

The FREETHINKER

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Views and Opinions.

More About Sunday.
The Committee stage of the Sunday Observance Bill will not be reached for two or three weeks, and we may defer further criticism of the measure until we hear what goes on in Committee. But we do not expect any drastic alteration will be made. It is probable that theatres will be included, and the sturdy character of the British public may be seriously threatened by it being permitted them, as free-born Britons, to see the "White Horse Inn" on Sunday evening. Already we see every Sunday during the summer the innocence of childhood undermined by the law permitting Italian ice-cream vendors to serve their wares, as though when Our Lord said "Suffer little children to come unto me," he and his disciples stood in the streets of Jerusalem with a row of ice-cream stalls. When, after debauching childhood in this way, we follow it up with holding out sinister invitations to vice by permitting Henry Ainley, or Forbes Robertson to appear in plays on Sunday evening, and even tempt the pure and lofty soul of Harry Lauder to join in the vile work, the sun of the British Empire must be near its setting.

But all genuine opposition will be set aside by the argument that the House of Commons has approved the general principle of the Bill. In the Committee stage the measure is to be in the care of Sir Stafford Cripps, the Solicitor-General, and we have the assurance of the *Christian World* that he is a man of "deep religious instincts who may be trusted to see that no essential safeguard is whittled away." He will reply, in the words of Mr. Clynes, that the Bill really alters nothing that exists, since it only permits people to do what they are already doing. That is certainly the most remarkable justification for a Bill ever given in the House of Commons. If this were Chicago, and Mr. Clynes were Big Bill Thompson, we can picture him introducing a Bill to legalize the gangsters and

racketeers on the ground that it would only be legalizing what was already in operation; it did not interfere with anything else, and the lofty Christian sentiments of everyone should be satisfied when it was understood that a proportion of the profits made by Al Capone & Company was to be given to charity. But the best joke of all is that of Mr. Clynes exhorting the House to face the situation with courage. Ye gods! No wonder the *Daily Telegraph* described him as "timidly defiant." He baas as ferociously as any sheep suffering with stomach-ache. He would dauntlessly raid a hen-roost—if he were permitted to wear chain armour as a protection against the assault of the angry chickens.

The Sabbatarian—A Type.

I must apologize for the attractive stupidities of the Bill having diverted me from the topic I set out to write on. This is an article contributed to the *Daily Express*, by Mr. Ben Turner, Labour M.P. for Batley and Morley. Mr. Turner heads his article "We are not bigots, but Christians," which rather opens him to the charge of writing tautologically. Mr. Turner voted against the Second Reading of the Bill, which I should have applauded had his vote been decided by reasonable considerations. But it was not, and his article may be taken as an attempted justification of his vote. Mr. Turner defines a bigot as one who is obstinately attached to opinions, which is not a very good definition. I prefer to define a bigot who as one who refuses to make allowance for any opinions other than his own, and Mr. Turner comes dangerously near to that when he declines to endeavour to understand the opinions of other people. For example, he prates about his desire to keep Sunday (in the interests of clarity, call it the weekly day off) as a day of rest, sweet and clean, etc., etc. But there is no difference of opinion about these things. The difference arises as to what makes the day of rest healthy—mentally, morally, and physically.

Mr. Turner appears to be under two impressions, both of which are demonstrably wrong. The first is that the Sunday was instituted for the purpose of improving the physical and moral health of the health of the people. That is not the case. The Sabbath is a taboo day, the whole reason for its existence is a religious one. And the "English Sunday" had its origin in one of the narrowest and the most depressing forms of Christianity that the world has known. The English Sunday was based on the Jewish conception of how the Sabbath should be spent, which was in turn based on a still more ancient form of superstition. If Mr. Turner will glance at some of the early Puritan literature on the question of the Sabbath, he will find very little about happy firesides and social well being, but a great deal about the anger of the Lord with anyone who breaks this particular taboo.

The second gross misunderstanding of the subject is in connexion with the existing Act of 1781. One does not expect Members of Parliament to be students of history or of anthropology, but they might occasionally hunt up the history and meaning of the Acts of Parliament they are asked to repeal or support. And the ultimate reason for the existence of the 1781 Act was the very mean one of stopping discussions on religious and radical subjects. The good Christians of that day knew that the hours of labour for working men were such that there existed precious few opportunities for discussing anything during the week. But on Sundays there was growing up the habit of discussing religion, and very heretical opinions were being disseminated. Moreover, the people of that day would not have stood very easily *all* meetings being brought under a licence such as the present government, being an advanced Labour Government, is suggesting; so it was thought that if payment for admission was prohibited, that would do the trick. For that would at least obstruct the "lower" classes holding such meetings, since being poor they would depend upon the takings to cover the cost of holding the meeting. Hence the existence of the 1781 Act which Mr. Turner wishes to see perpetuated. There never was any aim at improving the condition of the people or of brightening their homes or their lives. It was the men who created this Act who also created the terrible factory system, and also the horrible slums of the factory towns, and who sent men to prison for daring to ask, in combination, for the slightest alleviation of their miserable existence.

* * *

That Christian Fireside!

Mr. Turner is not merely wrong, he is absurd when he lets loose the sugary nonsense about Sunday being by tradition, the day for "calm serenity, and for the gathering of families round the fireside." When was this I wonder? Why the picture is so untrue, that so soon as he pens his fantastic description he forgets it and says, "I should certainly not like to go back to the old drab Sunday of fifty years ago, when to smile or whistle was a crime, and to indulge in any harmless home-made game was enough to send you to bed without supper. I am thankful that those days have gone." But these days were only fifty years ago! Evidently the happy, smiling faces, round the fireside were not very common at that day. But fifty years ago there were very strong complaints about the growing desecration of Sunday; fifty years ago there were Sunday Excursions, Sunday concerts, and various other Sunday amusements for those who wanted them. Earlier still, say, twice fifty years ago, the "drab Sunday" was far more in evidence, and Mr. Turner need only intensify the misery of his own childhood on Sunday to realize what must have been the lot of the still more unfortunate youngsters who belonged to an older generation. I would say that no child outside the pages of a Sabbatarian tract ever looked upon the approach of Sunday with anything but apprehension or noted its end with any feeling other than that of satisfaction. The happy, smiling gathering round the fireside about which Mr. Turner "mothers," was a day of over-eating and sleeping, varied with dull Bible readings, and generally, to quote Robert Louis Stevenson, "honouring the Sabbath by a sacred vacancy of mind."

But beyond the family circle was the outside world—the thousands of young men and women who simply would not and did not gather round the family fireside to indulge in the enjoyment of Mr. Turner's "sweet Sunday." They were out in the streets, with no healthful opportunities in the shape of excursions, since they too were considered a desecration of

the sweet Sunday, and no opportunities for passing away the time other than that of the public house or simply lounging about the streets. "Even if I stood alone," says Mr. Turner with quite unnecessary heroics, "I stand for the spiritual well-being of our people and our nation." Political religionists are not usually found standing alone, and it is hardly likely that a general conviction of the desirability of sweeping away the old 1781 Act would leave Mr. Turner unconvinced. And the assumption that it is only by way of supporting Sabbatarianism that one can uphold the well-being of the nation is the hallmark of bigotry at its best—or worst. One day Mr. Turner may realize that the demand for a more rational Sunday is on behalf of the "spiritual" well-being of the people. It is true that everyone does not wish to listen to classical music, attend museums, visit art galleries, or watch the higher forms of dramatic art on Sunday, but neither do all Christians wish to go to the Churches where the higher life is taught and sermons preached of such superlative intellectual quality that no one—not even the preacher—knows what on earth they are about. There are the orgies of emotionalism of the lower class evangelicals, there are the lying discourses and the low-down preaching of the professional evangelists, and no performance ever staged in theatre, music hall or cinema made more surely for national ill-being than do these. I do not wish to call Mr. Turner a bigot, but if he really means all he says and all he implies, and if he really says all he believes, then he certainly runs a danger of being placed in that category.

I have not dwelt upon the downright impertinence of a man who, after demanding the right to say how he shall spend his own day of rest, proceeds to make laws preventing others spending their day of rest as they see fit, because I have found it a sheer impossibility to make that type of Christian realize the utter impertinence of his claim.

CHAPMAN COHEN.

More Freethought Editors.

"Though few,
We hold a promise for the race
That was not at our rising."—*Meredith*.

"Liberty's chief foe is theology."—*Bradlaugh*.

OVER forty years ago there was a small shop at Holborn Viaduct steps, the windows of which displayed a chaste selection of educational books. One portion of a window, however, was devoted to works of a more inflammable character, and, in the opinion of many, was calculated to blow up, not only Holborn Viaduct itself, but also St. Paul's Cathedral, the City Temple, and Westminster Abbey. For, this apparently sober book emporium was the publishing office of *The Agnostic Journal*, edited by W. Stewart Ross, who, under the pen-name of "Saladin," carried on a singularly effective guerilla warfare against the hosts of Superstition.

Ross combined the two very different characters of tradesman and missionary of ideas, and in the process often proved himself a quick-change artist. At one moment he would be selling mathematical works to an aspirant for academical honours, and the next continuing an interrupted debate with a loquacious opponent who had no intention of buying anything. I have often interrupted a fiery debate in order to obtain the current issue of the *Agnostic Journal*, and heard the rich Doric of Ross's Northern accent as I walked away into "London's central roar."

Ross was "a man of parts," and attracted a personal following by his literary gifts, which were con-

siderable. As a poet he could be as musical and as melancholy as a midnight sea, and his prose was as full of purple patches and as flowery as that of Macaulay, who, by the way, remains one of the most readable of authors. In addition to his weekly articles in the *Agnostic Journal*, Ross kept up an unending stream of publications, ranging from two-volume books to slender pamphlets. One of his books, *The Confessional*, a trenchant attack on popery, had a large circulation far beyond the boundaries of the Freethought Movement, and his *God and His Book*, was at one time almost as popular as Ingersoll's *Mistakes of Moses*.

Ross kept his paper going for many years, and his readers most loyally supported him by subscribing to a Sustentation Fund, which achieved the laudable objects of keeping printer and paper-merchant at bay, if it did not give its editor the wages of a common soldier. Unlike most Freethought editors, Ross never learned the art of public speaking. To meet the wishes of his admirers, however, he did sometimes mount the rostrum, but he always started with what should have been the peroration, and "cloyed with too much excess." Even when acting as chairman, he would "go off the deep end" with resonant periods concerning "the caves of Elephanta," to the bewilderment of the real lecturer of the evening who saw, in his mind's eye, the last train going without him. Ross always got his mede of applause, which he attributed to his oratorical gifts, but which, in reality, was due to his literary prowess.

Apart from purely propagandist Freethought organs, much good work was done by John Morley, who contributed to the *Saturday Review*, and edited the *Morning Star* and the *Fortnightly Review*. In the last-named periodical first appeared the original drafts of some of his finest work, such as *On Compromise*, and the scholarly studies of Diderot, Voltaire, Rousseau, and the great French Freethinkers. During his editorship important Freethought articles were often published in that review, which became one of great influence, and even invited the flattery of imitation. The *Nineteenth Century* followed the lead, and published many of Huxley's outspoken articles, which culminated in his famous literary duel with Gladstone, in which the Liberal statesman found, to his astonishment, that verbosity was a poor shield against an adversary armed with all the resources of science and culture. This intellectual ferment actually reached the other side of the Atlantic, and the acute editor of the *North American Review* pitted Colonel Ingersoll against Cardinal Manning, and other Christian apologists, and added to the gaiety of the English-speaking world as a consequence.

During his journalistic and editorial career it is said that Morley printed the word "God" with a little "g," and so lively was the discussion in those far-off days of Hutton of the *Spectator* retaliated by spelling "Morley" with a small "m." Morley deserves mention, for, then as now, integrity was one of the rarest of virtues in Fleet Street.

Although of slender proportions, and only issued monthly, *The Literary Guide*, merits passing notice. This has been edited for many years by Mr. Charles A. Watts, the well-known publisher, who was cradled in the Freethought Movement. It has always been a bright little paper, and its chief contributors have included John M. Robertson, Joseph McCabe, and Frederick J. Gould.

Never was there a greater need than at present for periodicals edited by "intellectuals" for "intellectuals." Nowadays, newspapers exist to make money for their proprietors, honestly, if they can, but to make money. This simple fact explains why the entire press of a civilized country dismisses in a few

lines such an awful catastrophe as an Indian famine, which means death from starvation of thousands of men, women, and children, and gives an exaggerated publicity to the domestic lives of royal personages. Whether an august person reads his Bible in his bath, or whether another equally exalted person has two lumps of sugar in her tea, is a matter of microscopic importance, but the welfare of thousands of human beings is of consequence. It also helps us to understand why a free and enlightened press is so often moved to frenzies of apprehension as to the fate of homicidal criminals, who are almost invariably described as "handsome" or "beautiful." This is the most flagrant and disgusting sensationalism, and is founded on the system of appealing to the multitude of half-wits rather than to the more thoughtful members of the community, and thus to ensure those huge circulations which eventually materialize into fat dividends for the proprietors.

Some innocents imagine that mere writers exert little or no influence in politics and upon politicians, in statesmanship and upon statesmen. It is a fond illusion. What far-reaching influence did not Jean Jacques Rousseau exert in world-politics? Instead of being a voice crying in the wilderness, his was the most potent voice in the Europe of his day. Who heeded the infidel, Thomas Paine? Yet his was the hand that first wrote the arresting words, "the United States of America," the great Republic won by the swords of Lafayette and Washington. Think of Victor Hugo, who held aloft the banner of Liberty against all the trickeries and machinations of the tyrants of the days of the infamous Third Empire. There is nothing else in history but this eternal fight between freedom and tyranny, and the pioneers have ever been on the side of Liberty. But, as George Foote so aptly remarked: "We shall never enfranchise the world without touching people's superstitions." That is the reason why there is so great a need for Freethought. To make a new world, no audacity contributes that is not in the first place intellectual. The greatest need of the present age is boldly honest minds.

MIMNERMUS.

Ferrer—His Revenge.

THE ghost of Ferrer, which has relentlessly haunted the footsteps of Alfonso the 13th—the last of the Spanish Kings—has at length vindicated the memory of the martyr of Montjuich. The man who signed the death warrant of the great Spanish educationalist, did, in effect, by that act rob Spain of a heroic Freethinker, who spent his life and fortune in creating the much-needed schools of the "Escuela Moderna." By his fatal act the King brought about the natural and inevitable nemesis which has overtaken him.

On October 13, 1909, all the Bishops and priests of Spain, and all the bigots and superstitionists of the Church of Rome—and not only those of the Pope's Church, but all the smaller bigots of every creed who hate Freethought, and also hate all educational institutions which they fear may endanger the growth and development of Christian tendencies—rejoiced at the death of the reformer. But their satisfaction was to be dearly bought. No martyr of old was so instantly honoured as was Ferrer—by the pathetic but angry grief of untold thousands of people who in all the principal towns and cities of the civilized world, with indignant but spontaneous unanimity, affixed the brand of Cain indelibly upon the brow of Spain's last, and now exiled,

monarch. His crown he may never wear again, but that brand, which on that day was burnt upon his brow by the flaming indignation of the horrified consensus of vast multitudes throughout the world, will never, in time or eternity, be forgotten nor forgiven. Ever since the tragic crime was committed at Montjuich the rumblings of insurrection and revolution have been increasingly audible in Spain; Dictator has succeeded to Dictator, but without more than transitory success; constitutional government and Parliamentary rule have been vainly hoped for, until at last the obvious and only remedy—that of Revolution—has been forced upon the unwilling acceptance of the Monarch, to the joy and gratification of the people of Spain.

Ferrer's murder was consummated on October 13, 1909. The schools he founded were closed; the scholars were scattered, and robbed of the cultural advantage of a generous and enlightened education, and the property and funds intended for the maintenance of the schools were seized by the Government. The vindication of Ferrer, however, was not long delayed. I had the happiness of finding in my dear friend, Monsieur George Lorand, the one indispensable man to rescue the name of Francesco Ferrer from unmerited infamy. I went to Paris a few months after Ferrer's murder in order to appoint M. Lorand as the testamentary executor of Ferrer's affairs, as I was quite unable to undertake the onerous duties of that office as Ferrer's executor, consistently with the claims of my time and private duties and interests in this country. As a distinguished Belgian lawyer and an accomplished linguist Lorand had the full qualifications requisite for the task which would have devolved upon me, if I had elected to undertake to act upon the duties of that office. M. Lorand promptly left for Spain and went to work, and on December 29, 1911, he initiated the legal proceedings in Madrid, in which the Supreme Tribunal there justified our implicit belief from the first in the innocence of Ferrer.

In result, the highest court in Spain proclaimed that in none of the 2,000 prosecutions instituted on account of the Barcelona insurrection in July, 1909 had any trace been found of an intervention therein on Ferrer's part. As a result, General Weyler ordered the restitution of Ferrer's property, and rejected the claims made against his estate by the convents in respect of damages wrought upon those institutions; the Supreme Tribunal declaring that no proof whatever had been found of Ferrer's complicity during the deeds of violence and destruction occurring in the July, 1909 commotion, nor that any part of those misdeeds had been committed under Ferrer's orders. It would appear that during the July events, the convents presented fantastic demands for indemnity against Ferrer, in respect of damages and injury to their property, and they actually moved the Bishop of Barcelona to intervene in their favour, but the Supreme Tribunal sternly set aside their claims as unfounded.

Ferrer's legal rehabilitation was a signal triumph for right and justice. I have no doubt that Alfonso now knows in his heart of hearts that his destiny and downfall ultimately depended upon the reckless death-warrant which he signed for the obliteration of one of his noblest subjects—Ferrer. Had he stood out against the clamours of the Bishops and their noisy and ignorant priests, and had he faced with courage the implications and consequences arising from the seductive wiles and recklessness of the Spanish clergy, he might long ere this, have won the grateful admiration of all the more generous and noble-minded elements of the Spanish race. He spurned a splendid opportunity, and—in effect—threw away a glittering crown.

WILLIAM HRAFORD.

The Truth About Yahweh.

It has been claimed for Jehovah—it is still claimed by millions of uninstructed believers—that he represents the highest ideal of perfection that human nature has ever reached, and that he was incomparably superior to the numberless heathen gods, his contemporaries and rivals. Even the great Gladstone waxed lyrical when he wrote on this theme, declaring, in his reply to Col. Ingersoll, that the name of Jehovah is "encircled in the heart of every believer with the profoundest reverence and love." It is also claimed that to the Hebrews alone was first revealed that there is only one God, and that God was Jehovah.

But those who are acquainted with the results of the explorations and excavations in the East, since the deciphering of the cuneiform and other ancient scripts, have a very different story to tell. In truth, the facts have been known for many years, but for the most part they have been confined to expensive books and journals written for specialists and not for the public; and, in so far as the Churches are concerned, completely ignored.

But now that the results of these discoveries in the East are being popularized in cheap books which have a wide circulation, it is felt that the time has come when it would be a wise policy to reveal some of the truth, before it is divulged by profane and irreligious hands in the popular press.

This, no doubt, is the idea underlying the work recently published by the "Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge," entitled *The Hebrew Religion and Development*. By W. O. E. Oesterley, and T. H. Robinson. (Published at 10s. 6d.) Dr. Oesterley is Professor of Hebrew and Old Testament exegesis at the University of London, and examining chaplain to the Bishop of London—I wonder whether he has ever examined the Bishop, and if so what he found?—Dr. T. H. Robinson is Professor of Semitic languages at the University of Cardiff. They are both Doctors of Divinity and are not lacking either in learning or religion.

In our Bibles the name of God is given as Jehovah, but all Hebrew scholars are in agreement that this is a wrong translation. The primitive Hebrew language was written without vowels, therefore the name in Hebrew appears like this J H W H; the translators added the vowels, making it into JeHoVaH. But scholars now assure us that the correct translation should be Yahweh.

The vast majority of Christian children are taught that religion and the idea of God was first made known to the Israelites by a direct revelation from God himself, the writers were "inspired" by God. In direct contradiction to this, our authors show how religious ideas slowly, and naturally, evolved from the childish fancies and ideas of primitive man. In fact in Animism, about which our authors observe—

If it be asked how we are to suppose that man in the Animistic stage represented to himself the power or spirit which animated the stream, it is very doubtful whether any certain answer can be given. Such things are not enquired into by men in a very low stage of culture; the "primitive" race, like the child, takes many things for granted; questions are obviously not asked when the mental capacity for framing them is as yet absent.

We use the term *Animism*: this implies the existence of "spirits"; but it is quite certain that man in this low stage of culture had not the remotest conception of what we understand by spirit. To conceive of an immaterial entity was beyond his power. We doubt therefore whether a definite answer can be given to the question as to how man in this early stage presented to himself that which animated a stream, or tree, or cloud. (pp. 5-6.)

Of the Hebrew invasion of Canaan they observe, that the general culture of the invaders was below that of the inhabitants they found there: "It seems, in fact, that they simply adopted the culture of Palestine *en bloc*. Their original language was presumably, a dialect of Aramaic; in Canaan they used Hebrew, the old speech of the people in the Tel-el-Amarna age. The civil law which we find embodied in Israel's earliest codes is a form of that common to all the peoples of Western Asia, and resembles the type represented in the law of the Hittites, the Babylonians, and the Assyrians . . . so, too Israel went far in accepting the deities and the cultus which they found already in the country." (pp. 169-170.)

When we were young we were told the most awful tales about the heathen god Baal, and the sacrifices made to him, now we learn that Ba'al simply meant "Lord," and further: "there is reason to believe that the word 'Ba'al' was actually applied to Him [Yahweh] as a descriptive title, and that it was not till Hosea's time that the term fell out of use." (p. 177.) There were many Baals and Yahweh was only one of them. The beginning of the religion of Yahweh among the Hebrews, say our authors, commenced with Moses, who fled from Egypt after committing a murder, and settled in Mount Sinai in Midian, where he kept the flock of Jethro his father-in-law. They continue:—

Further, as is well known, among nomadic tribes there were tribal gods; each tribe had its own god, and the god held sway within the limits of the tribal territory; just as in later days there were national gods whose power was restricted to the country of the nation. It follows, therefore, that Mount Sinai close to which, according to Exod. iii. 1, Moses was feeding Jethro's flock, was within the Kenite territory of the Midianite land, and that Yahweh, who is described as dwelling on Mount Sinai, was originally the tribal god of the Kenites and Jethro was His priest. (p. 111.)

So that Yahweh was merely one of the tribal Baal's that infested Palestine, and was taken over by the Hebrews as one of the fixtures when they arrived there. "We have to confess," say our authors, "that we do not know for certain whom or what Israel worshipped in pre-Mosaic times, and must depend to some extent on conjecture based on the statements supplied to us in the Bible." (pp. 131-132.) Let us conclude with Heine's inimitable farewell to the dying god:—

A peculiar awe, a mysterious piety, forbids our writing more to-day. Our heart is full of shuddering compassion: it is the old Jehovah himself that is preparing for death. We have known him so well from his cradle in Egypt, where he was reared among the divine calves and crocodiles, the sacred onions, ibises, and cats. We have seen him bid farewell to these companions of his childhood and to the obelisks and sphinxes of his native Nile, to become in Palestine a little god-king amidst a poor shepherd people, and to inhabit a temple-palace of his own. We have seen him later coming into contact with Assyrian-Babylonian civilization, renouncing his all-too-human passions, no longer giving vent to fierce wrath and vengeance, at least no longer thundering at every trifle. We have seen him migrate to Rome, the capital, where he abjures all national prejudices and proclaims the celestial equality of all nations, and with such fine phrases establishes an opposition to the old Jupiter, and intrigues ceaselessly till he attains supreme authority, and from the Capitol rules the city and the world, *urban et urbem*. We have seen how, growing still more spiritualized, he becomes a loving father, a universal friend of man, a benefactor of the world, a philanthropist; but this could avail him nothing! Hear ye not the bells resounding? They are bringing the sacraments to a dying god!

(Heine: *Religion and Philosophy in Germany*. p. 203.)

W. MANN.

Religion in the Army.

It was a very depressing departure—a continual drizzle damped any attempt at hilarity. In an hour or so His Majesty's Troopship "Dorsetshire" would depart with its cargo of human beings for India.

It was pitiful to see the various groups of families—mothers, sisters, sweethearts—saying their goodbyes in the wet, miserable atmosphere. All their obviously newly bought finery ("Mustn't let the boy down in front of his comrades"), slowly and surely being ruined. Poor things, how uncomfortable and out of place they seemed, standing there under the gaze of the other troops, burdened down with an inferiority complex that covered them like their ill-fitting clothes. Their eyes were filled with the mute appeal one sees in the eyes of a dumb animal when out of its environment. They call animals dumb! They who can say little more than "I am hungry," or "I am thirsty"—of which the supposed dumb animals are all capable. The immediate material needs, yes, but beyond that they are as dumb as the animals they sometimes pity but never have the sense to envy.

The ship's siren sounds "All ashore," and they are shepherded off the boat like the animals with whom I have compared them—and the journey begins!

We are approaching our first stop—Gibraltar. The weather has been surprisingly good for the time of the year. The days warm and sunny, and the nights—oh, the nights! Is there anything more wonderful than to be at sea and gaze up at the stars stretching away at both sides and all around, unhidden by prosaic rooftops or useless church spires? Even the passing ship that by day is just a dull, commonplace boat, takes on the appearance of a fairy palace with its lights a twinkling and reflecting in the distance. The poetry which is revealed in the motion of the boat as it sways from side to side, seems to enhance at night when the commonplace gears and winches are enveloped away by the soft darkness. We are inside the breakwater—approaching the pier. The rock looks very lovely reaching up out of the blue, glittering as the sun catches the windows of the dwellings. I was last here in July, 1921. It then looked very formidable, but my maturity of another ten years seemed to have made it shrink to nothing but a glorious hill.

I am sitting on one of the hatches, drinking in the colour and movement of the commotion around me, when I espy an old friend—the Army Scripture Reader—coming towards me. He looks very nice in his pseudo-officer's uniform!

He is, I find, distributing booklets. The emprasized (whatever that means) Gospel of St. John (illustrated)—also what I term a "Ticket to Heaven"—a piece of cardboard about three by two inches, on which is typed:—

MY DECISION.

Being convinced that I am a sinner—and believing that Christ died for me, I now accept Him as my personal Saviour, and with his help, intend to confess Him before men.—John 1-12; Rom. x. 9-10.

Name..... Address.....

On the other side is:—

If this card is genuinely signed kindly return to me To-day, or sent to, W. G. Clarke, 16, Thornaby Avenue, Southampton.

Well, what do you know about that? If it isn't a Ticket to Heaven, then I ask you what it is?

I placed myself so that he would come to me. Eventually he did, and in the sanctimonious voice which is theirs he offered me a booklet. When I refused he enquired in a voice full of pity, "Do you not believe in Him?" I innocently asked, "In whom?"

A look of horror slowly spread over his face as he sing-songed "The Lord our God." (The capitals are his).

It was my turn to fill my voice with pity. "Don't be silly," said I, "There ain't no such person."

Later, when I talked of "Mr. God," he nearly collapsed. Our discussion took place on the crowded deck and immediately attracted the troops. We were literally hemmed in by them. I first asked him where was his authority to issue these "Tickets to the Celestial Sphere." He went on to relate that he had received the call, and I, very puzzled, asked him how God called him—"Did you actually see him?" "Did you actually hear Him calling you?" He answered, "No—I felt the call." "Yes," said I, "to the tune of how much you are receiving per week."

On my enquiry he attributed the evil in the world to ourselves "In that God had given us free will and reasoning powers." Then said I, "Why should we be condemned to everlasting fires and torments if in using our free will and reasoning we find the evidence of the existence of God isn't sufficient, and therefore we could not acknowledge him?" Murmuring from the troops, who were realizing that this fellow wasn't their superior after all. Then he went on to say that "We had to thank Christianity for the world being what it is to-day"—(which I thought a doubtful compliment). Emphasizing every word for the benefit of the crowd, he continued, "Without Christianity we should be at each others throats like a lot of dogs." I nearly collapsed when I heard this! Also with emphasis on every word I asked him, "Wasn't that what we did in the Great War?" The troops around dared to laugh!

After that he had the effrontery to say, "Well, the boys (meaning the rest of the troops) believed, because they take my booklets."

"They take them simply because they don't know how decently to refuse," I replied. After a few well chosen words, which stripped them of their self-consciousness, and with psychological insight I asked, "How many around believe in God?"

Only two put up their hands, one a boozy old character of forty-five, the other a sergeant in the Army Educational Corps, about forty. None of the youngsters!

I walked away to save "Gods Called" further embarrassment, for the troops were becoming indecent. Brave, like vultures, ready to swoop down on a body, but not before it is dead!

The actual discussion had meant very little to them. Their enjoyment had been that someone had been humiliated, but it all helps, and a seed may have been sown in the cause of Freethought that will later bear forth fruit.

PAT MILLS.

If thou seest clear, go by this way content, without turning back: but if thou dost not see clear, stop and take the best advisers.—*Marcus Aurelius*.

To have a respect for ourselves guides our morals; and to have a deference for others governs our manners.

Sterne.

I love plain and bold speech between gallant men, and that our words should go along with our thoughts.

Montaigne.

God Knows.

No shock is occasioned nowadays when the expression "God knows" is the cynical reply to questions slipshodly asked or apparently incapable of precise answer, but one cannot but think that in the more religious past, the statement was made reverently and sincerely. Both the person who asked for information on an abstruse problem and the one who answered would feel that God did know: the problem might easily be beyond solution by human brains at the time, but there could be no doubt of God's ability to supply absolute knowledge of everything. And with that the problem would be shelved with neither party dissatisfied, and with both feeling confident that the Heavenly Encyclopedia would be available eventually.

But modern "science," which has done so much to demonstrate the existence of a controlling intelligence (and a mathematically inclined intelligence at that) has somewhat spoiled things by undermining our faith in God's omniscience and has thrown doubts on the amount of knowledge that God has.

Some of our scientists are affirming that the universe is an idea in the mind of a mathematician called God. I am aware that some wit has retorted that God is certainly an idea in the minds of some scientists, but that in effect merely re-asserts that God does know, it does not remove our doubts about God knowing.

Let me explain. If the universe is an idea in the mind of a mathematician (or a biologist or chemist, for that matter), then all that is in the universe, including human beings, their brains, their consciousness and their ideas, is part of that idea. But the scientist's conception of God is a human idea, it is included in the universe, therefore it is part of the idea in the mind of God. Strange! God's existence is an idea in God's mind. But ideas, we are told, are true or false, and it is one of our tasks to decide which ideas are true and which are false. I am forced to ask, and the answer needs very careful consideration: Is God's idea of his own existence true or false? On the answer to that question depends a great deal, for if God's idea is false, he has thought himself out of existence, as it were, and that is a serious affair. It might need untold generations of scientists to think him back again.

However, there are other aspects. Has God decided whether his idea is true or not? If not, then his knowledge appears to be limited, and, in some things at least, he does NOT know. Again, if conceptions of God and his existence, forming as they do a part of the universe, are part of God's ideas, then we face another serious deduction. During the course of human existence there have been countless hypotheses of God, succeeding one another like images on a cinematograph screen, and, they also must have been part of God's idea of the universe, so that apparently God never holds any opinion of his nature and his existence for long. He does not seem to know any more about himself than we do. What a shattering of our hopes! But what about the universe itself? Conceptions of that have come and gone like Summer flies, so God must have been kept terribly busy since Creation watching the kaleidoscopic whirligig of his own mental activities. His thoughts about himself and his universe appear to have been somewhat vague and certainly unsettled. He may or may not have been wonderfully clever in creating a universe, but about the last thing he can be credited with is knowing. It is possible, of course, that he is learning as we give him all the knowledge we gradually obtain, but that is no satisfaction to those who have looked forward to learning everything from him. Modern science may have done religionists a great service in postulating a thinking god, but they have left him as fallible as his creatures. "God knows," as a human idea, is part of the universe, which is an idea in God's mind, that is, one of God's ideas is that God knows, but who knows if that idea is true or false? God knows, I suppose.

"L'AIGUILLOX."

Delilah.

Revised from the Hebrew.

AND Tisra went to the Mount of Olives. And while he sat teaching in the garden, the scribes and Pharisees brought unto him, a Woman of the Shadows. And Tisra was aesthetic in perception, and noticed that she was well-formed, graceful, and very beautiful withal. Like a delicate pearl among lumps of charcoal, for her captors were crude and ugly men. And Tisra said unto her, Why do these men apprehend thee? But she looked upon the ground, fearful to speak, for those around him gazed harshly at her, staring rudely, ready to accuse her. So Tisra said more gently, Who hast thou offended? And she answered, None that I know of Lord. And he looked angrily at her accusers and said, How does this child offend you?

And they replied, She offends the prophets and God; the law of Moses demands that she hath a certificate from the priests to make such things lawful, for such things are not permissible out of holy wedlock.

And he said even more gently unto her, for her comeliness melted his austerity and ravished his heart, What trade hast thou, or, howsoever dost thou live?

And she answered, sadly, My parents were poor and oppressed and endowed me with nothing but beauty, which all men seek to steal from me. When the men show me favour then even the women are angry and would injure me. Yet they have dowries of wealth, warmth and shelter. Master, what must I do ere I starve?

And he answered, Thou hast not sinned against the community, but the community has sinned against you; self-preservation is an instinct more sacred than the law or the prophets. Thy beauty is thine own and not in another's keeping. If you sell what is your own and make a bad bargain you alone suffer; if you give away your treasure that is your own charity, and no-one's pain; if anyone rob you then the law should punish them.

And he turned angrily to those around her and said unto them, Your God cannot be offended, for He is above earthly passions; the prophets are dead, and therefore beyond harm; and the law must first protect ere it punish. You being natural men desire beauty for your own and lust after all women that your eyes behold. What is but a blemish in this child is a canker in you, for you know that every one of you would commit adultery every day if it was made secret. You would expose her frailty and hide your own lechery, you hypocrites and pious frauds. Know you not morality consists not in exposing others and giving offence, but in control and tolerance; you condemn in others what you secretly cherish in yourselves.

And they were angry at their desires being known and thwarted and knew not what to say, for they imagined he could read their thoughts. And being convicted by their own shame also, they slunk every one away, leaving Tisra alone with the woman.

And she nestling in his bosom found peace and understanding at last.

MAX COORLEGG.

Every heart that has beat strong and cheerfully has left a hopeful impulse behind it in the world, and bettered the tradition of mankind.—*Robert Louis Stevenson.*

It is satisfaction to a man to do the proper works of a man. Now it is a proper work of a man to be benevolent to his own kind.—*Marcus Aurelius.*

It is only by labour that thought can be made healthy, and only by thought that labour can be made happy.
Ruskin.

When truth is revealed, let custom give place; let no man prefer custom before reason and truth.

•*St. Augustine.*

Acid Drops.

The German used to be cited as the complete example of the man who never dreamed of disobeying an official order. The present-day Englishman could give him a good start and a beating. There are plenty of examples of this, but here is the latest. Lord Dawson of Penn intended giving a lecture to the North London Branch of the Post-War Brotherhood on Sunday last, on "The Heart and Circulation of the Blood." He intended using a film by way of illustration. But the lecture was abandoned because the L.C.C. refused to grant permission as the film was to be shown before six o'clock, and if the film was shown before six the licence of the film would be endangered. Readers may, at this juncture put in the appropriate "cuss-words." They cannot make it too strong for the occasion.

Consider. The meeting was, we understand, free. Now anything that is legal on Monday is legal on Sunday, provided there is no charge whatever for admission. The L.C.C. had no power to veto the exhibition, and the Brotherhood was very foolish to apply for permission to do what they had a perfectly legal right to do. The threat of the L.C.C., that the owner of the premises might endanger his licence, for the other six days of the week, if he permitted a quite legal thing to be done, was a cowardly and contemptible exhibition of humbledom. If the L.C.C. refused the licence when the time came for renewing it, because something had been done on the day which their licence did not cover, the proper course would have been to take the L.C.C. into the courts to justify their refusal. And we do not think that an English judge would fail to order the licence to be granted. But the N.S.S. appears to be the only body that does this kind of thing. To the free and independent Englishman of to-day it is enough that an official order has been given. This side of the grave not one out of a thousand ever dreams of questioning it. Some years ago it was proposed to give certain officials very great powers, the reply came that the only objection was that there were not enough lamp-posts in Whitehall to accommodate the necks that would be stretched. But that was some years ago. The Whitehall lamp-posts are still undecorated. *Vive le Bumble.*

There was much generous notice of Mr. John Burns' recent excursion into the limelight after his absence therefrom since 1914. Nor do we cavil thereat, though, unless our information is inaccurate, "honest John" could not possibly be, as is alleged, "silent for seventeen years." It is only so far as public speaking is concerned that he has abated; but, almost any day not a holiday, as assertive as ever, he might have been found with certain cronies in a well known club, discussing the news of the day, and, we do not doubt, many other persons and things. Burns always had a gift for playing with words, especially by way of alliteration, and his observation about there being "too much mobility and not enough nobility," is quite in his old style. Whether it is because John has some of the blood of his most famous namesake in his veins, or for some more weighty reason, we know not, but his silence as to his secularist and malthusian opinions does not, we are certain, mean that he holds them no longer. And, should he be looking for new fields to conquer it should not be difficult for him to find them.

From Horgen, on the Lake of Zurich, comes a ghastly, but, alas, not novel story of religious mania. The details are unusually horrible, one attack of delusional insanity having taken toll of five lives, a father and four children, but the mania itself is of a well-authenticated and frequently observed type. This wretched man, Barth-Hurter by name, was with his wife, connected with a new Christian sect which pretended to be able to tell whether a given person was "predestined" for salvation or not. Finding that they were not among the "elect," this man and his wife considered killing their children might win them divine favour. The wife had been in an asylum, after having been found making ready a carving knife for their sacrifice. She was, un-

fortunately, released. The husband, who had been advised to consult the Psychiatric Faculty of Zurich University, killed his two children, his niece and nephew, and himself, while his wife was interviewing their minister as to whether he should take the advice given him. And we suppose that the pious readers of this story, which appeared in the *Observer* still believe that "his tender mercy is over all his works."

Nothing can ever hope to cope with religion, or anything approaching religion, for the opportunities it gives to all kinds of clotted bosh. For example. Miss Elinor Glyn writes an article in the *Sunday Dispatch*, explaining that she has lived before and will live again. She has lived two thousand years, and remembers quite a lot about it. Naturally she always occupied a very high position, she was at the court of Versailles in the eighteenth century—we hope there was nothing improper here, but some very strange ladies figured at that place, and high positions in Rome, Egypt, Greece, were all filled by the admirable Elinor. Even when she went to Russia she remembered having lived in one of the palaces there. Certainly if one is to keep on being born they may as well remember being in palaces as in hovels. That is the way these recollections usually run. Perhaps one of these days we may try our hands at what we can remember of our past incarnations. We fancy that in that case we should distinctly remember having been born as Sir John Mandeville and Baron Munchausen.

Fortunately for the different missionary societies those who subscribe to them have very short memories. Otherwise they might remember what a fuss was made of certain Chinese leaders some years ago as being quite convinced Christians. Then the Chinese revolutions began, and somehow these very Christian Chinese leaders disappeared. At least nothing more was heard of them. Then several years ago the Hindu leader Ghandi was trotted out as one who was very powerfully influenced by Christianity. Not actually a Christian convert, you understand, but one who was increasingly Christian in his outlook, which glorious result was entirely the result of missionary work. Now Ghandi is reported as saying, according to the *Daily Telegraph* of April 24:—

If instead of confining themselves purely to humanitarian work, such as education, medical services to the poor, and the like, they use these activities of theirs for the purpose of proselytising, I would certainly like them to withdraw. Every nation considers its own faith as good as that of any other. Certainly the great faiths held by the people of India are adequate for her people. India stands in no need of conversion from one faith to another.

Naturally this is being made the most of by those who believe in the rule of the iron hand, and also by the Missionary societies as a means of stimulating contributions, and is being very much distorted as a consequence.

Mr. J. A. Spender is probably nearer the truth when he suggests, in the *News-Chronicle* for April 25, that Ghandi is merely protesting against the attempts to snatch adherents one from the other, while welcoming "living friendly contact among the followers of the world's religions." He is quite sure that Ghandi has no thought of persecution, even if he had the power to persecute. The curious thing is that the protests of Ghandi against proselytism, repudiated in the form given them, are precisely identical in spirit, and almost in form with the protests of the Pope against Protestant proselytising in Rome. But there was no outcry in the British press against this. Our press knows when to turn the blind eye. Or perhaps it thinks that intolerance among Hindoos is an exercise of a quality that should properly be restricted to Christians.

For our own part we have no doubt whatever that Ghandi has in mind the way in which the missionaries make use of various agencies—medical and charitable—in order to bribe certain classes into a pretended adherence to Christianity for report purposes. Everybody in India knows the game that is carried on, and those who are conversant with the methods at home of our domestic agencies will appreciate the character of the work

carried on. With foreign missions the plan has a dual aspect. In one direction people are invited to subscribe because of the good done by the distribution of charitable aid. Then, while one class is being "milked" in "charity's name," those who have only a religious interest, and who do not care a brass button about the welfare of bodies so long as souls are saved, find those who come to the missions for charity in one form or another paraded as either converts or as being seriously interested in Christianity. Finally, when the charity of the mission is exhausted the convert or the "enquirer" disappears from the scene.

At the Manchester Police Court the evidence of a Roman Catholic was refused because he declined to swear on a Protestant Bible, and the magistrate declined to permit the affirmation. In the latter instance the magistrate was strictly within the letter of the law, since the two grounds of affirmation are that an oath is contrary to one's religious belief, or that the witness has no religious belief. Neither of these grounds existed with the witness in question. On the other hand, the magistrate was distinctly in the wrong for refusing to arrange for the man taking an oath in whatever way was binding on his conscience. But magistrates so often use their position to indulge their religious prepossessions, with the full agreement of other Christians that we are not altogether sorry to see one of them being treated in the same manner.

Thousands of youths were recently converted at Oxford, more thousands were converted at the Albert Hall the other week, and now Leigh-on-Sea, only a small place, reports, through the mouth of the Rev. L. B. Fletcher, 300 converts. Far be it from us to cast doubts on the truthfulness of these reports, but we are left wondering why the Churches are not better filled, and where all these thousands of converts come from—and go to.

The Roman Catholic Archbishop Downey has been taking part in a film performance, and, according to the *Universe*, experts were loud in praise of his skill as an actor. We are not at all surprised. When a man has been for years playing in the pantomime performance of the Roman Church, it must be child's play to take part in the preparation of a film. A man must be a good actor to be a successful priest. He must be able to be exuberantly funny with a perfectly straight face, and assume any emotion that fits the occasion.

It is well known that Members of Parliament were deluged with post-cards ordering them to vote against the Sunday Performances Bill. The *Universe* kindly explains that this is not an attempt to force members to support what they believe to be wrong, but only making clear to the member that their votes will be decided by what he does in relation to a particular measure. That is really quite good, considering the wholesale threats of Catholics in the case of the Education Bill. There is no body of people who vote to order so much as do Roman Catholics, and the statement of the *Universe* is quite worthy of "The Great Lying Church."

The dishonesty and the tyranny of the Roman Church does in fact present one of the most puzzling problems to genuinely liberal politicians. These know quite well that no reliance can be placed upon Roman Catholic pledges or upon a Roman Catholic sense of fair play. If the Roman Church had the power, it would rigorously suppress anything which it considered contrary to its interests. It hates toleration as the devil is said to hate holy water, which if true, may be only the devil's healthy repugnance to the gentlemen who prepare it. So the problem is always before us—ought we to give freedom to a body of men who will always exercise it to suppress freedom for others? Many are tempted to reply, No. For ourselves, while fully recognizing the danger, we feel there are fewer evils in taking the risk and trusting to better education and the advance of civilization to keep in check one of the most terrible instruments of human degradation the world has known.

Our Jubilee.

The next issue of the *Freethinker* will be a Jubilee number. That issue will consist of thirty-two pages, instead of the usual sixteen, and will include a reprint of the first number, and an account of the history of the paper. No extra charge will be made for this double number, but we are suggesting that readers should order at least two copies, using the extra ones for distribution. They will be thus helping to defray the increased cost of production, and also help to make the paper better known, and so secure new subscribers.

It is important that those intending to take extra copies should give their orders well in advance, as newsagents have to order of their wholesalers somewhere about ten or twelve days prior to the date of publication. By giving in their orders for extra copies by, say, the end of April, we shall thus have a guide as to what number we are justified in printing of this special issue.

In celebrating fifty years of existence the *Freethinker* is setting up a record not previously achieved by any Freethought paper in the whole of Europe. We want our readers to make it an occasion worth remembering.

TO CORRESPONDENTS.

Our Shop Manager reports that all copies of Mr. Lewis's booklet on *Atheism* are sold. A fresh supply has been ordered from America, and all orders will be discharged so soon as they are received, but all who have ordered must possess their souls in patience for about three weeks.

R. J. JACKSON.—We have read your criticism with interest and appreciation, but regret that we are so busy with other things at the moment that we have not the time to give a detailed reply. All we will say at the moment is that you seem to have overlooked the fact that our Restatement of Materialism was based upon an analysis of what Materialists had implied from the earliest times.

W. McKEE.—Your lecture notice did not reach us till Wednesday morning. Nothing of that kind is of any use for the forthcoming issue after first post on Tuesday.

A. S. MILLWARD.—We would not mind being with you in Italy this time of the year. Hope you will have a good time.

A.C.M.—Thanks. They are quite useful.

H. BLACK.—Shall look forward to meeting you at Liverpool.

B. JAMES.—Afraid your letter would invite a deal of correspondence which would be quite outside the scope of this journal.

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 connection with Secular Burial Services are required, all communications should be addressed to the Secretary, Mr. R. H. Roselli, 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.

Sugar Plums.

The Annual Conference of the N.S.S. will be held this year at Liverpool. Delegates, and friends, intending to be present, will need certain arrangements made on their behalf, such as hotel accommodation, Conference luncheon, etc. Unless those arrangements are made beforehand, disappointment and extra work will result. Will all those requiring accommodation or luncheon, please forward their requirements to either the General Secretary, 62 Farringdon Street, London, E.C., or the local Secretary, Mr. S. R. A. Ready, 29 Sycamore Road, Waterloo, Liverpool. The business meetings of the Conference will be held at the Washington Hotel, where a luncheon has also been arranged, tickets, 3s. each.

We have received a number of letters congratulating us on last week's "Views," dealing with the Sunday question. Several have suggested that a copy of last week's issue be sent to every Member of both Houses of Parliament, with members of local Councils. We should be pleased to do so, but doing things on this scale entails considerable expense, and we have no reserve funds for such a purpose. As it is we send a considerable number of copies whenever there is anything in the paper that is likely to be of use, besides sending free copies to a number of local institutions. But there must be a limit to what we can give away. We suggest that some one in each constituency should see that their member gets a copy, or if they would like it done from this office we will send a copy post free for threepence, or as many copies as are ordered, so far as our supplies hold good. Certainly, both those who opposed and those, who supported the Bill need education on this subject.

Judging by the orders already to hand for the Jubilee issue of the *Freethinker*, which will be twice the size of the ordinary issue, but with no increase in price, there will be a very large sale of this anniversary number. Our suggestion that each reader should contribute to the extra cost by taking at least one additional number and giving it to a likely reader is being taken up vigorously, but we are hoping to hear from many more yet, although the bulk of the extra orders will meet us through the wholesale agents.

The *Observer* notes that "with two or three exceptions, the English comments on the Spanish situation have not been conspicuous either for knowledge or intelligence." With this we quite agree. All that the majority of the newspapers are concerned with is sensations, and as most English people depend upon the newspapers for what they are to believe about the world, the public is about as ill-informed as the newspaper writers. We have columns of stuff about the bearing of the King, his "sporty" behaviour, the tears and anguish with which the Queen left Spain, accompanied with the Crown Jewels, but nothing whatever about the causes that have led up to the expulsion of Alfonso. Yet in 1909 the whole civilized world was ringing with the brutal murder of Ferrer by the combined action of Crown and Church, and the indecent torture of prisoners had aroused equal indignation. Ever since, the most severely repressive measures have been in operation, man after man of note has been compelled to fly the country, schools have been closed and their funds confiscated, but of all these things no one appears to be aware—thanks to the general reliance upon the "spool" press of the country. Yet the unanimity of the country in getting rid of Alfonso should have led intelligent men and women to look for some cause for such a phenomenon. For the expulsion of the king was not the triumph of one party over another. It was practically the movement of a whole people, and a monarch or a government must be in very bad odour indeed for this to take place.

As we said, last week, the liberals of Spain had not forgotten Ferrer, although we have not seen a mention of his name in the British newspapers. In this issue

we publish an article on Ferrer by our old friend Mr. William Heaford. Mr. Heaford was one of the Executors of Francesco Ferrer, and no man in England was in such intimate relations with him. We think the article will be generally appreciated. Perhaps Mr. Heaford will follow it up with an account of what Ferrer did, and what he tried to do for the Spanish people.

During our recent stocktaking we came across a parcel of Miss Ettie Rout's *Sexual Health and Birth Control*, with a foreword by Sir Bryan Donkin, which was reported out of print some time back. The book is composed of two lectures delivered to the Manchester Branch of the National Secular Society. The work is published at 1s., by post three-halfpence extra. Those who wish to secure copies should order at once.

We have also for sale a limited number of copies of Dr. W. W. Hardwicke's *Sunday the People's Holiday* (pictorial boards) giving a history of the Sabbath in pre-Christian and Christian times. This will be sent post free for 9d. There is likewise a number of *Natural Religion, or the Secret of all the Creeds*, by F.J.B. This is an abbreviation of the celebrated work of Dupius, *The Origin of all the Cults*, and contains three astronomical plates. Price 1s. post free.

An analysis of the voting on the Sunday Performances Bill shows the following:—

Conservatives	...	...	Against	98	For	100
Labour	...	...	"	67	"	149
Liberal	...	...	"	44	"	8

The Nonconformist element in the Liberal Party probably accountable for the almost solid resistance of the Bill. The Conservative vote was divided fairly equally. Labour had to move cautiously owing to the heretical opinions of so many of their supporters. But that Party may claim the credit of having introduced the most idiotic Bill of the century. The majority of those who abstained probably thought it was safest not to commit themselves until they saw which way the cat jumped. Parliamentary life seems to breed that kind of heroism.

The open-air lecture season begins to-day (Sunday) and full details will be found in the "Lecture Notice" column. We welcome the suggestion of the churches making use of the open spaces to get to the people. Our prospects for a busy and useful season appear to be very good, and naturally Freethinkers are expected to help.

The present government appears to be having a stimulating effect upon Freethinkers. From different parts of the country, enquiries, offers of help, and the necessity for more Freethought reaches us. There is no reason why a Branch of the N.S.S. should not be found in every big centre in the country. For general information it might be stated, a Branch of the N.S.S. may be formed by seven or more members. If those who are prepared to undertake the simple preliminaries will write to the General Secretary, 62 Farringdon Street, London, E.C.4. full information, with every possible assistance will be given.

The North London Branch will hold meetings on Tuesday evenings, commencing May 5, outside Hampstead Heath Station, L.M.S., South End Road, at 8 p.m., and at Arlington Road, on Thursday evenings at 8 p.m., commencing May 7. Mr Ebury will open the two courses.

We have received a copy of the annual report of the Liverpool Branch of the N.S.S., and are pleased to read so encouraging a document. During the year the Branch has made progress in every direction. Weekly meetings have been held in the new hall that was engaged last October, and the audiences have been uniformly good, quite twice the size of the meetings of previous years. In addition, a vigorous press campaign has been carried on, and numerous letters have appeared from the Secretary and others. Lectures have been given to outside societies, and have resulted in increased interest in Freethought. The Branch finishes up with a

few pounds on the right side, but we hope that will induce friends to subscribe more liberally in the coming year. With more funds more work could be done. The President for the year is Mr. E. Egerton Stafford, Vice-Presidents: Messrs. McKelvie, Harrison, Jackson, and Shortt. The Committee is Messrs. Murphy, Morris, McKelvie (Jnr.), Robinson and Skinner, Miss Wilson and Mrs. Ready. Mr. S. R. A. Ready is again Secretary. The Branch is resolved to stick to a good man while it can.

The Secular Society, Limited is issuing a new edition—the third—of Mr. Cohen's *Christianity, Slavery and Labour*. The work has been revised and enlarged, and will contain two plates illustrating the stowing of slaves on board a famous Liverpool slaver. This is the most exhaustive work on the subject in print, and contains a mass of historical and other information that should be useful to everyone. The book is thoroughly documented, and the references are among its most useful features. The book will be published at 1s. 6d. in paper, and 2s. 6d. in cloth. The work has been a steady seller since its first appearance in 1917.

The Freethinking Sage of Malmesbury.

THOMAS HOBBS occupies an exalted position among the pioneers of contemporary rationalism. His long life of more than ninety years obscures the fact that it was in the reign of Elizabeth, in 1588, the time of the Armada, that the future author of *Leviathan* first saw the light. A contemporary of Shakespeare's until the dramatist's death in 1616, Hobbes was the son of the vicar of Westport, near Malmesbury in Wiltshire. His mother became so nervous at the prospect of the Spanish Invasion, that her child was delivered before his time.

Rearing in easy circumstances, and a lad of studious tastes, Hobbes was already a good classical scholar when he went to Oxford. He there formed a very low estimate of the merits of that seat of culture, an opinion he never relinquished. When leaving the university he was appointed travelling tutor to the heir of Lord Cavendish, afterwards first Earl of Devonshire. With slight interludes, this connexion with the Cavendish family was retained till his death. This influential connexion enabled Hobbes to pursue his inquiries in comfort and security; provided him with travelling facilities, and served as an introduction to men of letters, science, and public affairs.

During his tours through Italy, Germany, and France, Hobbes mastered both French and Italian. His secretarial labours were light, and on his return to England he studied the world and its waywardness in the writings of eminent authors, and through personal intercourse with leading men. The first product of his pen was an English version of the Greek historian, Thucydides, which appeared in 1628. At this time he was on terms of intimacy with Bacon, Lord Herbert of Chesham, the earliest apostle of English Deism, Ben Jonson, and other famous men. Apart from the testimony of Aubrey the antiquary, little is known of Hobbes' relations with Francis Bacon. He visited Bacon at Gorhambury, where he occasionally acted as the inductive philosopher's amanuensis. Hobbes shared his host's disdain for futile scholasticism, but he attached small importance to the Baconian experimental method, and the scheme of philosophy he later created differed substantially from that of Bacon. The two thinkers were in harmony, however, regarding mechanism, but Hobbes appears to have adopted his mechanical theory of Nature from Galileo himself.

In 1629, Hobbes made his second continental

journey, when his interest was aroused in the problems of geometry, a science previously unknown to him. His speculative opinions now assumed a coherent shape, and a manuscript, conjecturally dated 1630, shows that Hobbes had already embraced the concept of motion as the fundamental explanation of phenomenal existence.

Hobbes' third continental tour extended from 1634 to 1637. Mersenne then presided in Paris over a choice circle, which included both Gassendi and Descartes, and with Mersenne Hobbes became intimate. Galileo's renown had reached England, and in 1633 Hobbes had vainly attempted to purchase the Italian physicist's *Discourse* in the London bookshops. Now he was able to meet Galileo in person at Florence.

In the first instance, Hobbes had applied the principle of mechanics to the physical world, but he now extended it to mankind and the social structure. On his reappearance in his native land he prepared a sketch of this theory which he termed "Elements of Law, natural and politic." In the introduction to his *Thucydides*, he had clearly displayed his interest in political science, and had shown a distinct preference for the kingship. This treatise was repugnant to the Parliamentarians, and had not Charles I. dissolved the Houses, Hobbes feared that "it had brought him into danger of his life." Even so, when in 1640 the Long Parliament became inquisitive, Hobbes departed and remained in exile for more than ten years.

This period of banishment proved fruitful. The exile was constantly in communion with Mersenne, and the galaxy of scientists grouped round him. Many other royalists fled to France, and one of these, Newcastle, recommended Hobbes as mathematical master to Charles, Prince of Wales. But Hobbes' position was soon made precarious by the prejudice and suspicion of the clericals who shrouded the exiled court. These secured his dismissal, but the good opinion of the young Prince proved important to Hobbes, when after the Stuart Restoration he reigned as Charles II.

In Paris Hobbes framed the groundwork of his projected system of philosophy. Three treatises were to be written dealing in succession with Matter, Human Nature, and Society. But the turbulence of the times induced the philosopher to deal with the last subject first, and his work *De Cive* appeared in Paris in 1642. This edition seems to have been limited, but a later and enlarged edition was published by the Elzevir Press in Holland, 1647. In 1651 the book was published in London, at a time when the Government seemed firmly established. This is also the memorable year when Hobbes' *magnum opus* the *Leviathan* was issued to the world. It was published in London as the author had so antagonized the clergy in France that he dreaded their resentment.

In *De Cive* and in *Leviathan* political problems are elaborately treated. Moreover, the conflict between the secular and sacerdotal interests is very skilfully portrayed. In a previous work Hobbes had asserted that the contention "between the spiritual and civil power has of late, more than any other thing in the world, been the cause of civil wars in all places in Christendom." Therefore, religion must be made subordinate to the State if spiritual unity is to be preserved. These plain statements were very unpalatable to the various sectaries. So in a dedication to Charles II., he pleaded that he had done no wrong in asserting the supremacy of the secular power in matters theological. This claim he trusts "your majesty will think is neither Atheism nor heresy."

For several years Hobbes waged war with his detractors, yet remained unmolested. The Merry Mon-

arch delighted in the ancient sage's wit and wisdom. But the clergy had never forgotten or forgiven Hobbes' unconcealed scorn for their creed and calling. Yet their rage proved impotent so long as he enjoyed the favour of the king. As Prof. Croom Robertson remarks: "Charles from of old had a relish for the old man's lively wit, and did not like him the less because his presence at court scandalized the bishops or the prim virtue of Chancellor Hyde. He even went the length of bestowing on Hobbes (but not always paying) a yearly pension of £100, and had his portrait hung up in the royal closet."

Nevertheless, malicious tongues insinuated that the lax teachings of Hobbes were largely responsible for the sexual licence which disgraced the court. And when the miseries and horrors of the Plague were succeeded by the devastation and terror of the Great Fire of London men attributed these calamities to the avenging hand of God. Accusing fingers were pointed towards the apostle of determinism and realism, and Hobbes appeared in danger of arrest and execution.

In October, 1666, a bill directed against Atheism and profaneness was before the House of Commons, and it was ordered that the Committee appointed to consider the measure "should be empowered to receive information touching such books as lead to Atheism, blasphemy and profaneness, or against the essence and attributes of God, and in particular the book published by one White (a Freethinking Roman Catholic and acquaintance of Hobbes) and the book of Mr. Hobbes called *Leviathan*, and to report the matter with their opinion to the House." This Bill was carried in the Lower Chamber in 1667, but the more enlightened Lords rejected it. Naturally, Hobbes was alarmed, and it is said that he now attended Church with greater regularity, and partook of the Sacrament. Meanwhile, he carefully studied the statutes relating to heresy, and composed a brief treatise on the subject in which he proved that no existing court held jurisdiction in the matter. But he was refused the right to publish anything further on the thorny theme of theology. Yet, his pen continued active, and among other writings he translated Homer, while his *Decameron Physiologicum* appeared in the philosopher's ninetieth year.

Hobbes was a master of splendid prose, and his style influenced Huxley's. His masterpiece, the *Leviathan*, is a work in which, to quote Prof. Sorley, "his whole view of life and the social order is comprehended." There the pregnant thought occurs that man's mind is the product of impressions derived from the material world. "Thought is indispensable to social security, and by "the most noble and profitable invention of speech, names have been given to thoughts, whereby society and science have been made possible, and also absurdity; for words are wise men's counters, they do but reckon by them; but they are the money of fools."

The sovereign, whatever mode of government he represents, must be supreme. In the *Kingdom of Darkness* the pretensions of the priest are a constant source of mischief. Presbyterian and Papist alike in striving for secular dominion have forsaken their sacred calling. The Roman Church stagnates on the ruins of ancient Rome. It is a ghost "sitting crowned upon the grave thereof."

T. F. PALMER.

It is not enough that we are truthful; we must cherish and carry out high purposes to be truthful about.

Thoreau.

Every great advance in natural knowledge has involved the absolute rejection of authority.—Huxley.

Seven Ten-Year Steps.

BUNCHED-UP in a crowd of small boys and girls, I sat one December evening in 1861, in an infants' school-room attached to a church in the Islington wilderness of dull brick houses. I can see the funeral coaches now; the plumed horses; the soldiers with bent heads; the royal coffin; and to-day I can recall no other item of that magic-lantern show, offered to us Christian mites as part of a Christmas school-treat. It was a representation of the funeral of Prince Albert, who had died, and been buried at Windsor, a fortnight before. This gloomy entertainment symbolized the church spirit in that age of hell-fire doctrine, sloppy revivals, and dreadful hymns ("There is a fountain filled with blood," etc.), and of the dismal evangelical voices of Lord Shaftesbury, and Charles Spurgeon, and of John Cumming, who groaned about "The Great Tribulation, or the Things Coming on the Earth" (though these Apocalyptic things never came).

Ten years passed. In 1871, amid the beech-trees, white chalk hills, and green pastures of Chenies Village, Bucks, I studied Latin, Greek, and French; and, at school, I taught all sorts of wisdom to little boys, whose corduroy breeches (often cut out of father's old ones) displayed a rustic simplicity. Outwardly, I went to and fro in genteel quietness. Inwardly I suffered quakes. I had been evangelically converted. I fought with devils, and wept over the Bible; and, when exhausted, I leaned on the blood-stained bosom of Jesus; and at midnight, when owls hooted, I many a time rose up to pray. If, at that period (it lasted about seven years), I could have met Calvin, Bunyan, and Wesley, we should have grimly understood one another, and the drip of blood from the Cross would have beat time to our gloomy hymns.

Ten years passed. On an August day, in 1881, I stood amid a crowd outside the railings of Westminster Palace courtyard. We heard that Bradlaugh had been hustled out of the House of Commons. We saw him at the entrance of the great Hall, arguing with the police. We saw him, with torn coat, drive away in a cab to the Police Court, in order to take out a summons for assault. With that tall, soldierly infidel I now had eager sympathy. I had abandoned the Apostles' Creed. I prayed never. I had listened to Bradlaugh, Foote, Moncre Conway, and Frederic Harrison. I had shifted heart and mind out of the blood-stained cell of Evangelicalism into the breezy field of Rationalism and Humanism. Bunyan's Pilgrim escaped, with joy, from the City of Destruction; and I escaped, with joy, from the City of Theology.

Ten years passed. In November, 1891, I was writing, in G. W. Foote's *Freethinker*, an account of my three years of (shall I say ?) penal servitude at Northey Street Board-school, Limehouse. A very devout Christian, the Rev. J. R. Diggle, had accused me of writing Freethought paragraphs in the *Agnostic Journal* (1887), and then, in a most brotherly spirit, he had secured for me, from the London School Board, permission to go out of the class-room every morning, while the head-master, W. Flack, taught the Bible in my place. I grew weary of the daily prison-drill, and had asked the Board to let me give ethical lessons, on an Agnostic basis, from the Bible stories; and the Board said No. And the prison-drill continued daily till March, 1896; and I escaped, with a new joy, from another captivity.

Ten years passed. In 1901, at Leicester, I was addressing my fellow-members of the School Board, and telling them how I had visited twenty-nine of their schools in the city, and had heard twenty-nine "religious instruction" lessons; and I am sure not one of my colleagues, even the most beautifully pious, could have said as much for himself. I suggested that these lessons did not convey enough of the social message for the making of good citizens, and I proposed a weekly moral and civic lesson in the secular time-table of each of the twenty-nine schools. The Board agreed; and such lessons were given for several years; and, though I believe that these lessons, in a formal sense, have been discontinued, the experiment had its significance, and may still carry a hint to us of to-day.

Ten years passed. The summer of 1911 saw me in the

United States, roving from Philadelphia to Chicago and roundabout, and giving story-talks, purely Humanist, to groups of girls and boys, in the presence of audiences of adults. Here I may curtly add that I re-visited the States in 1913-14, and spoke, in like manner, in my fortieth city. In the interval (1913), I had gone to India, and talked, in the same simple and non-theological mode, to gatherings of turbaned Hindu lads, with solemn teachers and professors grouped critically on the benches behind. Neither with them, nor the negro classes of Kentucky or Maryland, had I any difficulty. In those days, I breathed an air a thousand times more health-giving than in the blood-stained cell of the Cross. And I want others to step into that new atmosphere.

Ten years passed. A September day of 1921 beheld me in a chamber of the Jean Jacques Rousseau Institute in Geneva, arranging, with Swiss and other friends, for a renewal of our International Congress of Moral Education (interrupted sadly by the World War). All went well. Delegates from many nations, including Japan, China and India, assembled in Geneva, in 1922, and it was then that we opened a movement, which yet goes on with vigour, for an improved method, free from the ancient national bias and jealousy, of history-teaching. I recall, with singular pleasure, how we held one of our Congress Sessions, in the Glass Hall of the Secretariat of the League of Nations. On that occasion, I expressed, in a few tentative words, an ideal which I have, in many ways, since given utterance to, namely, that the Universal History of Civilization, including its best biographies, should furnish the future Bible for the schools of all the world.

Ten years passed. And, forty years after my first meeting with my friend Foote, I salute the readers of the *Freethinker*. I glance back over the long avenue of seventy years, and am glad to think that infants are not likely nowadays to be entertained at Christmas Treats with black palls and plumes and coffins. Other things of gloom and mind-slavery are melting away. Let comrade Whittier speak:—

Though the harsh noises of our day,
A low, sweet prelude finds its way;
Through clouds of doubt and creeds of fear
A light is breaking, calm and clear.

F. J. GOULD.

Your Gramophone.

THE B.B.C. has impudently laid it down that no one can listen-in to a British station broadcasting while the churches are holding their performances, and even when the church services are over, listeners are not allowed to hear anything but religion until nearly nine o'clock.

Listeners who are unable to get foreign stations, and who are incensed at the B.B.C. time tables, can find relief in the gramophone, for no one can forbid a music-lover finding solace in the music of the record.

That is, of course, so long as one is not a nuisance to the neighbours. In the modern post-war house, it is impossible to use one's gramophone so that neighbours cannot hear it, but a great deal of the art of getting the best out of a gramophone consists in using the right kind of needles.

The very loud tone needle will not suit all records just as the soft needle used indiscriminately will spoil many fine recordings.

As a general rule in the ordinary houses, such records as band music are too loud with a loud needle, while the beauty of violin music may be lost with a soft needle.

Commonsense, however, will suggest the best kind of needle for each record.

SOME GOOD RECORDS.

The title "The Giggling Curate," Decca No. F. 1528 may strike Freethinkers as not being likely to interest them, but it is worth hearing, for Arty Chuckles, who sings the song, gets in some sly digs at curates and their accents.

Decca F. 2182 is one of the new ones, and as it is called "A Burlesque Election," Freethinkers will find

it shows up admirably the manner in which our rulers and law givers (save the mark) are elected. The speeches and the heckling are not very witty or original, but they are typical of ordinary elections.

I doubt if there is a more lively record than Decca F. 2172. It is Billy Hill and his Boys playing the Farmyard Symphony and the Village Jazz band; the children will enjoy the appropriate farmyard and other noises.

Of a different kind is Sterno 629 The Pagan Three playing Julien and Aloma on Hawaiian guitars.

This record is one of the most pleasing renderings of these alluring instruments which I have heard for some time.

Sterno 623 should be in every Freethinkers record library, for it is a striking commentary on our standard of intelligence. It is called the Ragpickers Party, and the Ragpickers sing selections of ragtime melodies, including such highly intelligent songs as "When the mid-night Choo choo leaves for Alabam," "Hitchy Koo," and Alexander's Ragtime Band," which some years ago vied with hymn tunes in suburban parlours.

Those gramophone lovers who believe in getting as representative a collection of tunes as possible will want to add Sterno 477 to their shelves. This is a xylophone rendering of Here Comes Emily Brown and Handsome Gigolo. Those who like xylophones will play this record over and over again for pleasure, and those who do not will like to hear it and play it if only for the experience.

New H.M.V. records are always interesting, and a good variety has just been issued.

First and foremost is Vladimir Horowitz playing as a pianoforte solo the famous "Paganini Etude in E Flat Major." This is on D A 1160, price 6s. It is just a hundred years since Paganini appeared in England, and it is typical of the English that before he came the newspapers were filled with derisive remarks about him, and when he came they fell over each other to praise him.

Those of us who love real music can make amends by enjoying again and again this tune which bears his name, and we can understand that Listz went through a kind of frenzy when he first heard Paganini. On the other side is the Doll Serenade from Debussy's "Corner Suite."

We may doubt the truth in the song "Ninety-nine out of a hundred want to be kissed," but we can enjoy the breezy rhythm of this and of "Betty Co-ed," the college girl loved by every college boy, as played by Jack Hylton and his orchestra on B 5987.

Many of us, however, will prefer the singing of John Goss and the Male Voice Quartet on B 3752. The songs are "Ten Thousand Miles Away," which reminds us of the time when Christian England transported women criminals to Australia, and "Agin-court," and "Here's a Health unto his Majesty." excellent songs even though Freethinkers may not approve of the sentiments.

As one who has no admiration for Sir Harry Lauder, I was interested in C 2104, a 12-inch record of "vocal gems," as they are called. The best I can say of this record, which faithfully reproduces Lauder's mannerisms, is that I would rather listen to the record than go to a music hall to watch the man himself.

Rather better as a humorist is John Henry (and "Blossom") in the version of "The Pied Piper of Hamelin." The humour is not very pronounced, but the lovely voice of the speaker makes a pleasant interlude in a musical programme, which the gramophone fan sometimes arranges for the benefit of his friends.

One other record B 3775 must be mentioned. This is called a "Puzzle Record," and each side contains three tunes. Indeed, I would challenge anyone not in the know to name the three tunes without running a side at least three times. It would not be fair to give any hints, but I should suggest that you allow a friend to put this record on again until the secret is discovered.

RAY.

Be calm in arguing; for fierceness makes Error a fault, and truth discourtesy.

George Herbert.

Correspondence.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE "FREETHINKER."

SUNDAY.

SIR,—May I, as "this same Mr. Whitlow," reply to certain comments in your issue of April 12.

First of all, it is a fact that a reasoned statement (not a hasty letter) against Sunday opening, is practically certain to be excluded from the majority of Daily Papers, though columns will be filled by contributions on the other side.

Of course deep conviction, whether in a Freethinker or an extreme Puritan, leads to bigotry, which is generally dogmatic assertion by someone with whom we disagree.

It is unsafe, and generally unjust, to impute insincerity to those with whom we disagree. In the case of the "bigoted Sabbatarians," I would point out that the concern for Sunday-workers is not "cant." The fact that the late Mr. Jas. Stewart appealed to the bigoted Lord's Day Society to help with his Hairdresser's Sunday Closing Bill, is worth your attention. That the retail traders, anxious for the preservation of their Sunday rest, appeal to the same Society, is worthy also of note. The Musicians Union and The Stage Guild find that our "canting concern" is practical help.

The purely religious argument, as I see it, is the argument of the best way of life, not only for myself, but for my fellows. Honestly believing that the commercialization and (you will forgive the word) secularization, of Sunday is bad for the nation I oppose it.

You, honestly and sincerely, disagree with me—I have no right to call you a money-grabbing materialist. Neither have you any right to call me a canting bigot.

MAURICE WHITLOW.

A PLEA FOR THE WIDEST FREETHOUGHT.

SIR,—It is possible that freethought in religion—which stands for nothing more or less than applying the same kind of reason to its premises and evidences as we do to everything else—would make its position more unassailable, and at the same time less controversial if, instead of turning its light mostly on the many variants of Christianity, it took all religion, as Bacon took "all knowledge," for its province. This is the line which the Editor of the *Freethinker* takes in his telling exposition of Atheism in the issue for April 12, and especially in the concluding passage, where he points out that "all savages are religious," and that religion is universal only in the sense that "every tribe of human beings develops some kind of superstition." The argument that this instinct springs from a reality which is above reason, can find no support for the credentials of any one religion, whatever its claims may be for divine revelation. "Countless millions of people to this day have never heard the name of Jesus Christ," writes Mr. W. Henry Braden in a recent *Freethinker*, "and if it was God's supreme effort to reach man, one would have imagined that God, who can do all things, would have selected a more successful method of manifesting himself." And, on the ethical side it is easy to show how often religion has shown itself not only a drag on progress, but definitely on the side of evil. Hinduism to-day, and many phases of Christianity are among numberless proofs, which show that there is nothing meritorious in being religious. Virtue, though in many cases it may be associated with religion, cannot claim that as its origin unless it turns a blind eye on the history of humanity, on the clash of religion, and on the bitter differences inside the same religions which are still on the tapis. On what ground therefore is the Atheist whose vision forces him to regard all types of Deity as man-made to be stigmatized as taking up an immoral position?

Mysticism is the only form of religion which is free from man-made dogma, but it remains an individual experience, it cannot be communicated. It is independent of the theist and the anti-theist, and even of the particular type of religion in which it is found.

E. MAUD SIMON.

BRAIN AND MIND.

SIR,—May I question certain statements of Dr. Arthur Lynch in the first of his two most interesting articles on "Brain and Mind," in the *Freethinker* for April 12. He says: "the pineal gland . . . is neither a gland or a part of the brain tissue. It is part of the degenerated representative of a rudimentary third eye, which still appears in a genus of serpents, the hatteras."

By the latter animal Dr. Lynch means, of course, the *Hatteria* or *Sphenodon punctatus* of the wilder parts of New Zealand, which is a creature, however, that does not belong to the genus of serpents nor is it even, as its superficial appearance leads many to suppose, a lizard. *Hatteria* is the still living representative of a very ancient (pre-Tertiary) sub-order, the Rhynchocephali or snout-headed reptiles; it is, in short a true pro-Saurian.

Again, the pineal gland, or to use its less ambiguous designation the pineal organ, is a complex structure that arises from the posterior of the roof of the hinder end of the fore-brain (*thalamencephalon*). Originally a complex organ, being in part a third or parietal eye, and in part a glandular structure, its present-day function is decidedly glandular. Recent research has proved that this organ secretes definite chemical substances which, circulating in the blood and lymph fluids, exert a powerful influence on the development and growth of the sexual organs and of other organs correlated with sexual maturity.

CHARLES M. BEADNELL.

SIR,—Reading with great interest Col. Lynch's fine essay, "Brain and Mind," I was very disappointed to find him joining in the hunt after poor Büchner.

Considering that the first edition of *Force and Matter* was published as far back as 1855, one would think that a little allowance would have been made for time and enthusiasm, but even so Büchner's words do not justify Col. Lynch's interpretation of them.

Col. Lynch remarks:—

Some philosophers speak as though thought were something physical, and Büchner has especially distinguished himself by asserting that ideas are a kind of excretion of the physical apparatus. This is localization either in *excelsis* or *ad absurdum*.

Büchner's position is best stated in his own words:—

The well known and much attacked expression of Vogt, that "Thought stands in the same relation to the brain, as bile to the liver, or urine to the kidneys": an expression which is, however, qualified by the preceding sentence: to express myself rather coarsely . . . we cannot help considering this comparison very badly chosen. We are not able, after the maturest consideration, to find any analogy between the secretion of bile and urine, and the process by which thought is produced in the brain. Urine and bile are visible, tangible and ponderable substances; they are, moreover, excretions of used up materials: but thought, spirit, soul are not material, not a substance, but the effect of the conjoined action of many qualities. (*Force and Matter*, 3rd English edition, p. 184.)

ROBERT F. TURVEY.

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SUNDAY LECTURE NOTICES, Etc.

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

LONDON.

OUTDOOR.

WEST LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (Hyde Park): 12.0, Mr. B. A. Le Maine; 3.30, Messrs. C. E. Wood and C. Tuson; 6.30, Messrs. A. H. Hyatt, A. D. McLaren and B. A. Le Maine. 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 Shorlocks Road, North End Road, Walham Green): Saturday, 7.30, Messrs. F. Day, A. J. Mathie, E. Bryant.

BETHNAL GREEN BRANCH N.S.S. (Victoria Park, near the Bandstand): Mr. R. H. Rosetti will lecture at 3.15 p.m.

PINSBURY PARK N.S.S.—Mr. A. D. McLaren will lecture at 11.15 a.m.

NORTH LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (Regent's Park, near the Fountain): Mr. G. Whitehead will lecture at 6 p.m.

NORTH LONDON BRANCH N.S.S.—Tuesday, May 5, outside Hampstead Heath Station, L.M.S., South End Road, Mr. L. Ebury, a lecture, 8 p.m.; Thursday May 7, Arlington Road, Mr. L. Ebury, a lecture, 8.0 p.m.

SOUTH LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (Stonhouse Street, Clapham Road): 7.30, Mr. L. Ebury. Monday, May 4, Tuesday, May 5, Wednesday, May 6, at Rushcroft Road, Brixton, at 8.0, Mr. G. Whitehead. Thursday, May 7, Friday, May 8, Liverpool Street, Camberwell Gate, at 8.0, Mr. G. Whitehead. Sunday, May 10, at Stonhouse Street, Clapham, at 7.30, Mrs. E. Grout—"Miracles."

WEST HAM BRANCH N.S.S. (outside Technical College, Romford Road, Stratford, E.): 7.0, Demonstration, speakers—Mrs. H. Rosetti, Messrs. F. C. Warner, F. G. Warner, H. White, H. S. Wishart and R. H. Rosetti.

INDOOR.

HIGHGATE DEBATING SOCIETY (Winchester Hotel, Archway Road, Highgate, N.): Wednesday, May 6, at 7.45, Mr. Beckwith.

SOUTH PLACE ETHICAL SOCIETY (Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, W.C.1): 11.0, John A. Hobson, M.A.—"Gambling with Human Lives."

SOUTH LONDON ETHICAL SOCIETY (Oliver Goldsmith School, Peckham Road): 7.0, Mr. J. Murphy—"The Papacy."

COUNTRY.

OUTDOOR.

GLASGOW BRANCH N.S.S.—Ramble from Saltcoats. Train at 11.10 a.m. 3s. 1d. day return ticket. Meet Boots' Corner, Argyle Street, at 10.30 a.m.

LIVERPOOL (Merseyside) BRANCH N.S.S.—Outdoor meetings will be held as follows: Sundays, Queen's Drive (opposite Baths): Mondays, Beaumont Street; Wednesdays, corner of High Park Street and Park Road; Thursdays, on waste ground adjoining Library, Knotty Ash. All at 7.30. Current *Freethinkers* will be on sale.

NEWCASTLE BRANCH N.S.S. (Bigg Market): 7.30, Mr. J. C. Keast—A Lecture.

NEWCASTLE-ON-TYNE.—Wednesday, May 6, at 8.0, in Bigg Market, Mr. J. T. Brighton—A Lecture.

SUNDERLAND.—Sunday, May 3, at 7.0, near Boilermakers' Hall, Mr. J. T. Brighton—A Lecture.

WEST STANLEY.—Saturday, May 2, at 7.30, Anthony Street, Mr. J. T. Brighton—A Lecture.

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