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

Views and Opinions.

God and Affairs.

If the Ottawa Conference goes the way of most of the Conferences that have been held since the war there will be to many people one adequate reason why. As at other Conferences there have been all the usual accompaniments of hopeful speeches, as there will be at the end the customary ones of the great good accomplished, and the valuable preparations made for another Conference to see whether anything has been done. Delegates have been duly photographed in all sorts of situations—leaving their hotels, playing quoits, entering motor cars and shaking hands with all and sundry. But there has been one serious omission; and we confess that we should have been unaware of this but for the vigilance of a Scotch minister who is ever on the look-out to see that his Lord is not slighted. The *Glasgow Daily Record and Mail* records an astounding revelation by the Rev. A. Macara, of Denny Old Parish Church, who says that having scrutinized the “momentous” messages from the King delivered at Conferences in the past he had found in them the words “Soliciting the guidance of God in your deliberations.” But in the message to the Ottawa Conference God’s name was not to be found! So asks Mr. Macara, “Who framed the message, and why was God’s name not mentioned?” That is the question. Who is responsible? We must not blame the King, for he has no more to do with the message than the machine on which it is written. It can hardly be the Prime Minister, for whenever he flings official secrecy to the winds and gives the quite startling information that “The wor-r-ld is in a bad way,” or “it is imperative that something should be done if anything is to be accomplished,” he never fails to adopt both a religious tone and attitude. Why is “Jimmy” Thomas at the Conference and God without an invitation? And how can we expect that the Conference will result in good when God has not received an

official call for help? When Parliament again meets Sir Thomas Inskip should certainly raise the question.

* * *

What God could have done.

You see God could so easily have lent a hand. I do not mean that he could have made all the politicians at the Conference intellectually honest or supremely intelligent. There are admittedly some things beyond even his power. But, for instance, part of the trouble appears to centre round the question of the world’s supply of wheat. Not that there is not a surplus of wheat; the trouble is, there is too much. And at Ottawa the problem appears to be whether non-Empire wheat can be shut out, and so force the sale of wheat that is Empire grown. Now if God had been invited to the Ottawa Conference he might have done something. Again, for instance. In the *Evening Standard* for July 27, there appears the statement that Russian wheat production has grown from seven hundred and three million bushels in 1929 to one thousand and eighty-four million bushels in 1930. This, explains the *Standard*, is an increase which represents a quantity almost equal to the average output of the whole of Canada.

This, I may interpolate, opens up a very serious question. For Russia has done this without asking God to bless the crops when the seed was planted, or thanking him for the wheat when it was grown. Had, therefore, God been asked, there can be no doubt to the religious mind that he might have done something. He might have helped the British Empire, which more than any other Empire or people in the world exists to carry out his will, by blighting the crop completely in Russia and moderately in other parts of the world outside the Empire. This would have sent up the price of Empire wheat, and good dividends or large profits is, as experience has shown, the true proof that we are working in line with the will of God Almighty. God must be indeed angry when he has thus encouraged Russia at the expense of his own favoured nation—or collection of nations. But God is not mocked! He has not been asked to be with “Jimmy” Thomas in the deliberations of the Conference, and quite naturally he will feel like “Let it go to the Devil!”

* * *

Experience.

On the other hand, it must be admitted that on several important political occasions lately, to which God was officially invited, the consequences were not very encouraging. At the Indian Congress, the outcome was an almost complete fizzle, and the great drawback, officially, was—religion. The religious differences of the Indian population, it was said, prevented cohesion, or the application of uniform self-government. Then there has been the just concluded Disarmament Conference, which was an even more

ghastly failure. Even the *Christian World* is distressed at the result, after "the prayers of devout Christian people were offered on its behalf." Each of the leading powers was content to do away with any armament that it did not seriously want, so long as the other powers would agree to give up what they did want. Our own country was content to give up the use of bombing machines in war, but not for use over our mandated territory. But while our representatives were willing to give up the use of bombing machines they were not agreeable to give up building them. They were to be merely decorative—in times of peace. So the prayers of "devout Christian people" do not appear to have affected the course of events very much. But the prayers of British Christians may be taken to have shown the world that we are still full of lofty Christian ideals.

* * *

Mussolini and God.

Yet in all this there is one gleam of comfort for hard-pressed godites. For from that very pious paper the *Daily Express* one learns that Mussolini has declared himself on the side of some sort of a God—provided, we assume, that this some sort of a God is on the side of Mussolini. Herr Emil Ludwig has been reporting in the press a series of interviews he has had with the Italian dictator. And to him Mussolini has declared:—

During the last few years my faith has grown in me that there may be a Divine force in the universe . . . As a youth I didn't believe in God, I had called upon him in vain. But I do not completely exclude the possibility that once in the course of millions of years a supernatural apparition took place. It may even be that in millions of years a similar apparition will repeat itself.

It is true this is not much, but in times when God is so generally neglected, and is ignored at an Ottawa Conference, it is something to learn that Mussolini has not ruled him out altogether. True also, "Divine force" is nothing very tangible, but it is something to go on with. Putting "Divine" in front of "force" makes a devil of a difference to preachers nowadays. It makes force more than force, and if it is more than force, then it is not force, and if it is not force then it is a person, and if it is a person then it must be God, and if it is God it must be the Christian God, and if it is the Christian God then the whole Christian theory is necessarily true. The chain of reasoning is quite in the line of current Christian philosophising, and it is not for me to disturb the smoothness of its sequential running. And as Mussolini, when a youth, did not believe in God because God paid no attention to Mussolini, we must assume that nowadays God is more respectfully attentive to Mussolini.

* * *

Man and God.

How God came to be so ignored when they were drawing up the King's Address might be excused by his Ministers as a mere oversight. But to the scientific sociologist there would seem to be much more in it than that. Things that are essential are not overlooked so easily. When they really are essential, and that for generation after generation, they simply cannot be left out of sight. They become part of the human habit. And if they are useful then sheer utility keeps them before the general mind. But to be told, as we often are told, that the troubles of the world are with us because man has forgotten God—as though we were dealing with a parcel that one has mislaid in the course of a journey, we begin to wonder whether after all God is worth bothering about. A God worth remembering simply could not be forgotten. A God who can so easily be forgotten

is scarce worth remembering. In any case we may take it that man would not have forgotten God if God had remembered man. And of the two cases it would seem that it is far more important to God, that man should remember him than it is to man that he should remember God. For if man forgets God then God ceases to exist, while man does continue in being whether he remembers God or not. A godless man is a solid fact, but a manless God is a sheer impossibility. There are many things that exist just so long as man believes in them and no longer. Fairies, witches, ghosts, devils, medicine-men and kings, all belong to this class of existence. So far I agree with the Rev. Macara. It is a terrible slight to have omitted God from the Ottawa Conference. It may serve as a precedent to his being omitted from other public functions. A deposed monarch is a sad sight, but a God ignored is much sadder. Even a pat on the back from Mussolini may not compensate him for such neglect.

CHAPMAN COHEN.

Liberty Under the Bigots.

"Truth can never be confirmed enough,
Though Doubt did ever sleep."—*Shakespeare*.
"Every reform was once a private opinion."
Emerson.

"I see but one cross remaining on earth, and it is that
of the unrepentant thief."—*Landor*.

RECENT hasty legislation has had the effect of calling public attention once more to the vexatious question of Sunday observance in this country. The Bill itself is so obviously a stop-gap that the matter is likely to cause endless controversy in the near future. A little clear thinking is required, and history may be of some assistance.

To begin with, our Sunday is not the Jewish Sabbath, and the Jewish Sabbath in its turn was not originally Hebraic, but was borrowed by Israel from the social and religious customs of Babylon and other surrounding peoples. Moreover, the Sabbath was the last day of the week, and Sunday is the first.

In England the practice of the Roman Empire was from the first the rule, and Roman mastery extended over Britain for five centuries. The Anglo-Saxon laws commanded the keeping of Sunday as a holy day, which meant abstinence from work, but not, by any means, giving up games and amusements. From Anglo-Saxon times onwards to the Tudors trade was interdicted, but relaxation was not. It was the advent of the so-called Reformation which took the "sun" out of Sunday and made it the worst day of the week.

The Puritanical fanatics who led the Reformation soon began to disregard the easy-going methods then in vogue in Christendom, and reverted to the bigoted fanaticism of the Jewish Rabbis. To the Puritan the Christian Sunday became a replica of the Hebrew Sabbath. And, curiously, whilst England was never wholly Puritan, the religious reformers were sufficiently organized to lay a very heavy hand on English social life and "make a goblin of the sun."

The tyranny of the Puritan Sunday would be perfectly intolerable were it not for Secularism at both ends of the social scale. A large number of rich and poor alike quietly disregard the Sunday taboo. It is on that day that the rich man gives his choicest parties, and the day when the poor man gets away from his sordid week-day surroundings. In fact, to the majority Sunday is the day of leisure, and that it is not more so is due less to public sentiment than to the existing state of the law, which has, in this case, proved itself "a hass."

It cannot be too often repeated that the precious Sunday Observance Acts by which the English Sunday is governed are mainly the work of Bishops of the Established Church. They consist of two unrepealed Acts of Charles I.; one of Charles II.; one of George III.; two Acts of Queen Victoria, and the latest ridiculous scrap of paper concerning the opening of cinemas. Of the older Acts of Parliament, a few of the provisions are enforced, but the majority are antique and intolerable. For example, you may be put in the stocks for attending a sports meeting outside your own parish on a Sunday.

These Acts are paralysed in places, but they are not by any means dead. In country places shopkeepers have been fined for Sunday opening. It is on record that one newsagent was fined over two hundred times. At one seaside town a prosecution for Sunday opening was commenced against a tobacconist, who had the wit to lay a counter summons against the local Corporation for band performances and pier-opening on that day of taboos.

The Act of George III. makes the house, room, or hall where debates, amusements, or entertainments are carried out "a disorderly house," where payment is made for admission. Everybody knows the wisecracks by which this odious church-going law is evaded. It was a Bishop of the Anglican Church, Porteous, who drafted this tyrannical statute. Someday a real statesman, not a fanatical priest, might well devote his attention to the revision of this mass of misdirected bigotry embodied in the Sunday Observance Acts.

Yet what are we to do? Bullying enactments forcing charitable contributions from cinema proprietors are no remedy, and will only promote just indignation. A restoration of the Jewish Sabbath is neither possible nor really in keeping with the spirit of civilization. The clergy shout for a day of rest. They are the biggest employers of Sunday labour in the country. To place a taboo upon simple social pleasures may be Christian, but it is none the less an act of tyranny and impudence.

No body of priests can put the clock back two thousand years. They cannot prevent Cabinet Ministers golfing on Sunday or abolish week-end dinner parties. Much less can they abolish Sunday motoring. The city clerk and the working man should have the same rights, and should not be barred from cinemas and theatres on the one day of leisure in the working week. Every citizen has a right to his Sunday. Scores of ecclesiastics who denounce Sunday desecration work their chauffeurs hardest on that day of the week.

There are considerations higher than these. The individual Christian may be happy "bounded in a nutshell," but it is absurd to expect a whole nation to be satisfied with his obvious limitations. So far as the priests are concerned, the position is entirely different. They are merely tradesmen bent on crushing all business rivals. "Nothing is here for tears."

MIMNERMUS.

FARRINGTON STREET.

Books in boxes and rows,
 Authors nobody knows;
 Pamphlets and plays,
 Lyrics and Lays,
 Dirt and Divinity,
 In propinquity;
 Sermons as heavy as lead,
 Lectures that never were read,
 Reason and romance and rancour and rhyme—
 All of them going at sixpence a time.

A.C.W.

Youth and Religion.

WE have heard a great deal, since the war, about what the average young man—the man in the street—thinks about religion. For the most part they seem to have ceased to think about it all; and those who do think about it, and give vent to their thoughts, say the most shocking things about it.

In the book *Youth Looks at Religion* (Philip Allan, 5s.) the youth is representative of the Public School, or College class. It occurred to the editor, Mr. Kenneth Ingram, that the views on religion, of seven young writers whose names were known would be interesting, and a guide to what the younger generation were thinking; and he has succeeded in gathering the opinions of the seven writers whose essays constitute this book. Mr. Ingram thinks that besides informing middle-aged and elderly people what youth thinks, it will also act "as an incentive to youth to think out its religious beliefs for itself," and as a corollary, "It must make its mind clearer as to what it is going to scrap and what it means to carry forward into another age." (p. vi.)

This invitation to youth to pick and choose, to keep only the parts of which he approves, and scrap the rest, would have horrified the parents of Victorian times. We were given no liberty of choice. It was "believe or be damned." Any rejection, or falling away from the faith would be met by some such shocked remonstrance as:—

Ralph, thou hast done a fearful deed,
 In falling away from thy Father's creed!

This alone indicates the change that has taken place during the last half-century. Youth, instead of being dragooned and bullied into religion, now sits in the judgment seat and delivers the verdict.

Mr. Christopher Casson, whose essay comes first, is the son of the actor of that name, who, after becoming a midshipman in the Navy, forsook it for his father's profession. He tells us frankly, that the making of any statement about his religious beliefs "is exceedingly difficult" mainly because they are not fixed but in a state of flux. In consequence of which, he says, when "I look back on my effort as it will appear in print, I shall find that I have developed sufficiently to disagree with a great deal of what I have said." (p. 14.) To Mr. Casson, God is "the symbol of the highest state of mind, the greatest consciousness, and the most wonderful sense of humour." To many people, he observes, a sense of humour is not important, but for himself, he says, "I cannot think of God without linking Him to a sense of humour. When one examined the face of a mosquito, for example, one can hardly imagine that God had not an exquisite sense of humour in creating such a design." (p. 17.)

We have read many astonishing things attributed to God, but this, from a professed believer, is the most astounding of them all. In fact, we had to read it over twice, to make sure we were not mistaken; for the Mosquito is one of the most terrible scourges that have afflicted humanity. In the tropics they abound in such numbers, are so voracious for human blood, bite so viciously—raising painful swellings—that it is impossible for Europeans to sleep at night, when they operate, without being enclosed in Mosquito proof nets. These insects also, have been, and are still, the cause of myriads of deaths after untold suffering, through their communicating the germs of Malaria, Dengue Fever, and Yellow Fever, the dreaded "Yellow Jack," one of the most fatal of Tropical fevers. Anyone who could see humour in a Mosquito, would probably see something funny in a Crocodile or a Shark.

Mr. Casson asserts his belief in Christ, in God the Father, and in a God the Holy Ghost, but states that

"Were the Bible and the whole Christian record disproved to-morrow, it would make no difference to me. The ideals would still remain." (p. 23.) The Quaker idea of worship appeals to him the most, where everyone sits quietly until someone is inspired to speak, but, he objects:—

It would be ideal if all the congregation were artists and were capable of being inspired in such a way as to inspire others. But in practice, I imagine, many people who speak on these occasions and who fancy that they are being moved by the Spirit, are really the victims of their own emotions. The Quaker scheme of worship seem to me to provide a terrible opportunity for the bore who likes to hear himself speak, and only talks rubbish. (p. 30.)

Miss Pamela Frankau, the novelist, tells us in her contribution, that she was an enthusiastic believer when she was confirmed, and remained a communicant for some years. Then she began to talk and argue about religion and dropped the habit of prayers and communion, and "From a period of fairly voluble agnosticism, I have since settled into tolerance. I do not 'believe' as Christians believe. Nor am I quite sure that I do not 'believe' something. But I cannot reconcile the ritual of Christianity with logic." She still thinks of it as a wonderful story, but as no more than that. And when "they tell us we shall struggle through a manhole to find Eternity" she observes, "this last is perhaps the hardest to believe, since for millions of years we know that men have died and been forgotten, nor for a second has any knowledge of a life after death broken the profound silence." (p. 44.) In conclusion, Miss Frankau says, "The wise accept their ignorance. I could do that . . . I should push the problem to the back of my head, saying: 'I don't know, and I never shall know, and here's an end of it.' Faith would phrase the decision, 'I don't know, and while I live I shall not know, but I believe.' Therein lies the difference." (p. 49.)

Mr. E. L. B. Hawkin, who is a nephew of the late General Louis Botha, Premier of South Africa, in his contribution, referring to the Wesleyans and Baptists, complains: "One is quite unable to argue with them, and, in the main, they are narrow, bigoted, and filled with a sense of their own uprightness. The Pharisees of old were tolerant in comparison." (p. 64.) He thinks the Christian Science Church, whose religion, "if practised in the correct manner, cures our ills and makes us successful citizens with sound bank-balances," is making the most headway, the younger members being bright and optimistic. But, says Mr. Hawkin, "In spite of this note of optimism, I am forced to the conclusion that organized religion is rapidly losing its hold on the youth of to-day." (p. 69.) And further: "Modern youth does not feel inclined to side with any formalized religion, but prefers to work out its own salvation and paddle its own spiritual canoe." And "The Church will have to do some very hard thinking if it is to win back the hard-boiled modern youth of to-day." He "knows too much."

One of the many reasons, says Mr. Hawkin, "which induced me, personally, to throw over religion was that I was always hearing about the 'Brotherhood of Man.'" And then, "When a war is started the Churches cease talking about brotherhood and begin to preach the doctrine that 'God is on our side.' . . . In war time the Christian God of Love is quickly transformed into the fiery Jewish Jehovah of the Old Testament." (p. 73.)

Miss Susan Lowndes is the only one to uphold the old views, which she gives as follows: "As a Catholic I am intolerant, not because I regard myself as any better than anyone else, but because I believe that the Catholic Church is the sole mouthpiece of God."

(p. 92.) While we admire her frankness, especially in avowing her intolerance, a thing that so many of her co-religionists are so anxious to disavow, yet we hope that her religion will never be able to exercise again the intolerance of which she is evidently proud. Miss Lowndes is a daughter of Mrs. Belloc Lowndes the novelist, and a niece of Mr. Hilaire Belloc.

Mr. Giles Playfair, the son of Sir Nigel Playfair, is another contributor; he sets out to answer three questions, "Do I believe there is a purpose in the Universe?"; "Do I believe in the continued need for an institutional Church?"; "Do I accept the Christian claim?" To the first question, he answers, after a study of Eddington and Jeans, that "Apart from ultimate annihilation there can be no such purpose." Yet, he holds, if we believe in a future life, that does not matter. To which, it might be asked, if the universe is annihilated where is the future life to be spent? In a Vacuum?

As to Christianity, Mr. Playfair, observes: "Christ demanded of His followers that they should live as He lived. And that seems to me to be precisely what Christianity means—to live like Christ lived. And if I am right in thinking so I am not a Christian: and what is more I do not know anyone who is." (p. 102.) Yet he admires Christianity as the greatest power for good the world had yet known. "But with the birth of modern civilization it necessarily lost its force, because the two were incompatible." (p. 107.) The last two essays are on similar lines, and contain nothing fresh. According to these writers, youth thinks very little about religion, and that little is coldly indifferent when not actively hostile.

W. MANN.

Is A Natural Religion Possible?

It is deplorable that some professed Rationalists continue to hold a candle to the enemy by the misuse of the term "religion." There has recently been printed an article by Mr. Henry S. Salt, headed "A Religion for All?" No Rationalist will, of course, misunderstand Mr. Salt's intention. He is an outstanding humanitarian, and his object, one has no doubt, is excellent. But he overlooks the depth and astuteness of the chief representatives of supernaturalism; and we may be sure that they are quick to fasten on to the utterances of any well known Rationalist, in which the term "religion" is employed to show that a universal natural religion for all who have the well-being of mankind at heart is a desirable thing. The average man in the street who is unused to metaphysical subtleties and the sophistications of academic debaters is thereby deceived because in the minds of 999 out of every thousand persons the term religion at once suggests a supernatural being with earthly representatives in the form of clergymen from the Pope downwards.

It is earnestly to be hoped that Rationalists generally will once and for all prove their resolute militancy by throwing overboard this term "religion" and cease from misusing it in the future.

Over fifty years ago Matthew Arnold, in replying to critics quoted from Homer: "Wide is the range of words! Words may make this way or that way!" Probably some such thought is in the minds of Rationalists who want to regard some new unsectarian religion as a potentially beneficent thing. It is the old straining after some ethical code to be drawn up for general observance by those who desire to see humanity emancipated and elevated. But we know from the experience of our greatest leaders what our objective is without requiring to hamper the cause we

have at heart with any table of cast-iron laws. Any such table could in any view be merely temporary and provisional. We know the great principles for which we are fighting, and we know that their demands are far higher than any of those that have hitherto been laid upon the believers in any existing religious communion. The exact thinker knows that the general estimation of religion is that is inevitably associated with the supernatural. Humanism puts forward more comprehensive and more exacting ideals than any body of supernaturalists have ever advanced. "Let the dead past bury its dead."

Only a fool would assert that we should ignore the accumulated wisdom of past thinkers and actors on the stage of the world. We can learn very much from the past. But it is worse than folly to be forever living on the past as well as in it; to be victims of the past; governed by past ideas and conventions and preferring old *dicla* to new ideas. One general proposition we are entitled to make which is justified by history, and that is that the diversities and differences between the nations of the earth are not nearly so great as our forefathers believed; that after all, all peoples are very much alike in essentials, and that diversities arise from natural environment. In his primitive existence, man in every part of the planet was to be found following a common method of inventing gods. Shortly put he deified the human beings whom he loved, respected or feared most after they died—once he realized that their death meant the extinction of their consciousness and powers which they had actively established in their living bodies. Earlier he had worshipped great natural objects—the Sun—the Mountain, the River, the Tree. With every step upward that man takes, the gods recede further into the inane void. They became more and more vague and less and less distinguishable.

This gradual ascent of man has at length produced the liberal or modern pseudo-scientific parson, who is probably more anathema to Rome than the out and out Atheist. And it is this type of parson—clever, genial, brotherly, accommodating, benevolent, well-read and interesting, by whom unhappily several Rationalists are attracted. How such a clerical type has secured for himself so much freedom and indulgence from his own ecclesiastical corporation, people do not stop to enquire. His inconsistency is mistaken by many for courage. When a Bishop of the Church makes a friendly declaration about the advance of science, we may be sure he is putting up a *ballon d'essai* to ascertain what effect it will have on public opinion. If it tends to bring more adherents within his particular "fold" he will go on repeating, elaborating and embellishing his declaration. If it doesn't he won't. He will try something else.

But the simple-minded fundamentalist who wants something to get a grip of is not satisfied with that kind of fellow. Here is nothing clear, definite and easy to grasp. Sometimes he scents intellectual dishonesty in all this clerical flirting with new scientific knowledge and turns his back on the "moderns" in disgust. That is why Rome, united and indivisible with her immutable creed, is extending her borders and gathering in from other communions many who require some supernatural being to depend on, but who are fed up with trimmers and opportunists. But there are others who have learned the futility and falseness of all supernaturalistic systems, who likewise are fed up with trimmers and opportunists, but who find congenial scope for their reforming energies in the ranks of Freethought. Surely to them after years of experience of supernatural ordinances and their operation the term "religion" is not only an absurdity but an obstacle to emancipation.

Who Wants Juries?

"TRIAL by jury, except in the very limited classes of cases assigned to the Chancery Court, is an essential principle of our law. It has been the bulwark of liberty, the shield of the poor from the oppression of the rich and powerful . . . Many of the liberties of the subject have been originally established and maintained by the verdicts of juries"—so declared Lord Justice Atkin, in the Court of Appeal, on the hearing of the case *Ford v. Blurton*, in 1922.

Why is it, then, that recent years have witnessed a growing tendency to dispense with the services of juries in our legal tribunals? The answer is to be found in the fact that juries vary considerably in their nature and functions; these are not always clearly understood, and the misunderstanding results in the vices and virtues of one type of jury being popularly assigned also to quite another type.

Law courts are concerned either with civil suits or with criminal trials. Juries sit to assist the judge only in the lower courts, *i.e.*, where questions of fact have to be decided as well as questions of law. If juries were called upon by the State to resolve problems of law a valid objection to them would be that in this scientific age we cannot tolerate the decision of technical questions by amateurs; but their services are not so invoked; questions of fact only are left to them—under the guidance and after the summing-up of the judge.

But besides trial juries there are also inquisition juries, *e.g.*, the coroner's jury, the grand jury and the jury of matrons.

"Juror" means a "swearer" (Latin), *i.e.*, a person who takes an oath—to find facts. The institution of the jury goes back to the dawn of the history of the British nation; in essence it represents the small, cohesive village communities where every inhabitant knew everyone in the district, so that each was qualified to form an opinion upon the guilt or otherwise of a person submitted for trial. Indeed, whatever the issue put to the jury, it was anciently entitled and bound to use its own knowledge of local facts as well as to weigh the testimony adduced before it. Even to this day this feature of jury service survives both in the coroner's jury oath and in that administered to members of the grand jury. Both these species of juries, it is to be noted, discharge functions which normally are followed by further proceedings before another tribunal. They conduct merely a preliminary inquiry; the coroner's jury decides whether there is a case of homicide which ought to be fully investigated, whilst the grand jury—comprised of local notables—determines whether the Crown has made out a "true bill" against a person accused so as to justify his being put upon a full trial by judge and jury.

Because of their subsidiary nature both these juries have been subjected to considerable attack in recent times. The grand jury, it has been suggested (even by the Bench) can well be dispensed with for reasons of public economy; in so far as it constitutes a quaint survival it has become an expensive luxury; on the other hand, it is to be borne in mind that the grand jury has always enjoyed the privilege of raising questions of public importance, over and above the specific cases of crime submitted for its consideration; this privilege has proved, in times of constitutional crisis, of considerable value to those who have sought to raise a popular voice of protest against the arbitrary trend of government. No British subject will lightly abandon any institution which may subserve the cause of individual liberty or popular rights.

The coroner's jury, ancient as it is, stands in another light. Its services for the most part can be rendered more speedily and efficiently by the coroner sitting alone and using his own (or another's) expert medical knowledge. The *Coroner's Amendment Act*, 1926, in fact, has given the coroner wide powers to dispense with the summoning of a jury in cases which raise no grave or public issues (see Section 13).

Modern experience points to this factor of public issues as being the vital consideration in all questions appertaining to the function of the jury. Whatever the particular questions which a particular jury is called upon to answer it may justifiably be said that if no public interest is involved the jury's service is, if not wholly superfluous, one which could be performed more efficiently and economically by other means. This assessment of the value of our jury system is applicable whether the cause be criminal or civil. In criminal causes, however, if the offence is such that conviction may involve the accused in loss of life or liberty, then it cannot be gainsaid that the public interest is at once involved. In civil suits, on the other hand, the gravity of a cause is no criterion; an action for breach of contract brought by one merchant against another may involve thousands or even millions of pounds, and yet neither its facts nor the law applicable to them be of the slightest interest to anybody save the parties directly and immediately concerned in its trial.

Hence in civil suits juries tend to be dispensed with. Indeed, the graver the issues to the parties the greater is the desire to dispense with a jury. For civil suits are grave in proportion to the sums involved or the complexity of technical problems raised by them; a jury picked haphazard from a roll of citizens is unlikely to be the best tribunal for the solution of intricate industrial, commercial or financial transactions. One obvious cause for the increasing popularity of commercial arbitrations in the last half-century or more has been the opportunity they afford, not always available in the law courts, of submitting technical trade disputes to technical experts.

The New Procedure Rules devised in April, 1932, for the speedy trial of certain categories of commercial suits launched in the King's Bench Division of the High Court give an official blessing to trials without jury wherever such may seem expedient. Similarly, the Commercial List approved, towards the end of the nineteenth century, modern methods for modern trials.

The categories of civil suits exempted from the scope of the New Procedure Rules, however, indicate that there are classes of civil suits which approximate in nature, origin and potential consequences to criminal suits; *e.g.*, libel, seduction, malicious prosecution and false imprisonment; for these juries may well perform services quite as valuable as those they discharge in criminal courts.

"Trial by peers" which *Magna Charta* declared to be a right wrested from the sovereign, finds its expression in trial by jury. A citizen has, under the jury system, the right to "put himself upon his country," *i.e.*, to call upon a representative selection of his peers (meaning "equals") to witness his trial and to act as a buffer between himself and the forces of government in the person of the Crown prosecutor. To deprive him of such a right would, clearly, be a retrograde step mistakenly taken in the sacred name of progress.

Nor was it in the interest of the accused alone that the jury system was fashioned and maintained for so many centuries. The jury, a body of ordinary men and women, brings to the administration of the law a

knowledge of ordinary conditions not always in the possession of the learned judge. The jury is a concrete expression of public opinion; as such it adds to the dry bones of the judge's technical knowledge of the rules of law, the flesh and blood of human intercourse. The jury is potent to restrain tyranny and to expedite reform, by forcibly bringing to the notice of the judiciary the trend of public opinion. Thus, when a thief might be sentenced under our law to death for stealing a sheep or forty shillings juries constantly indulged in the pious perjury of finding as a fact that the sheep in the case was not a sheep at all, or that the forty shillings in question really amounted only to thirty-nine shillings and elevenpence—thus rescuing from the shadow of the gallows the wretched miscreant before them, and at the same time bringing public ridicule to bear upon so inhumane a law. A law which is thus publicly derided cannot long survive. Law, as Professor Dicey has shown, tends to lag behind public opinion; the jury can force the pace of legal reform.

Furthermore, the administration of justice, both as between citizen and citizen and as between government and subject, is the most important of all public services. By it and through it alone can human activities proceed; without justice, freely and regularly available, progress is a mirage and freedom an empty cry. It is altogether fitting, therefore, that the citizen should have not merely the right but also the duty to give his share of time and effort to jury service. Much unpopularity has attached to the principle of jury service because in actual practice those summoned to sit on a jury are impressed with the "waste" of time in which they personally seem to be involved. To deride a principle because its application causes personal inconvenience is clearly improper. Law, order, and freedom—these are boons which cannot be enjoyed for ever simply because they have once been triumphantly vindicated. They are not merely acquired but also retained only at the cost of eternal vigilance.

Jury service is to the judicature what the ballot-box is to the legislature. Our judicial and electoral systems are neither of them perfect in detail and in practice. In principle they are sound; rightly used they can be turned to engines of progressive freedom of thought and action. Let us by all means bathe the baby, but let us beware of pouring out the baby with the water.

LINCOLN GRAY.

WAR.

The panegyrist of war places himself on the lowest level on which a moralist or a patriot can stand and shows as great a want of refined feeling as of reason. For the glories of war are all blood-stained, delirious, and infected with crime; the combative instinct is a savage prompting by which one man's good is another man's evil. The existence of such a contradiction in the moral world is of nature whence flows every other wrong. He is a willing accomplice of that perversity in things who delight in another's discomforture or in his own, and craves the blind tension of plunging into danger without reason, or the idiots pleasure in facing a pure chance. To find joy in another's trouble, is, as man is constituted, not unnatural, though it is wicked; and to find joy in one's own trouble, though it be madness, is not yet impossible for man. These are the chaotic depths of that dreaming nature out of which humanity has had to grow.

George Santayana in "Little Essays."

Acid Drops.

The *Radio Times* in a recent issue says that the more controversial are the letters it receives the better it likes them. This may be so, but as a man once said to Burnand when the latter said he received at the offices of *Punch* many amusing stories, "Why the devil don't you publish some of them?" The *Radio Times* explains that it has never been its intention to keep out letters "for fear of hurting people's feelings." Excellent, but may we ask why it has never, while continually publishing articles in support of religion, published any against religion? Frankly, we place no more reliance upon these professions of impartiality from the *Radio Times* than we do upon the statements of women like Viscountess Snowden or men like Sir John Reith as to the satisfaction given by their religious services. "Lying for the greater glory of God" is a very old religious custom, and it is as vigorous as ever.

The following piece of pious logic from a contemporary will no doubt be regarded as profound wisdom by the godly. "Obedience to the law of God is not a limitation; it is the open way to liberty." The fact of the matter is, however, that obedience to the alleged law of God places man in mental subjection to the self-appointed interpreters of that law—the priests or parsons. There is remarkably little liberty for man in that degraded position. It is this same obedience that has restricted, and still restricts, more than anything else the free spirit of man and his search after knowledge and understanding of his own nature and of the world he lives in. There is an open road to liberty, but the most formidable barriers on it are, and have always been, those erected on the plea of compelling obedience to the (alleged) law of God.

One of the "heads" of English Nonconformity sorrowfully confesses that it is more difficult to preach the Gospel to-day than it ever was. "Our fathers made assumptions, without challenge, many of which we cannot make . . . Many of the old shibboleths fall dead on the twentieth century ear." New knowledge has come, he says, from many quarters, and it is not always easy to put the old faith in a new setting. What he really means is that new knowledge—scientific discovery and modern thought—has grievously upset the old religious notions and assumptions, and that only by clever theological conjuring can they be made to seem to harmonize with modern ideas. Now, if the old assumptions are all wrong or faulty, the modern man may well ask what guarantee there is that the new assumptions are likely to be any more true than the old. If the revelation vouchsafed to "our fathers" was misleading, so may the new and up-to-date revelation be also.

Much has been heard lately about a new kind of religious revival called the Group, generally the Oxford Group Movement. Like most new religious movements it was founded, not at Oxford, which still has a bias for the old ones, but in the United States, Dr. Buchman, its founder, was a Lutheran pastor, and he is so fortunate as to have as his "right-hand assistants" two gentlemen who rejoice in the names of Sherry Day and Sam Shoemaker. The movement is reported to be strong in the Universities, and, if a book just published about it (*For Sinners Only* by A. J. Russell) is reliably informed, it is spreading its net mainly for the upper classes. As some of the leaders of the movement "live by faith and prayer," that is to say like the prophet Elijah, on the gulls, they appear to have hit upon a field for their labours in which there is a minimum of risk of actually depending either on faith or prayer or both. The converts are encouraged to confess their past sins in public to each other, and, as those present at the "testimony" meetings are advised to take notes, the confessions would appear to involve not only much scandal but not a little risk of a more serious kind. We greatly doubt the proverb that "open confession is good for the soul," and it may easily be worse for the pocket. A cynical reviewer ob-

serves that the leaders of the movement "are more familiar with evening dress than the hair shirt." In short, much notice as it has had from the press, there is nothing novel in the doctrine or practice of the movement, it is just another flat trap—with God as the bait.

The Rev. Geo. H. McNeal has been explaining why he is a Methodist. He was born into Methodism, and remained in it because he believed in its spiritual genius and its appeal to the heart and mind. Well, this doesn't seem much worth boasting about. He had certain religious notions impressed upon him as a child, and he never developed sufficient intelligence to question them, nor enough ambition to seek for anything different and better.

The Rev. G. Hickman-Johnson has been offering counsel to some young missionaries. When bad times come, he says (he means, when doubts about the Christian faith arise), "keep the securities of your faith intact by the aid of the Holy Spirit that dwells within us." What he really means is that, when doubts arise, the young missionaries might try auto-suggestion as a means by which the disturbing thoughts may be dispersed. But, of course, the remedy mustn't be put so bluntly as that, but wrapped up in a sugar coating of pious jargon.

Communion plate was recently stolen from a church. We daresay it was insured against burglary risks, and probably the church itself was insured against fire, and a lightning conductor is placed on the roof in order to prevent the Lord's electricity from doing damage. Which reveals how much (or little) faith the ecclesiastical gentry have in God to look after his own property, or to compensate them when the accidents incidental to property-owning occur. Presumably they have arrived at certain sound conclusions concerning how far it is safe to put one's trust in God.

At the "pastoral session" of the Wesleyan Conference, the representatives present were especially asked not to take away the hymn-books; 1,500 books had already been "lost" during the past week. Evidently Wesleyan notions of honesty are very peculiar. We can quite appreciate that a certain parson was right when he said there was a need to "evoke the sense of sin."

The Rev. Arundel Chapman thanks God that he "grew up in an atmosphere in which Methodism was made lovable." Well, it certainly would be right and proper to thank God for a miracle. "Lovable Methodism" undoubtedly comes within that category. On the other hand, perhaps the reverend gent may be merely quite innocently revealing that he thought Methodism lovable because he lacked experience of anything better.

The parson, says a contemporary, used to be a power in the village or parish; to-day he is too often the subject of jibes and music-hall jokes. How are the mighty fallen! The parson's misfortune, however, is the not unusual one of those with great pretensions who get found out. It is the nemesis that overtakes people who think they can fool all the people all the time.

Dr. Moses Gaster, the Chief Rabbi of the Sephardic Communities in England, says that "the Talmud tells us that most Hebrew texts are capable of seventy different interpretations." If such is the fact, then the chances of the English Bible being a true translation of the meaning of the originals are seventy to one. Let Christians not be perturbed at this. For whichever way the originals might be translated, the Bible would still remain as much "Holy Truth" as it now is—that is to say, a collection of ancient fables and myths, and superstitious fancies and conjectures.

Mr. Robert Lynd, in a helpful mood, says: "I believe in censorship because of the fallibility of authors; I disbelieve in it because of the fallibility of censors." For the

truly Christian man, however, there is but one sure way of settling the question. This is by affirming that he believes in censorship because of the infallibility of divine inspiration and pious prejudice in Christian censors.

The following quotation from a contemporary may perhaps help to explain why the Holy Bible is, according to the Bible Society, the world's "best seller." "To many minds fiction is a great relief from the humdrum of a work-a-day world; it is a sort of anæsthetic."

Mr. Clennell Wilkinson, in the *Daily Sketch*, says he "can never understand why so much fuss should be made about bathing-dresses, Sunday cinemas, and other vexatious regulations." He doesn't appear to realize that this is a Christian country, and that therefore it naturally possesses pious persons who endeavour to compel other people to conform to the peculiar notions and prejudices of the godly. Ignoring the beautiful Christian theory that man is a free agent to sin or not to sin, our pious busybodies proceed, in practice, to enact and enforce coercive laws and petty regulations on the assumption that the "free agent" can be made righteous thereby.

A trinity of contributors to the *Christian Union Quarterly* (Baltimore) combine to write a terrible tale of the way in which "the old sanctities are disintegrating and disappearing." Once more we hear that "Secularism is making deep inroads into Christian faith and practise," and that—and this is surely a happy simile—"there is a run on the bank of religion. Many have withdrawn their deposits, and many old stockholders are not free from doubt as to whether the institution is solvent." This doleful diagnosis would, we should have thought, have been followed by some practical suggestions for saving the remainder for such "stockholders" as are left. The three writers, however, have nothing more original to say that there is too much competition in the business. "We must consider the validity of our present divisions," and "hopefully anticipate that denominational groups will increasingly recognize the challenge toward greater unity arising from these grave modern conditions." Sad to say the only thing on which the "denominational groups" seem to agree is that there is a good prospect of the whole lot being "broke" before long. We wish them nothing worse than that their fears are justified; but they are reminiscent of statements that were common a hundred years ago, and, we fear, will be a century hence.

There is a Mr. J. W. Poynter who bids fair to rival the late Mr. Algernon Ashton as a writer of letters to the press. Mr. Ashton's contributions, however, were varied in subject, and often of an informative character, while Mr. Poynter's seem to deal only or mainly with matters relating to Roman Catholicism, to which religion he was attached for some years before returning to his first love, the Anglican Communion, to which he still adheres. From the *Literary Guide* to the *Christian World*, from London suburbs to the shires, this assiduous pen roves with unflagging facility. The burden of his message seems to be that he (Mr. Poynter) is peculiarly qualified to correct the more ignorant misrepresentations of Roman Catholic doctrine and ritual, and to judge as to how much weight may be attached to any criticisms other than his own.

In a recent correspondence (in the *Hampstead and Highgate Express*) Mr. Poynter, being pressed to explain to what extent he accepts the tenets of the Anglican Church which are common to it and to Roman Catholicism, avowed that "no one can do more than believe what seems to him to be true" which can hardly be considered a satisfactory reply to that question. In the *Christian World* he argues that the propagandist efforts of the Roman Catholics in the British Press have been going on for "about the same period as those of the Salvation Army," and suggests "the success of the latter is far greater than that of the former." Whether this is so or not is nothing to do with the point with which the corres-

pondence in our contemporary is concerned, namely there is not enough done to counter Roman Catholic propaganda. "It is a mistake to exaggerate the extent of the success of Roman Catholic propaganda," says Mr. Poynter, and goes on to charge Protestants with "inexcusable apathy" in that very matter! This is typical of the purposelessness of this gentleman's letters. The poor reader of the *Christian World* may well wonder, as we have often wondered ourselves, whether it would be possible to say anything anywhere about the Church of Rome which would not call forth the scrupulous correction of this amiable and prolific correspondent.

Of remarkable, and, to Christians, disconcerting admissions by pious writers as to the state of religion, its defences and its exponents, examples are provided almost daily. Dr. H. Emerson Fosdick boldly asserts that "one of the profoundest needs of religion is brains," for, "if religious zeal be ignorantly managed, the end is calamity." So far we have advanced from the time when ignorance and zeal were regarded as a holy combination and learning and "brains" as a temptation and an evil. Then we have an "Abbreviated" Old Testament, "arranged for use in Home, School and Church," by Francis Wrigley, with a preface by no less a light than Dr. Horton, in which, by way of defending his editorial methods, Mr. Wrigley says:—

What real purpose is served by publishing minute details of the tabernacle in Exodus, the obsolete ritual legislation in Leviticus, the awful stories of tribal wars and frontier wars and murders that occupy so large a place in Judges, Samuel and Kings, the endless genealogical lists in Chronicles, the imprecatory passages in the Psalms, the pessimistic and agnostic utterances of Ecclesiastes and the somewhat voluptuous love poetry of the Song of Solomon?

The conclusion to be drawn is obviously that in proportion as Christians acquire and use "brains" they cease to use, at all events without careful censorship, expurgation or editing, the "evidences" upon which all that they are supposed to stand for used to be buttressed.

Fifty Years Ago.

THE last influence concerning religion is the existence of a class interested in its maintenance and propagation. In the most important Christian body the clergy are divorced from family and social ties, and irrevocably married to the church. In other instances they are alienated from the interests and sympathies of society by a system of sectional and distorted education, as well as by the influence of class feeling and personal interest. It has been said that if a class were interested in proving that two and two count five, it would secure a large number of zealous and satisfied converts. We quite believe it. That two and one make one is a fundamental verity with these solemnly-constituted impostors. This arithmetical feat is even outdone by the mental gymnastics involved in the belief that a little flour-paste, after being mumbled over by a priest, becomes converted into the whole body—bones, flesh, and blood—of a person who died over 1800 years ago. But a little acquaintance with history, however, shows that the influence of the clergy has seriously declined. Men begin to think for themselves. Every item of progress has been won despite the bitter hostility and intolerance of the black regiments. They have fossilized their dogmas until none can preach them save those who are so dull that they cannot master the logical effect of recent criticism, or so dishonest that they find no moral incongruity in the advocacy of opinions they do not hold in the ordinary and conventional sense. But a class which is intellectually dull, or morally blunt, cannot long retain ascendancy over the public mind; and that process of deterioration in the character and influence of the clergy, which during the last three centuries has materially compromised their position, seems likely to result in the total extinction of all respect for the office and services of the class.

The "Freethinker," August 13, 1882.

TO CORRESPONDENTS.

E. HENDERSON.—We are sending paper for six weeks, again many thanks for your keen interest.

"LANCET."—Next week.

R. OCHILVIE.—The preacher who said that Mr. Cohen was a member of the Conservative Party and a "rank Tory," was a healthy but an inartistic liar. Mr. Cohen takes no part in politics, and belongs to no political party. Book is being sent.

H. BLACK.—Thanks for note. Much regret the news.

G. F. GREEN.—Thanks for extract with translation.

A.G.—You overlook the fact that in any case Spiritualism must consist in a belief in the correct interpretation of what is going on before you.

TAB CAN.—Thanks for extremely interesting and timely pamphlet. The mania for making new "crimes," as well as curtailing the legitimate freedom of the individual has been one of the marked features of the past thirty years. And nothing breeds so quickly a contempt for law.

T. WILLIAMS.—The edition of Paine you have is without any commercial value.

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.

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

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

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.

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

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

Sugar Plums.

At the meeting of the British Medical Association Lord Dawson of Penn pointed out that in the cholera epidemic of 1832 over 50,000 deaths occurred in this country. Cholera is now extinct, or next to it, in Britain. But for generations the Churches had prayed for the salvation of the land from this disease. To-day no one prays for protection against it. The disappearance of the scourge and the altered attitude of the public mind in relation to it, is wholly the work of medical and sanitary science. Prayer was futile, and God was helpless. Atheistic science did the trick.

It was worth while pointing out, as did Lord Dawson the fundamental error of thinking that "disturbances of your mind are under your control, and are therefore your fault whereas disturbances of your body are not under your control and are therefore your misfortune." But it is unfortunate that in so doing one is almost compelled to use language that sets up misleading implications. "Your" in either instance sets up the wholly misleading and superstitious notion of a something to which both belong, in the sense of our owning a suit of clothes. Actually there is no "your" body, or "your" mind, there is

only a structure, an organic whole in the qualities classified as mental in one direction and physical in another. But our language is so saturated with supernaturalistic implications, that one can only warn anyone against misleading connotations.

Mr. G. Whitehead reports excellent meetings in Liverpool, with one exception. At the Edge Hill pitch some rowdy advocates of a better England demonstrated the force of their arguments by smashing the N.S.S. platform, to the accompaniment of filthy language. The joy in heaven was brief as following meetings on the pitch were orderly and satisfactory.

The Swansea Branch N.S.S. thanks largely to the new Secretary, gives every promise of a full restoration to activity. Mr. G. Whitehead will be in the district for two weeks, during which there will be plenty of work for any local saints who would care to give a hand. Details of the meetings will be found in the Lecture Notices column, and information concerning the Branch may be obtained from the local Secretary, Mr. B. G. Howells, 1 Baptist Well Place, Swansea.

Dr. Norman E. Himes, who is one of the leading authorities on the history of Birth Control, has compiled an exceedingly useful little book in *A Guide to Birth Control Literature* (Noel Douglas, London, 1931. Cloth, 3s. 6d. net.) It is a selected bibliography of some of the best works on the subject, both in English and foreign languages dealing with the technique of contraception as well as the social aspects of Birth Control. Dr. Himes is careful to explain that his list must necessarily overlook or omit many well known names, but he mentions more than 130 authors and their works. As a good many of these have been published since the war, one can gather the immense interest now taken in the population question—a side of sociology championed by so many great Freethinkers in the past.

From New York comes a bulky volume of nearly 600 pages dealing with *Woman's Coming of Age*. It is published by Messrs. Horace Liveright, Inc., at 3 dollars 75 cents, and is one of the finest symposiums on the Woman question ever compiled. There are twenty-eight essays by many famous writers, who were given an absolute free hand in dealing with their special subjects. The Editors, Samuel D. Schmalhausen and V. F. Calverton, both contribute exceptionally well written and acute essays on "The War of the Sexes," and "Are Women Monogamous?" but it would be difficult to give anything but praise for the others. Among the writers are Havelock Ellis, John M. Robertson, Joseph McCabe, Dora Russell, Rebecca West, Robert Briffault on the English side and Charlotte Perkins Gilman, G. V. Hamilton, Samuel Putnam, Ben B. Lindsey on the American side, and the essays deal with almost every aspect of the subject in the light of the latest biological, historical, physiological and psychological discoveries.

Mr. John M. Robertson, as can be expected, is at his best in "The Possibilities of Women," Dr. Havelock Ellis writes as the leading authority on "Woman's Sexual Nature," Lydia Nadejena gives a fine account of "The Great Transformation in Russia." Dora Russell deals freely and provocatively on "The Poetry and Prose of Pregnancy," Mr. Joseph McCabe gives a graphic account of "How Christianity has treated Women," while our own contributor, Mr. H. Cutner, discusses "Woman's Devotion to Religion"—needless to add, from an entirely Freethought standpoint. These are but few of the subjects dealt with in this very striking symposium, the editors of which should be congratulated on having got together so many views so brilliantly expressed.

Perhaps the one thing which can claim a little success in soothing the grief caused by death is the sweet sadness of human sympathy. Following the death of Mrs. H. Rosetti, my wife and chum, I have received messages of

sympathy, tributes to her work in the Freethought movement, and to her personal character, from many angles, including a number from people of orthodox opinions fully aware of our unbelief. Although those messages are very numerous I would undertake to reply to each individually, but feel the ordeal would be a painful one to me. A silent handshake will convey more than words, and I am asking the Editor's kindness to allow this note to appear as a grateful recognition to all those who sent expressions of condolence with myself and son, and affectionate tributes and admiration for my late partner.

R. H. ROSETTI,
General Secretary.

Adaptation or Design?

VAGUE awareness of discomfort in unfavourable surroundings apparently emerged at an early stage in the evolution of life. Dim consciousness of unease, steadily increasing in intensity as living organisms advanced towards greater structural and functional complexity induced faunal and floral life, as a whole to seek pleasure, and avoid pain. Plants and animals alike, from the simplest to the most complex flourish in a congenial environment, while they languish or perish on unsuitable soil. Pleasurable sensations, accompanied as they are by health and vigour, possess survival value, and those organisms that have most successfully resisted and overcome inimical, and therefore painful factors in their surroundings have become the parents of a more numerous family.

The terms pleasure and pain are employed in their widest sense. Some may prefer the terms *happiness* and *misery*, although they mean much the same. All, however, must admit that man, in company with the lower animals, almost instinctively seeks pleasure and shuns pain. Indeed, the problem of pain and the difficulty of reconciling its constant existence with a compassionate divinity presiding over the world's affairs has confounded all theologians and theistic philosophers right down the centuries.

Everywhere around us we encounter a stupendous sum of unmerited pain and suffering. Plague and famine, floods and droughts, earthquakes and volcanic eruptions were long explained as the deity's punishment for human wickedness or as manifestations of Satan's malice. Then, again, the fallen state of man accounted for much of the world's misery. For when Adam and Eve dwelt in their earthly paradise unalloyed happiness prevailed. But the eating of the forbidden fruit made thorns and thistles grow where they had never grown before, and man was doomed for evermore to toil in the sweat of his brow. Eve was the temptress, and the Hebrew god therefore condemned woman to bear children in pain and suffering. Even as late as the nineteenth century the pangs of parturition were attributed in orthodox circles to the curse laid upon Eve. For, when Simpson employed anaesthetics in cases of child-birth not merely divines, but doctors condemned his conduct. A writer in the *Edinburgh Medical and Surgical Journal* in 1847 darkly referred to "those bold enough to administer the vapour of Ether, even at this critical juncture, forgetting it has been ordered, that 'in sorrow shall she bring forth.'"

Simpson answered the fools according to their folly when he said: "Besides those that urge, on a kind of religious ground, that an artificial or anaesthetic state of unconsciousness, should not be induced merely to save frail humanity from the miseries and tortures of bodily pain, forget that we have the greatest of all examples set before us for following out this very

principle of practice. I allude to that most singular description of the preliminaries and details of the first surgical operation ever performed upon man, which is contained in Genesis xi. 21: "And the Lord God caused a deep sleep to fall upon Adam; and he slept; and he took one of his ribs, and closed up the flesh instead thereof." "

Contagious and infectious diseases are traceable to micro-organisms. These, in terms of the design theory were deliberately devised by the divinity. Again, the immense array of parasitic organisms which scatter misery, demoralization and death must also have been intentioned to function to the detriment of their victims. Moreover, medical science in its endeavour to minimise or banish the baleful activities of disease germs is nullifying the intentions of an alleged designer. Obviously, if the orthodox doctrine be true, every pathologist is opposing the plans of God.

As a matter of fact, pain has operated as a spur to progress from the dawn of life onwards. The present painful state of the world's economic affairs has caused many thousands of people to think seriously for the first time in their lives. Innumerable schemes for improvement are with us, but whether any of them are of any value seems doubtful. Pain in some form or other, appears part of the nature of things. When interpreted in terms of natural causation its unwelcome presence is accounted for. But one cannot reconcile its existence with an all-powerful and beneficent divinity. Still, it is occasionally urged by evolutionary Theists that Nature's trials and tribulations are the only means available to God in promoting the ultimate happiness of the race. This attitude is well expressed in Tennyson's verses:—

"That nothing walks with aimless feet;
That not one life shall be destroy'd,
Or cast as rubbish to the void,
When God has made the pile complete.

"That not a worm is cloven in vain;
That not a moth with vain desire
Is shrivel'd in a fruitless fire
Or but subserves another's gain."

In other words God through evolutionary processes is slowly shaping a perfect world. Yet, while we must admit the tragic truth that progressive evolution is the resultant of ceaseless conflict and suffering, and that the end may justify the means, still what are we to think when we discover that many loathsome and degraded parasitic creatures have descended from a comparatively superior to a pitifully abject state. For, having slowly and painfully ascended in the scale of life as survivors in a protracted struggle, they then gradually became adapted to a condition of abject degeneration. From this fallen state there is no conceivable prospect of recovery. Instead of justifying Providence, the painful rise and pitiful fall of parasitic organisms reveal an utter indifference in Nature towards structural or functional advance.

That a fortunate few derive advantages from their neighbours' sufferings possesses no ethical value. Others' pleasures afford little satisfaction to those who endure pain. Darwin, as one naturally surmises, pondered long and deeply on the problem of pain. Unlike Tennyson, the great naturalist approached the problem with an open mind, and he was unconcerned with what salvage might remain from the shipwreck of theology. When accused of fostering infidelity Darwin was aroused from his customary serenity. In an epistle to the eminent American botanist, Professor Asa Gray, Darwin vindicated the views expressed in his published writings. With characteristic candour and genuine modesty he wrote: "I had no intention to write atheistically. But I own that I cannot see as plainly as others do, and as I should wish to do, evidence of design and beneficence on all sides of us. There seems to me too much misery in the world. I

cannot persuade myself that a beneficent and omnipotent God would have designedly created the ichneumonidæ with the express intention of their feeding within the living bodies of caterpillars, or that a cat should play with mice. Not believing this, I see no necessity in the belief that the eye was expressly designed."

Considerations drawn from the several departments of biological science induce students to believe that the sense of sight possessed by the higher organisms has been gradually evolved from primitive pigment cells just capable of distinguishing between light and darkness. When regarded as the product of innumerable stages of development, the power of vision as manifested in birds and mammals, including man, loses much of its popular majesty. From lowly beginnings vision has been slowly elaborated in the conflict of life. Those creatures endowed with a faint visual sense possessed advantages over those that responded only when physically touched, and thus distinguishing their enemies at a distance—however short—escaped in ever increasing numbers. With increasing range, the sense of sight gave greater survival value to its possessors. Hence, step by step, and stage by stage, the eye has evolved into that complex organ of vision which we find in the eagle, the elephant, and in man.

The eye thus ceases to furnish an argument for design. It is the outcome of long continued adaptation. Yet, this structure is still imperfect from the standpoint of the oculist. That world-famous scientist, Prof. Helmholtz, detected several serious imperfections in the organ when studied as an optical instrument, even in its most developed forms. In all the higher animals, man among them, the eye is subject to various malformations and other morbid states. Nor can it be claimed that these abnormalities are the offspring of an artificial civilization. For in untamed surroundings, both in savage and barbarous life, similar pathological phenomena occur.

T. F. PALMER.

Bronte Sisters—Heretics.

THE theological position of a person of genius is always a matter of great interest, and in the past was, of course, more important to the personality as an index for others to judge by than to-day when the theologian's standpoint is rendered null in result by reason of the non-acceptance of the theological standards by the person under review. In the case of the older novelists of former generation, the logical, but not obvious, standpoint was often that of the heretic, considered by the judgment of their times, and in the case of the Bronte sisters the "inheritance of intolerance" which Mr. Shorter speaks of in his *Charlotte Bronte and her Circle*, combined with, and the fruits of, an ultra-Protestant education, were bound to have secret or open physical and psychological results which modern psychological science would have fully opened to view for us in this case had it been able to apply itself to her person.

It is an elementary point we need to remember in psychology that persons of individual and strong intellect are inclined to jump, as it were, the boundary walls of their particular environment, but laying aside a sufficient amount of bias to compensate for this tendency, and taking up an examination of the relationship the sisters preserved towards the remaining powers of belief, we find that the least reluctant theologian-defender of the sisters' belief will admit that Anne departed from the doctrine of eternal punishment, that foundation point of the bleak northern preaching which surrounded her childhood days. Anne, too, at that, was the one who kept most nearly to the opinions of her father parson. Listen to her courageously breaking through the iron-clad doctrine in her poem, "A Word to the 'Elect.'"

It was Anne, the unobtrusive, calm in mean and looks, who protested with softer voice but never railed. She, perhaps, was the greater heretic, if only her mind had lain itself bare for us. Still waters . . . Schooled to patience, Anne quietly took on her burden, recognizing that her work was not to be that of the front-line rebel but that of teacher.

I thought that with the brave and strong
My portioned task might be,
To toil amid the busy throng
With purpose high.

Thus she sighed and took up her less glaring portioned task. However, Anne's poetry though religious and sad was impressed too deeply with the iron stamp of Calvinism ever to be a loud clarion to revolt, and having been so impressed in the years that modern educationalists now recognize as the most elastic and impressionable period of childhood, she could never free herself from the brand. The fear of ultimate damnation caused her to tremble, but twice her timid voice revolts: first when she apostrophises the smug security of the "elect," as Calvinists, sure of themselves as regards salvation, name themselves. The second occasion is when she penned "The Doubter's Prayer," where she calls on Him to appear in stronger light and drive her cruel doubts away. But all she required in her human dilemma was a "spring of comfort" which, given the conditions that life found her in, was not forthcoming from human fellows.

The quiet Sister Anne, composing poem and romance, was meek in spirit, gracious in act but Emily was the rebel whose courage would not break—the admirable courage of the imprisoned bird fluttering desperately against the uncomprehended strength of the bars of the cage. She was the warrior whose cause was stronger at heart for suffering and fighting. She poured out her songs telling the enemy what she had learned in battle:—

Let me be false in others' eyes,
If faithful in my own.

Like her character Catherine Earnshaw, Emily was part of the moorland. She came to heaven but "Heaven did not seem to be my home, and I broke my heart with weeping to come back to earth, and the angels were so angry that they flung me out into the middle of the heath on the top of Wuthering Heights, where I awoke sobbing for joy."

Emily reaches almost to pantheism in her poems as she in her strength defies narrow Calvinism and the first light of scepticism appears in the lines beginning, "No coward soul is mine." She was the happiest of the sisters.

Riches I hold in light esteem,
And love I laugh to scorn;
And lust of fame was but a dream,
That vanished with the morn.

For her a life after death had no terrors, and although she believed in immortality without explanation why or how, in the end she freed herself in the concept of "when I shall sleep without identity," and "The time when my sunny hair shall with grass roots entwined be."

Take old Joseph from Wuthering Heights and we find Emily's opinion of the pharasaical world, with its sermons and Bible, that surrounded her. This character is a scorching denunciation of the worst of the eighteenth century precept and practice: a scourge for Christians and a delight to unbelievers.

While in Brussels, for all its gaiety, we find the environmental call too strong for Emily, and she was homesick for the lonely moors and the "piteous gravestones" of Haworth; the last bands had been tied too strong by the hands of religious strictness, and she longed for the compensatory peace of the morbid locality that in the end could grant her shelter to hide her resentment at defeat of her life desires and ambition. But it was only the instinct of the fighter who retires to his stronghold when other defences have fallen. Emily waged war to the last against the world and fate:—

No promised heaven, these wild desires
Could all, or half, fulfill;
No threatened hell, with quenchless fires,
Subdue this quenchless will!

It is not perhaps well-known that Emily once expressed approval of a friend's action when that friend had refused to state what her religious opinions were. That

friend was one of the early pioneers of Freethought, unknown, alone, fighting brave-hearted against the heavy hand of orthodoxy of those bleak days. All through Emily's writings, too, the heretic is peeping out, and it seems that she retained what little she finally held of religious belief in spite of, and not because of, religious formulæ.

Possibly Emily under a summer cloud, and a less parson-ridden condition of life might have freed herself from dogma. She could see the sores and callouses gained from the enchaining creeds, but her concept was not yet awakened to the faint clash of battle for mental freedom elsewhere in the world that might have aided her to break her shackles. Hear her cry:—

Vain are the thousand creeds
That move men's hearts . . .

Perhaps here she calls woe on the evenings of disputation among the strict Protestant circle in which she moved. Emily, living in this clerical evangelistic atmosphere was driven to acknowledge to herself its un-Christianlikeness, was revolted and, not yet daring to openly avow her opinions, hid them under the loose term, "Broad Church." In her writings we find her love for earth the greater—earth the mother and grave of man, with no coloured threat of damnation or immortality, but a deep certainty of rest.

L. CORINNA.

(To be concluded.)

Criticism and the Bible.

WAS YAHWE ORIGINALLY A NATIONAL GOD?

WE have already emphasized the tendency of the theological critics of the Bible, to make their criticism vindicate the alleged peculiar character of the Christian religion and thus exempt it from ethnological criticism. The case for the peculiar character of the Christian religion rests almost entirely on establishing as a fact, that the god of the Hebrew religion out of which the Christian religion in large part, and indeed the oldest part, developed, was from the very beginning a monotheistic and national god. We have already criticized the *method* by means of which the "critics" seek to build up their case¹ and have also applied ethnology to a part of the chief handbook of the Christian theology. From what we have so far seen, the evidence which the theological professors require is not there, and that which they tender in evidence is often a travesty of what is there. Now let us directly take up this question of the rôle and range of the Hebrew Yahwe. Was he at the outset a national god, or, like every other grown-up god, had he in the earlier course of his career been a local god?

We have in an earlier article referred to the need for greater caution in dealing with the text of the Old Testament, owing to its crumpled and distorted character. This caution is particularly essential in the enquiry before us.

The Biblical history of the exodus of the Israelites from Egypt and of the forty-years wandering in the desert, is not actual history but a legend, and, apart perhaps from that part of the legend which refers to Joseph, it has less historical value than even the legends about the patriarchs. It would be scarcely possible to pile up greater contradictions than those which are presented in the Biblical amalgam of Elohist

and Yahwist reports concerning the exodus from Egypt. And this applies not only to secondary matters but to the whole framework of the legend.

According to the Yahwist version of the legend, the Israelites dwelt, before the exodus, in the pasture land of Goshen, since they were shepherds,² but according to the Elohist report they were agriculturists and lived beside the Egyptian population in the most fertile part of Egypt, in the land of Rameses.³ Which is the correct version? Neither! Goshen was too small to support a numerous shepherd people, and the Israelites are described as numerous in the account of the exodus. But if, as the Elohist relates, the Israelites were *agriculturists* in Egypt, how could they emigrate from there as *nomads*?

Again, although, as the Elohist reports, the Israelites were settled in the midst of the Egyptian population, they constituted, according to this account, a particular people who were more numerous and more powerful than the Egyptians and were, therefore, considered by the Egyptians as a danger to the kingdom.⁴ Yet, according to the Yahwist narrative which makes the Hebrews live as shepherds apart from the Egyptians, to whom "every shepherd is an abomination," the descendants of Jacob were not feared as if they had been a great people. On the contrary, they had to perform enforced labour for the Egyptians. "And they made their lives bitter with hard bondage, in mortar and in brick, and in all manner of service in the field."⁵ Field-work and town-buildings⁶—what appropriate occupations for shepherds! For the rest, almost every sentence contains either a contradiction or an impossibility.

What have the Egyptian records to say about this episode of the exodus? Nothing! If the departure from Egypt and the disappearance of the army of Egypt in the waters of the Red Sea had been anything more than a fable, such an event, such a tragedy, would have surely found at least some reference in the historical records of Egypt. And the Egyptian history of the fourteenth and thirteenth centuries is relatively rich in detail and well-known. We not only know the more important events of each year but even quite minor incidents. Yet of such important events as the exodus from Egypt and of the drowning of the Pharaoh's army, there is not the smallest word or slightest hint in the records of Egyptian history.

We do not deny that this exodus-legend may have nevertheless, some residuum of historical fact in it. Such legends rarely, if ever, arise without some sort of recollection of a historical occurrence in the background. Perhaps the expulsion of the Hyksos, the Semitic shepherd kings (who had settled in the Nile delta about 2,100 B.C., and had subjugated Lower Egypt), by the princes of Upper Egypt, in the seventeenth century, supplied the impulse for such a piece of legend-making. Again, it is perhaps to be traced back to the fact that for a time Hebrew nomads dwelt in the south-west corner of the Syrian desert, under Egyptian rule. It is possible, further, that there is sticking in the legend of the exodus some Canaanite reminiscences of the time when under Thutmose II. and III., in the fifteenth century B.C., the Egyptians had extended their sway as far as Phœnicia and Mesopotamia, and imposed heavy tribute upon the subjugated Phœnician princes. There is an Egyptian

¹ We have before pointed out the partiality of most of those critics for the Yahwist authority. Naturally! For the Yahwist author had a similar aim to the modern theologians to prove that Yahwe was the original and therefore true god of the Israelite nation.

² Genesis xlv. 33, 34; xlvii. 6.

³ Genesis xlvii. 11.

⁴ Exodus i. 9, 10.

⁵ Genesis xlv. 34.

⁶ They had to build two treasure cities for the Pharaoh.

tribute-list in which one finds mentioned two among the Canaanite districts which had to pay this tribute to Thutmosis III., called Jacob-El and Joseph El; thus a further proof that both names are of Canaanite origin and characterize the ancestor gods or Elohim which were worshipped there, and from whom their posterity took their name.

But in whatever way the exodus-legend may have arisen, for the history of the exodus from Egypt there exists no sort of proof; and even certain theological investigators openly admit this fact.

It fares no better with the story of the forty-years wandering in the desert. That ten or twelve tribes of shepherd people could have wandered around on these desert steppes which lie to the south and west of Palestine, during all those years, is perfectly absurd. Even in the more fertile stretches in the desert of West Arabia, it is exceptional to find a nomad horde numbering a few hundred members. As a rule, a nomad horde in this locality counts only some twenty to thirty tents with from sixty to eighty people. But the children of Israel left Egypt in hundreds of thousands!

And the children of Israel journeyed from Rameses to Succoth, about six hundred thousand on foot that were men, beside children.

And a mixed multitude went up also with them; and flocks, and herds, even very much cattle.⁷

The whole story is quite impossible!

The later Israelites, who still knew the nature of that stretch of desert, were, notwithstanding eastern credulity, quite unable to imagine that an entire people could have once wandered about there and maintained themselves and their live-stock. They must, it was thought, have been fed in some other and superhuman way. And according to the Biblical account, the emigrants, after their departure from Egypt, suffered as early as the third day from a scarcity of water;⁸ and notwithstanding the store of provisions which they had brought with them from Egypt, they saw themselves faced with death from starvation.⁹ Here Yahwe comes to the rescue. "Behold I will rain bread from heaven for you." Every day the bread came down, and on Friday's a double ration, so that his chosen people should not have to violate the Sabbath through collecting the heavenly "manna."¹⁰ At definite times, too, Yahwe issued a supplementary allowance of flesh-fare, by dropping down from heaven swarms of birds—"quails."¹¹ Only in this way, thought the later Israelites, could their forefathers have been able to exist in the barren wilderness.

Now what follows when we decline to accept this heavenly hospitality of Yahwe's as a historical fact?¹² There is no alternative but to conclude that the Hebrew nomads at that time lived, scattered throughout the desert, in small hordes held together by ties of kinship and under the command of horde leaders—just like the nomads of the Syrian desert and of the Iranian and Siberian steppes in more modern times. The Biblical legends of the patriarchs Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, even if in legendary-fashioned form, exhibit clearly the features of this sort of pastoral life.

W. CRAIK.

(To be continued.)

⁷ Exodus xii. 37, 38.

⁸ Exodus xv. 22.

⁹ Exodus xvi. 3.

¹⁰ Exodus xvi. 4, 5.

¹¹ Exodus xvi. 8, 13.

¹² There are many miracle-believing theologians for whom this story makes too strong demands on their faith.

Obituary.

HYPATIA ROSETTI.

I LEARNED, while away from London, of the death of Hypatia Rosetti with a sense of personal loss. My acquaintance with her goes back to her early girlhood, and I can see before me as I write the bonny, vivacious face of the young maiden in her "teens." When young she was a girl to inspire affection, and as she gained maturity there was revealed a strength of character that commanded one's admiration. It is a compliment to her parents—both of whom are alive to mourn her loss—to say that she developed a devotion to principle that was in every way admirable. And where Freethought was concerned her attitude was outspoken and unflinching. In the elementary school she was withdrawn from religious instruction as a matter of course. In the training college and in her work as a teacher in a Council School she was an avowed Atheist, outspoken and unafraid.

All her life she was actively associated with Free-thought activities. Her outspoken attitude made her of necessity a propagandist wherever propaganda was possible. For some time she took an active interest in local politics, but found it too mixed up with religion to suit her taste. She lectured occasionally, and on the few occasions when I heard her make a short speech, she showed a clarity in her ideas and a capacity for phrasing that promised well. She was Secretary of the West Ham Branch for twenty years, and held the office when she died.

Her married life was peculiarly happy, and the blow to her husband and son is a very heavy one. Nothing can make good that loss, but nothing can rob them of the memory of a beautiful companionship that has been.

It must have been a sad group that gathered at the City of London Crematorium, Manor Park, on August 4, where a worthy tribute to her work and gifted personality was made by Mr. A. D. McLaren, and had it been possible I should have been present to have paid a tribute to one whom I had known for so long, and of whom I thought so highly. I can only atone for my absence by this inadequate note concerning my own feelings, and of my sympathy with my fellow mourners. One has to pay a price for living and loving, and that price is very high when it involves a lasting good-bye.

CHAPMAN COHEN.

Correspondence.

"HATE."

TO THE EDITOR OF THE "FREETHINKER."

SIR,—You give a very esoteric meaning to the word "hate." Whom do you hate? By your own definition, I doubt if you can hate anyone.

"Hatred is rather a lofty passion, and should be reserved for lofty things." About as logical as reserving money for the rich! "One does not hate a parasite." I do, anyway. I have no contempt for Christianity, any more than for a tiger. They are both too dangerous. I hate both, but Christianity worst; it is intentionally and deliberately cruel, which a tiger probably is not. You say "hatred can only exist between equals"; but is it not the natural feeling of the weak for the strong tyrant? And Christianity is that.

C. H. HARPUR.

The Church Mouse.

POOR was the little mouse,
 For all Church Mice are poor,
 But in the Steeple House
 He found upon the floor
 A crumb of consecrated bread,
 Which he gobbled down quicker than this can be said.
 Now consecrated bread
 Is no ordinary fare,
 But it goes to the head,
 Soon the mouse was aware
 Of a very peculiar feeling,
 A kind of intoxication that set him reeling.
 For consecrated bread,
 Though of water and flour,
 Has had over it said
 A spell of great power,
 The work of a most potent wizard;
 And soon the Church Mouse felt the spell in his gizzard.
 This most powerful spell
 Was the work of a priest,
 One who knows about Hell,
 Or who says so, at least.
 This knowledge, of course, may be "bunk,"
 But it's true that his spell made the Church Mouse feel
 drunk.
 The priest by his spell
 Makes bread into God
 (The God who made Hell),
 And — Hell! but it's odd
 To think of a god made of bread!
 Why not a pound of the best Danish butter instead?
 But I must be careful
 Of what I next write,
 Or some irate and prayerful
 Christian theophagite
 Will call me a common blasphemer
 And cast doubt on my faith in mankind's Redeemer.
 Now when men are well drunk
 With spirits, wine, or beer,
 No longer in a funk,
 They cast out every fear;
 And so it was with the Church Mouse
 As filled with god-like power he left the Steeple House.
 He said good-bye to that
 Safe hole behind the altar,
 And sought the Vicar's cat
 Intent on Pussy's slaughter;
 The god-like feeling in each vein
 Drove caution right away and made the mouse insane.
 My story soon is told.
 He found the cat all right;
 Though his attack was bold
 The cat put him to flight;
 His god-like strength full soon was sped;
 The cat-like strength was real, and the Church Mouse
 now is dead.
 The moral of this tale
 Is surely very plain,
 Fictitious strength is frail,
 And god-like strength insane;
 The theophagite with his spell
 Is just about as silly as his God of Hell.

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NORTH LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (White Stone Pond, Hampstead): 11.30, Sunday, August 14, Mr. L. Ebury. Monday, August 15, South Hill Park, Hampstead, 8.0, Mr. L. Ebury. Thursday, August 18, Leighton Road, Kentish Town, 8.0, Mr. Tuson.

SOUTH LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (Brockwell Park): 6.30, Sunday, August 14, A Lecture. Wednesday, August 17, Cock Pond, Clapham Old Town, 8.0, Mr. F. P. Corrigan. Friday, August 19, Streatham Common, 8.0, Mr. F. P. Corrigan.

WEST HAM BRANCH N.S.S. (outside Technical College, Romford Road, E.): 7.0, Mr. L. Ebury.

WEST LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (Hyde Park): Wednesday, August 10, at 7.30, Messrs. Tuson and Wood. Thursday, August 11, at 7.30, Mr. E. C. Saphin. Friday, August 12, at 7.30, Messrs. Bryant and Le Maine. Sunday, August 14, at 12.0, Mr. B. A. Le Maine. 3.30, Platform No. 1, Messrs. Bryant and Wood; Platform No. 2, Messrs. B. A. Le Maine and Tuson. 6.30, Platform No. 1, Messrs. Wood, Tuson and Bryant; Platform No. 2, Messrs. Hyatt and Saphin.

WOOLWICH AND DISTRICT BRANCH N.S.S. (Beresford Square): 7.45, Thursday, August 11, Mr. T. P. Corrigan. Friday, August 12, "The Ship," Plumstead Common, 7.45, Messrs. J. Read and S. Burke. Sunday, August 14, Beresford Square, 7.45, Messrs. G. Mead and J. Read. Monday, August 15, Lakedale Road, 7.45, Messrs. J. Read and S. Burke. Wednesday, August 17, "The Ship," Plumstead Common, 7.45, Messrs. J. Read and S. Burke.

COUNTRY.

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BACUP (Union Square), 7.30, Monday, August 15, Mr. J. Clayton.

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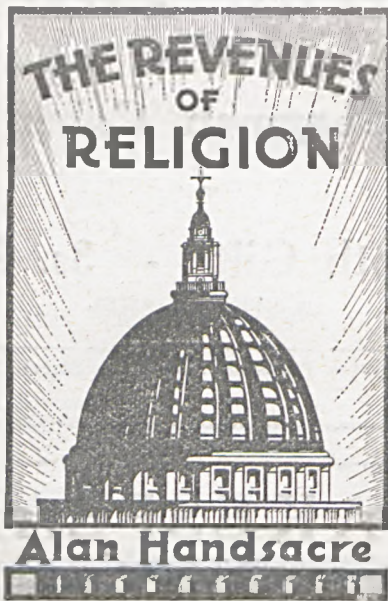
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WITH INTRODUCTORY NOTE

By
CHAPMAN COHEN.

Now that the Roman Catholic question is much discussed this useful and racy pamphlet should be widely read and circulated.

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THE

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A Great Scheme for a Great Purpose

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

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

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