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Views and Opinions

God and the Weather

FOR weeks the country has been suffering from want of water. Crops were being ruined, cattle were losing in value, human beings were exposed to grave dangers from disease. Religiously, the people were very patient. It is true they complained about the inaction of the Government, and about the Prime Minister, who is the President of the Cabinet, but they made no complaints about the "President of the Immortals," who has always been credited with a particularly strong influence where the weather is concerned. It was also hinted that if the problem before the Government had been that of *taking* life, and it had been a question of getting ready to drown an "enemy," the whole man-force and water-force of the country would have been mobilized to that end. As it was a mere question of preserving life, it had to be treated with due caution, and plenty of time taken for deliberation.

But human nature has its limits, and as things got worse there was a general impression that something ought to be done. The Prime Minister became more nebulously dithyrambic than ever, the Home Secretary had the whole matter "under consideration," the Water Board issued notices to "Use less water"—which some wag stuck up in a fire-station, and hints were given that pains and penalties were awaiting those who wasted water. Finally the Bishop of London took a hand and did what he ought to have done earlier. For if there is one clear proof of the value of prayer it is in connexion with rain. God may ignore many prayers, but never in the world's history has a prayer for rain been without an answer. Whenever and wherever men have prayed for rain, sooner or later the rain has come. True, the rain has not always come just where it was wanted most, nor as quickly as one would have wished; but it has come, and, so far, faith has been justified.

So the Bishop of London ordered all the clergy of his diocese to offer up prayers on Sunday, June 17 for

rain. The form for this is provided in the Book of Common Prayer. It is a very cautious, even a very artful prayer. It asks for "such moderate rain and showers that may revive the fruits of the earth for our comfort." And for fear the Lord should lose his head, it reminds him that once when he sent rain he sent enough to "drown all the world except eight persons," and hopes that in answering the prayers he will send only "such weather as will revive the fruits of the earth." That is very diplomatically put. In plain English it is saying, "O Lord, we are greatly in need of rain, but when you answer this prayer don't lose your head and overdo it as you did in the time of Noah. Don't drown us, save us. Be moderate." The Lord was asked, to quote the language of one of the characters in *Alf's Button*, not to be "too blooming wholesale."

* * *

God and the Bishops

In London, Sunday, the 17th, was blazing hot—a shade temperature of eighty degrees. With one eye on the barometer the London clergy asked God to send rain, but cautioned him against overdoing it. Result? In London nothing, and Monday was hotter and drier than ever. But in Yorkshire, where there had also been prayers, immediately after the prayer it rained for twenty minutes. Why this discrimination? Why this niggardly allowance? Has Yorkshire more influence in heaven than has London? Does the Lord imagine that twenty minutes rain will make up for many weeks of dry weather? And as though to make mismanagement more evident, a liner that reached England from America a few days before the Churches called the Lord's attention to the fact that we needed rain, reported that for four days and a half it had sailed through continuous rain. What a muddle! Rain in the Atlantic, where it was not wanted and was a nuisance, none in London, where it was needed, twenty minutes in Yorkshire, a few drops in London on Tuesday, and nothing of consequence afterwards. Just enough to show that the Lord had heard, but was not bothering over much. And yet there are some people who fancy that our troubles may be cured by dictatorship.

Concerning what rain has fallen the remark of the *Observer*—made in all innocence—is to the point. "The mercies of rainfall are only intermittent." A Theistic elaboration of this would read, "God's mercies are intermittent. One cannot count upon him always doing the right thing at the right time. His actions are incalculable and undependable. He may do the right thing to-day and the wrong thing to-morrow. He does what he will and wills when he wont."

But one has to consider the position of the Bishop of London. He has received a snub, publicly administered. What is he going to do about it? A member of the cabinet who had been treated in this fashion

would have felt compelled to resign. In the most public manner the Bishop had told God Almighty that he had been remiss, and asked his brother clergy to help him in publicly reminding God of his neglectful behaviour. And the Lord deliberately sends just a sprinkle that the weather bureau report as "negligible," and the Water Board says has made no difference. Such contemptuous treatment is enough to drive even a Christian bishop to revolt. If I were in his position I would try another plan. Instead of praying until rain comes, I would order the clergy to cease praying altogether and close the churches so soon as the rainfall was below a certain average. Payment by results is not always a bad plan. And with all history before him any one would be alive to the fact that if people cease to pray to God or worship him he will soon cease to exist. Gods depend for their existence upon the adoration of their followers.

Even more drastic methods might be taken. With a logic that comes with complete belief, it is not uncommon for savages to disown gods that fail to do what they are expected to do, and what they are there to do. Not merely savages—of the primitive ages—have this courage. As late as 1893, when the island of Sicily was suffering from drought, prayers to the saints brought no relief. So the natives of Palermo brought the statue of St. Joseph from a Church and placed him in the middle of a parched garden so that he could see for himself what was wanted. They even threatened to chuck him into the sea if he did not do something. At Licata the statue of St. Angelo was brought into a public square, loaded with chains, and was given the alternative of "rain or the rope." But such exhibitions of courage and common sense are rare with modern believers. The rule is to thank God for his help, whether he has helped or not; to have harvest thanksgivings even though the crops are rotting in the fields, and praise God for his fatherly care although one's nearest and dearest may be dying from some god-given pestilence. Christians, like camels, take their burdens kneeling.

* * *

A Futile Effort

From the point of view of a bishop's function and status the position is serious—or it would be if he were dealing with an intelligent body of followers. For rain-making is one of the oldest functions of the medicine-man. Animal life is so dependent on water that even a temporary shortage of food may be better endured. And in cities the importance of water—plenty of it, is still greater. Every tribe of savages has its official rain-maker, and the manner in which the tradition has clung to the priesthood is shown by our retention in the prayer book of an incantation by which is hoped to end a drought. Whether it is done by a dance, or by working magic, or by a "Oh Lord, send us some rain, but don't drown us" formula makes no difference. And the Bishop and his kind may well ask God, "If we cannot depend upon your backing when I ask for rain, on what may I depend for your support?" It is not as though the bishop had made it difficult for God. He had waited for weeks, until everyone felt that the drought must soon break. He had avoided bothering the Lord, more than could be helped. And even then he did not ask for the rain to come by a particular date, or in a particular place. He did not ask God to make a signal illustration of his power by causing the rain to fall on the land of the godly and leave the land of the ungodly parched. He just asked for rain, and left it for God to send it when he would and where he would. The little that has fallen since the prayer was offered will not do. It is more of an aggravation than a satis-

faction. There is not enough to make the godly rejoice, and there is just enough to make the ungodly scoff. I consider the Bishop has cause for grave resentment. Of course there was that nasty bit in which the Lord was reminded that he once lost his temper and drowned the whole world except eight people, but, after all, people when they pray do not bother whether their prayers are logical or not, and God in his great patience might have overlooked that *faux pas*.

* * *

A Serious Situation

It is not the Bishop's status only that is affected by this refusal to give a prompt and spectacular answer to prayer. God's standing is seriously affected thereby. It was, as I have said, a function of the medicine-man to get rain when it was needed. But that was because it was believed he had very intimate relations with the god who controlled the weather. But the gods then controlled everything. They shaped the earth and they gave it its products. They kept the stars in their courses and regulated the movements of the planets. They were responsible for health and disease, for good and bad fortune. "God's will" was then a very real thing, and the functions of the medicine-man were consequently as wide as the earth and as various as human needs.

But times are changed. The activities of the gods have been contracted in an ever-growing measure, and the functions of the medicine-men have diminished to a corresponding extent. The physicist and the chemist, the biologist and the psychologist, the astronomer and the geologist, one after another has left God on one side in a statement of scientific problems, or, at most, gives a passing and semi-respectful acknowledgement of something that the thoughtless mistake for God, and that is as convincing as the "Gawd blimey" of the Whitechapelite. And perforce the clergy have given way on these points. But they have at least stuck to the weather. Whatever else was taken from their God they have stubbornly kept him in the meteorological department. And now events are showing that God has really nothing to do with the weather? Even the B.B.C., with its pious trinity of an engineer, a retired colonel, and a retired seaman, permits meteorological forecasts to be made without any reference to the will or the power of God. And when the Bishop draws the attention of the world to the power of God by asking him to give us rain, but not to drown us, instead of the reply being prompt, precise, and impressive, nothing happens that might not have happened had the Bishop remained dumb.

So I conclude that the Bishop has cause for complaint. He is not where he is because of his own will or his own choice. He is there because God "called" him, because his character and his intelligence was of the kind suitable for an ecclesiastical post. He depended upon God to give him his backing, as an ambassador expects his Government to give him its support. The Bishop and his call to prayer has made it plain that we cannot depend upon God to either prevent a drought or to end one when he is asked to do so. And if we cannot depend upon him to manage so simple a thing as the weather, in the name of all that is sensible, what is there that we may safely place under his control?

CHAPMAN COHEN.

HIGH POLITICS—LOW BUSINESS

It is a poor friendship which is based on the mutual hatred of a third party. In politics, this is known as a treaty covenant or pact: in reality it is not only poor friendship but bad business.

Emerson The Eclectic

"Emerson is the sweetest memory of his land and century."—*G. W. Foote.*

"The books which help you most are those which make you think the most."—*Theodore Parker.*

No less important a critic than Matthew Arnold has told us that Emerson's works are the most valuable prose contribution to English literature of the nineteenth century. If this be true, Emerson's well of inspiration will run for many a day. Of all his contemporaries he is now the strongest, the most influential, the most read. Nietzsche simply repeated in varied language the golden message of Emerson, and sent us all back with renewed interest to the master's writings.

It is natural to feel curious concerning the evolution of a great literary force that is really original. To watch Shelley as he grows from *Queen Mab* to *Prometheus Unbound*, or to trace Shakespeare as he progresses from *Venus and Adonis* to *Hamlet*, forms the best introduction to a re-reading of these authors. Nor is such curiosity wasteful in the case of Emerson.

This great Freethinker first saw the light in a parsonage, and he had clericalism in his blood. His father and grandfather were clergymen. At first he followed in the footsteps of his ancestors, and was ordained as an Unitarian minister. Even in those early days his preaching was ethical rather than devotional. Threshing old straw did not appeal to him. There was chafing under the harness, and the bent is towards Secularism. The prime duty, he thought, was to be truthful and honest, and he revolted at the "official goodness" of the priestly position.

Then his intellect rebelled. There was a question of the rite of the communion, and his mind was brought to a pause. His elder brother, William, was even more rationalistic, and declined to take holy orders. Emerson's ethics took a practical form. He opened his church to anti-slavery agitators, and made the acquaintance of Thomas Carlyle, whom he visited in Scotland. This was the germ of a great friendship, notable in the history of literature.

Emerson's first book was, characteristically, a volume on "Nature," and it revealed the fact that he found the Unitarian fetters none the less real for being simple and few. From the publication of this first book Emerson became a power. Lowell eulogized his "sweet perfections." Since then, time has only more assured Emerson's position among the really great writers. Those who have read his pages with attention know that his real and essential religion was the religion of humanity. He tells us plainly that the day will come when Churches built on supernaturalism will be superseded, and left behind by the conscience of the race:—

There will be a new church founded on moral science, at first cold and naked, a babe in a manger again, the algebra and mathematics of ethical law, the church of men to come.

A Church founded on ethics! Is it not the trumpet of a prophecy? The superstitious may well laugh, but daily they are discarding their dogmas, and heading their churches towards the Emersonian ideal.

What distinguishes Emerson from so many philosophers is that he had a shrewd Yankee head on his shoulders. Long before Ruskin declared, "There is no wealth but life," Emerson said, "The best political economy is care and culture of men." Years before attention was paid to ethics as a serious factor in religion, Emerson wrote: "I look for the new teacher that shall see the identity of the law of gravitation with purity of heart, and shall show that Duty is one thing with science."

This noble American dreamt of vaster accomplishments and greater victories than man has yet witnessed. "We think our civilization near its meridian," he exclaims, "but we are yet only at the cock-crowing and the morning star." It is difficult to formulate the Emersonian philosophy. It is unquestionably individual. "Be yourself" is the keynote, "Nothing is at last sacred but the integrity of your own mind." Emerson's counsel of perfection is like that which Shakespeare puts in the mouth of old Polonius:—

"To thine own self be true,
And it must follow, as the night the day,
Thou canst not then be false to any man."

Despite his Transcendentalism, inherited from his clerical ancestors, Emerson was a Freethinker. Golden thoughts confront us on every page of his writings:—

A world in the hand is worth two in the bush.

Who shall forbid a wise scepticism?

Let us have to deal with real men and women, and not with skipping ghosts.

So far as a man thinks, he is free.

Whoso would be a man must be a nonconformist.

To aim to convert a man by miracles is a profanation of the soul.

Prayer as a means to effect a private end is meanness and theft.

Every revolution was first a thought in one man's mind.

Crime and punishment grow out of one stem.

Nature, as we know her, is no saint.

Mankind divides itself into two classes—benefactors and malefactors.

The high price of courage indicates the general timidity.

In Emerson we have a notable contradiction of the old adage which excepts a prophet from honour in his own country. He became a classic during his lifetime. His detractors are few and feeble. The joke that, when Emerson interviewed the Sphinx, she said to him, "You're another," explains their outlook very well. Emerson absorbed wisdom everywhere, even from the anti-slavery agitators. When Thoreau was in prison for resisting authority, Emerson visited him. "Why are you here, Henry?" he asked, "Why are you *not* here, Ralph?" was the crushing and unexpected reply. It was not wasted on a mind like Emerson's. No writer stimulates thought like Emerson. His maxims are a perpetual antidote to the insidiousness of custom and tradition.

The fragment of granite which marks his grave is a fitting symbol of his nobility of character and singleness of purpose. Let us take heart from this sweet-souled American, who was ready not only to die for civilization, but to live for it. His splendid literary legacy is the best philosophy at the worst of times.

MIMNERMUS.

A Neuvain for the Sleepers

THE free must fight or freedom die;
Writ plain the warning comes to all,
But few men hear Cassandra's cry.

Reaction soon on us will fall;
The free must fight or freedom die.
Awake! and heed the watchman's call.

The hour of peril draweth nigh;
Read, as upon Belshazzar's wall,
The free must fight or freedom die.

BAYARD SIMMONS.

On Being Right

No one unaccustomed to the experience can possibly understand the sublime satisfaction of being right, nor can he appreciate its profound and far-reaching consequences, both individual and social. But the man who has the true gift of being right does not require to be told about it; so soon as he has reached a conclusion, its infallibility comes to him by a swift intuition that leaves no room for doubt.

It would be impossible to exaggerate the stupendous advantages of this gift for truth. To commence with, it simplifies life to an almost incalculable extent, for it provides a standard by which to measure the opinions of others; and, more than this, it enables one to assess a value to them without the tedium of prolonged study. One is in the happy position of the schoolboy who is allowed to look at the answers before commencing the problem. All the time he is working he has the foreknowledge of whether he is going on correctly or not. In the same way, those gifted with this flair for being right are able to see at a glance when the arguments of other people begin to stray from the path of truth, by the simple expedient of testing the gist of them against conclusions already known to be final. People not endowed with this knack of correct vision are sometimes apt to resent the impatience of those who have it, but it should be remembered that nothing is so tedious as listening to a lengthy discussion on problems already satisfactorily solved.

The powers which this exceptional gift confers upon people are immensely important. To start with, there is engendered in them a feeling of strength sufficient to resist all opposition. Morally speaking, they become Herculean. The dazzling light of truth, ever guiding their footsteps, obscures by its sheer brilliance all obstacles whatever; and the knowledge of truth, flowing into them, pervading their whole spirit with its magic essence, imparts to their energies an indestructible vitality, and to their minds an indomitable resolve. Moreover, it clears and quickens their vision so that, without the delays proper to reasoning or the fatigue occasioned by processes of judgment, they are able in a flash of flawless intuition to perceive the errors of others. Is it to be wondered at, therefore, that such men become either great teachers or great rulers? In ages where moral problems chiefly beset the world, those with a genius for being right appear as teachers, while, in times of social turmoil, they come forward as dictators. Above all they are men of action, not of words, for what need have they of words? Words are the vehicles of thought, not of action, and what availeth thought but as the precursor of action? Why then should one waste his time on thought who already knows what best should be done?

It is only natural that these great men should have large followings, for among ordinary men thought must precede action, and the ordinary man is incapable of any but elementary thought. Thus he knows not how to act, and is virtually a nonentity. He does not desire to be told what to think if only someone will tell him what to do, any more than he desires to walk a long distance if he can get someone to give him a lift. The great ones are therefore a boon to him because they give him a lift. They do not tire him by compelling him to struggle along the path of his own problems; they not only show him the way, but take him there into the bargain. They say, "Do thus!" And he does.

The great anger felt by defenders of Right when someone suggests that they might be wrong is not at all a spiteful anger. It commences as a just irritation at the folly of the critic, and very naturally develops

into a righteous indignation at his audacity. Folly is an excusable thing in itself, but it becomes obnoxious when it gets bold, and when it has the temerity first to challenge, then openly to attack the Truth, surely it is deserving of the lash. That is why dictatorship must necessarily entail terrorism, for folly like poverty is always with us, and the defence of the Right remains an urgent no less than a sacred duty.

As far as I can see, the only disadvantage of being unquestionably right is that it makes everybody else unquestionably wrong, and this creates a very unpleasant situation. Where a number of people all happen to be unquestionably right at the same time the situation is aggravated. What must it be like in Heaven, where everyone is unquestionably right? Surely Hell must be preferable, where, I am given to understand, everyone is unquestionably wrong. The nearest approach to this favourable state of things existing in Hell is the world as envisaged by the Free-thought Movement; for this is a world in which everyone unquestionably *may* be wrong. A great to-do, a great hub-bub, is thus created, but it is a hub-bub in which everyone gets a look in. Its disadvantage is that it greatly perplexes and annoys people with the gift for being right, for they are compelled to labour under the abstract possibility of being wrong.

As far as I am able to judge history, there seems to be more virtue in being wrong than in being right, because it is only when you are right that you commence to interfere with other people. Admittedly being wrong leaves you without a dynamic. It fails to create that store of vitality, of inexhaustible energy, that gives the fanatic his sustained power. No man ever did wrong in the interests of the Wrong except when he mistook it for the Right. But one thing does come out of the Wrong, does arise from the thought that it may be wrong, and that is a genial tolerance designed to make life worth living. The virtue of the Right has been greatly over-rated, and the humble brotherliness of the Wrong sadly neglected. The truth about Right is probably like the truth about happiness. Both come best when left to come in their own way. The conscious striving to be happy is a psychopathy of the sensation hunter. The conscious effort to be right shows a psychopathic egoism. But the idea that there is no unquestionable Right makes the world kin. Someday, perhaps, we shall arrive at this. Then dictators, preachers, Sabbatarians, moral reformers and allied species will be seen in their true colours. But we will not particularly think them wrong, merely ridiculous—unless, of course, I am wrong. MEDICUS.

The Incomparable Heine

We looked forward with pleasurable anticipation to a new book, translated from the German, concerning that incomparable Jewish genius Heine (*Henrich Heine*, by Ludwig Marcuse. Published by Sidgwick & Jackson, 12s. 6d.) In the event we were disappointed.

We should have thought that no one could produce a dull or uninteresting book concerning so brilliant a writer as Heine, but Ludwig Marcuse has done it. No one, previously unacquainted with Heine's writings, would suspect that the book was concerned with one of the world's very greatest stylists. Havlock Ellis, no mean judge in such a matter, declared that Heine possessed "the secret of speaking with a voice that every heart leaps up to answer." Nothing of this appears in this dull, pedantic, verbose, and Germanly heavy book.

A large part of the book is not concerned with Heine at all. For instance, twenty-four pages (133-

156) are occupied exclusively with the story of Metternich and his diplomacy, and another twenty-two pages are devoted to a similar sketch of Saint Simon; and all the while he keeps wandering off into tiresome and futile disquisitions. What are you to make of the following sentence: "Anyone who responds to a thousand stimuli in a thousand different ways has a thousand subjects. The more profound a poet is, the more limited is he as to subject. Kleist, Kierkegaard, Nietzsche, can be dismissed in a sentence according to the source of their inspiration." (p. 125.) Or of this: "A human life can only be portrayed convincingly by one who knows what man is. No one who does not possess this knowledge can hope to give a true and living picture of his subject, to reveal the final truth about him." (p. 62.) Whether Marcuse "knows what man is," I do not know; at a venture, I should say he does not; but it is certain that he has not produced "a true and living picture of his subject." Again, what does it matter to us that: "Men like E. T. A. Hoffmann and Devrient had drowned their souls in liquor at the wine-rooms of Lutter & Wegener"; or that: "Köchy ran a marionette show which parodied Shakespeare and Holberg. Grabbe used to jump up on to a table and indulge in great bursts of rhetoric"; or that "Gans and Zung and Wohlwill became intoxicated by Hegelian abstractions"? We can only remark wearily, "Well, what of it?"

The first two chapters, dealing with his early life; and the last two, dealing with his last years, and with his wife Mathilde, are worth reading. If they were condensed, and transfused with some of Heine's brilliance they would make a much better book.

Heine's wife Mathilde had been a shop girl in Paris. Heine passed the shop, where she was employed, every day, and fell in love with her. Like Rousseau and many another, Heine preferred an uneducated, natural, and charming woman, to a learned bluestocking. Mathilde never read a word of Heine's writings, and confidentially enquired of Heine's friends whether he really was a great poet. They had their tiffs and quarrels, like others, but she held Heine and was the joy of his life. In his characteristic way he said: "She has very few brains, but a most excellent disposition."

English people who have been trained to look upon Napoleon as the arch tyrant and opponent of liberty, are likely to be puzzled by Heine's hero-worship of Napoleon; especially as Heine had taken such a leading part in the Liberation warfare of Humanity. This is through a misreading of history. Every nation has its own history, written from its own point of view, and the heroes of one nation are very apt to figure as the villains in the history of another nation, and *vice versa*. It is said that Napoleon ended the French Revolution with his "whiff of grape-shot." What he really ended was the "Terror" in which the Revolution was devouring its own children.

Napoleon was a child of the Revolution. He confirmed, consolidated, and legalized it in the 228 articles of the famous Code Napoleon, his most enduring claim to fame. Not, of course, that he composed it all himself; he had the help of lawyers and statesmen, but the fact remains that if he had not approved of it, it would never have become law, and this proves that Napoleon was not only a great general, but also a great lawgiver. This Code abolished serfdom and feudalism at one sweep. More, it confirmed the peasant in the ownership of the land given him when it was taken from the aristocracy and the church during the Revolution. For this reason the rulers and aristocracy of Europe looked upon Napoleon very much as the Tories of to-day look upon

Lenin and the Russian Revolution, and were in mortal terror lest the new ideas should spread to their dominions. And wherever Napoleon's armies went they did.

For instance, when Napoleon conquered Germany, he appointed Joachim Murat—a general who had married a sister of Napoleon's—ruler over the newly created Duchy of Berg, of which Dusseldorf, the home of the Heine family, was the Capital. The boy Heine was at this time, 1806, seven years old. The Code Napoleon was just being put into force, and Napoleon sent a copy to Murat. As Marcuse well says—and it is the testimony of a German:—

Napoleon did not merely occupy Germany; he revolutionized Germany. Serfdom was abolished; serfs and peasants owing personal service were given full rights of citizenship. Tenants were converted into freeholders. All compulsory service was declared illegal, without compensation to those whom it had been rendered. The estates of the nobles were placed on an equal footing before the law with the holdings of the peasants. Parents no longer exercised any legal authority over their children after they came of age. A common and universal law of inheritance was enforced without regard for rank or domicile. A single idea inspired two hundred laws.—*Egalité*.

No illusions should be indulged with regard to the sources of the contentment inspired, more particularly in Western and Southern Germany by Napoleon's rule—a contentment that caused Heinrich Heine's father to sigh aloud in the days when every Philistine felt himself at liberty to make mock of the captive lion Napoleon: "Would to God he were still with us." (L. Marcuse: *Heinrich Heine*, pp. 15-16.)

Compare this with the conditions of the workers in England at that time, who were being told that the ogre Napoleon would desolate the kingdom, deprive them of their liberty, and reduce them to slavery! This when agricultural labourers were being paid seven-and-sixpence a week, and bread was a shilling and threepence the quarter loaf! And the Government were passing the infamous Combination Acts, which enabled them to transport any workers attempting to form a Trades Union. The only liberty they possessed was the liberty to starve. They would have been far better off under the Code Napoleon.

It is only national pride and vanity—the ruling curse of the age—that prevents us to-day, or rather, some of us, from recognizing that if Napoleon had succeeded in establishing the United States of Europe, and eliminated the many jealous and competing nationalities, there would have been no pursuit of that elusive Will-o'-the-Wisp, the "Balance of Power," which inevitably led the nations into the maelstrom of the great war; from which they have learned nothing, although it beggared the victors. For, on all the National parade grounds they are preparing for the final Armageddon which will probably wipe out civilization and cause a return to the night of the Dark Ages.

Besides the benefits conferred by the Napoleonic rule, the boy Heine struck up a friendship with Monsieur Le Grand, a drummer in the French Army, and the boy loved to lie on a bank in the court gardens and listen to stories of the great Emperor. How he led the grenadiers over the Simplon and fell, like a thunderbolt out of the blue, on the astonished enemy in Italy. How, when the soldiers faltered under the fierce fire at the bridge of Lodi, the Emperor seized the flag and led them across to victory. How he saw the Emperor at the battle of Austerlitz, and how the bullets whistled over the smooth icy road. Of Jena, and Eylau, and many others. And to please the boy he beat on his drum the marches he had played during

these stirring scenes. Then, one never to be forgotten day, Napoleon himself, at the head of the Grand Army, came to Dusseldorf, on his way to the invasion of Russia, and the boy now eleven years old, saw as he says: "with my own highly-graced eyes himself! Hosannah! the Emperor." And as he thought of the stories of Monsieur Le Grand his heart beat the "general march." Heine then describes the passing of the Emperor in a style of which he alone possessed the secret. Marcuse gives a truncated and bald version; we give a better one:—

I thought of the police regulation, that no one should dare ride through the avenue under penalty of a fine of five thalers. And the Emperor with his retinue rode directly down the avenue. The trembling trees bowed towards him as he advanced, the sunbeams quivered, frightened, yet curious, through the green leaves, and in the blue heaven above there swam visibly a golden star. The Emperor wore his invisible-green uniform and the little world-renowned hat. He rode a white steed, which stepped with such calm pride, so confidently, so nobly. . . . Carelessly, almost lazily, sat the Emperor, holding his rein with one hand, and with the other good-naturedly patting the horse's neck. It was a sunny, marble hand—one of those two hands which bound fast the many-headed monster of anarchy, and ordered the war of races—and it good-naturedly patted the horse's neck. Even the face had that hue which we find in the marble of Greek and Roman busts; the traits were as nobly cut as in the antique, and on that face was written, "Thou shalt have no Gods before me." A smile, which warmed and soothed every heart, flitted over the lips—and yet all knew that those lips needed but to whistle—*et la Prusse n'existait*—those lips needed but to whistle—and the entire clergy would have stopped their ringing and singing—those lips needed but to whistle—and the entire holy Roman empire would have danced. And those lips smiled and the eye smiled too. It was an eye clear as Heaven; it could read the hearts of men, it saw at a glance all the things of this world, while we others see them only one by one, and by their coloured shadows. The brow was not so clear, the phantoms of future battles were nestling there; there was a quiver which swept over that brow, and those were the creative thoughts, the great seven-mile-boot thoughts, where-with the spirit of the Emperor strode invisibly over the world.

The Emperor rode quietly straight through the avenue. No policeman opposed him; proudly, on snorting horses and gleaming with gold and jewels, rode his retinue . . . and the people shouted with a thousand voices, "Long live the Emperor."

That is wonderful writing, yet Heine is practically unknown in this country; one rarely sees his name mentioned or his work discussed. What a nation! Although we cannot call Marcuse's work a good book, yet there is much of interest, in the first and last chapters, to those who delight in Heine.

It is melancholy to reflect that as a Jew his works are now banned in the land of his birth.

W. MANN.

Hundreds of thousands of temples, mosques, churches, synagogues, conventicles, scattered through the ages; hundreds of thousands of men and women devoted to religious services, and society saddled with their support; an incalculable amount of human energy spent in the service of the gods, and for all this not a single verifiable truth, not a single idea that could not have been produced without the aid of religion. And on the other hand persistent opposition to every proposed advance and to every new idea. Could one find a more colossal example of human stupidity or a more pathetic fallacy than this?—Chapman Cohen, "Opinions."

Prayer

THE efficacy of prayer is a popular topic with parsons. Their discourse is invariably delivered to the accompaniment of a crude theology. The latest gentleman to expound upon this subject is the Rev. C. G. Royston, who addressed a meeting of the King's Lynn Toc H. Group recently. Deploring the indifference which had caused people to drift from God, he declared that, during times of great suffering, such as drought and famine produced, "man was brought to the realization that he was not entirely self-sufficient, and that the influence of God was essential." Mr. Royston thus puts himself in line with the primitive savage, who believes that drought and famines are controlled by a God who has to be supplicated in order to end them. He resorts to the usual wily reasoning when the question is asked, "Why does God not answer prayer?" His reply being, "God does if a person prays for something that is needed." "If you pray hard enough," "if you pray for something that is really needed"—what convenient provisos in a world where the prayers of anguished hearts meet with no response!

When we realize how great is the number of priests in this country, and, indeed, throughout the world, priests who one and all resort to a greater or lesser degree to the practices of the medicine-man, we have an idea of what a blight they are upon the growth of human society. Prayers have gushed from the heart, and perhaps, in the mere act of utterance have afforded some relief, or because they have fallen on human ears have met with a human response, but beyond this they have been of no avail. As man has progressed and learnt more of the facts of the universe around him he has understood why this is so. He finds that natural forces are uniform in their operations, and the idea of a God to whom prayers or advice, on anything can be addressed is ridiculous, and the idea of a God is finally without meaning.

J.O.H.

Acid Drops

The congested areas of Liverpool are among the worst in the country, and although most of the infamously insanitary cellar dwellings are now gone, there are still some left. During the school holiday season, July and August, the tramways committee arranges for children to make four journeys a day for a penny. This enables them to get away from their slums for a little while, at least. But the Rev. C. Smith, of St. Clement's Toxteth, finds that if it keeps children away from Sunday school during the hot months, and he asked for the cheap fares to be stopped, in the interests of his Sunday school. He does not object to the cheap fares continuing on week-days—when children cannot use them without staying away from their elementary schools, but probably the Vicar thinks the less they have of these schools the better. But when it comes to be a choice between a glimpse of the country for slum children and the Sunday school, the Vicar says, "Damn the country." He does not say "Suffer little children to come unto me," he says, "Compel them to come unto me, and I will see that they are trained so as to deal at my shop when they grow up."

Bromley (Kent) Parish Church is to have a Children's Corner, with its pews specially decorated with nursery rhymes. The object is to accustom the child to going to Church. But it should be made quite clear that these are intended for children only, and are not matters of faith. Otherwise many of the adult worshippers may be taking them as things to be accepted as part of religious teaching, and will be wondering what chapter in the Bible they are taken from. On the other hand, the children may arrive at the substantially correct conclusion that a great deal of Christianity is on the same level as Grimm's tales. The experiment is fraught with danger to the religious belief of the country, and we shall expect some protests to be made against it.

The Rev. Raymond Taunton, says that a man should satisfy himself with "good reasons" why he goes to Church. It looks as though Mr. Taunton is providing people with very good reasons for staying away.

A Bolton (Lancs.) magazine called *The Holiness Mission Journal* (June issue) has discovered that "the majority of the followers of Karl Marx view with open hostility anything pertaining to Christianity." It seems also that Communists "are schooled in the belief that Christianity is a weapon in the hands of the powerful and the wealthy to keep the poor and the labouring classes beneath their control." It appears to us that the Communist "school" is simply stating the facts which history proves. *The Holiness Mission Journal* has its own remedy for all the problems of mankind: "The Gospel," it says, "is the only real and lasting solution."

The Rev. A. D. Belden is treading on dangerous ground. He dares to state: "It is difficult to disentangle the legendary from the historic (in the story of Elijah)." We dare to say that it is much easier in the case of the story of Christ, which is wholly legendary (or worse). But the humble, and often not too intelligent Christian must do a lot of this "disentangling" before he can tell what he ought to believe. Better let him swallow the lot as he did when Christianity was in its palmyest days.

The Rev. A. J. Westlake, like many since the days of Pilate, asks questions and runs away before he is answered. In the *Baptist Times*, he asks, rhetorically: "What excuse is there for our fine (Church) buildings, trained choirs, and wealthy adherents? Do they offer just additional scope of self-indulgence?" We should like to hear an intelligent answer to these and many other questions. It is at least a sign of grace that they are being asked.

The Baptists are naturally justified in glorifying the able preacher, Charles Haddon Spurgeon, who taught what some of them believe still. But it is quite disgusting to read in daily newspapers like the *Herald*, columns of twaddle implying that "the gospel he preached was a real thing," boasting that his sermons have been read by "the colossal figure of 150,000,000," and then nonchalantly admitting that "we may not be able to read Spurgeon's sermons to-day." If Spurgeon had been the genius and inspired prophet these Centenary eulogies call him, there would be no need for these depreciations. Spurgeon was always sincere, and his "eulogists" are smothering him with their well-understood half-way-house beliefs, and their tongue-in-the-cheek commendations.

Spurgeon was a brave fellow. Contradictions in the sacred narrative never worried him. Difficulties were faced straightforwardly. Even "doubts" were all right so long as they were recognized as part of Satan's daily assaults on a good man's salvation. Dr. James Denny, in his "appreciation" prefixed to the *Spurgeon Letters*, gave some good examples of this characteristic. Once Spurgeon had to preach from a highly disputable text, which could easily mean one of two opposing readings. Spurgeon preached for half an hour on one of the two possible meanings, and the other half hour on the assumption that it meant the exact opposite.

Mr. Hilaire Belloc is continuing his task (in the *Univers*) of showing "How it is done"—that is, how history has "distorted" the truth, or "lied" about, the one true holy Catholic religion. This time, his attack is made against Gibbon, who, he admits, "writes admirably, and his book is the most readable book in the language, as well as among the most entertaining." Mr. Belloc, however, does not consider this is the cause of Gibbon's popularity, but "the anti-Catholicism which is the driving force behind all he wrote." This is perfectly true; Gibbon knew Catholicism, not only because he once was a convert, but because, in his great work, he was

forced to judge its history. He saw its beginnings and its progress throughout the ages, and in his *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, one of the greatest of all historical works, he veiled the utter contempt he felt for Christianity behind the most biting sarcasm. As Byron said: "He sapped a solemn creed with a solemn sneer."

For the "Immaculate Conception," Gibbon must have felt more than contempt, and for the way in which he treats it as a stupid piece of credulity, Mr. Belloc, in turn, can hardly conceal his rage. In fact, so angry is he that Gibbon says, "the Latin Church has not disdained to borrow from the Koran the Immaculate Conception of his (Jesus's) mother" (to which Gibbon gives a reference to Sale's *Koran*) that Mr. Belloc repeatedly writes *Sales for Sale* when dealing with the reference. Whether Gibbon is right or wrong, the fact is that the doctrine of the Immaculate Conception nearly split the Church, and that many Catholic divines were bitterly against it, and complained it was not clearly enunciated by the early Church Fathers (even Mr. Belloc admits this while asserting the "idea" was known before the Koran). The probability is that, if the reference in the Koran has any meaning, it settled the question in the minds of some of the rulers of the Latin Church: that the Immaculate Conception was a fact. In any case, the greatness of Gibbon as an historian will certainly survive any assault made by Mr. Belloc.

Mr. Eric Bateman is a good Catholic and an officer of the Fascist Union. He deplors the fact that more Catholics had not joined the Nazis earlier, so that Catholic ideas and ideals could have permeated the movement; but in this country, he says, "Fortunately it is a fact that there is a very high proportion of Catholics in the British movement . . . and thus we are in the position, as Catholics, to bring any manner of difficulty before the party leaders." With plenty of good Christians, Catholic and Protestant, among the Blackshirts, there should be no difficulty in understanding why the glorious Gospel of Force should be one of their main planks. In any case, we know better now what to expect if ever Fascism came into power in England.

Prof. Findlay sets out to explain what Jesus meant by saying, "Take up his cross daily and follow me." He quotes many interpretations and might have quoted more, all of them mutually irreconcilable. "I feel certain," says the Prof., "there must be a misunderstanding somewhere." All that we can "feel certain" about is that Jesus did not mean what he is said to have said. Put briefly, Prof. Findlay finds, "Attractive" the theory that "the original" (whatever that is) must have meant to say, "take up his tent-pegs." We knew that Galatians iii. 13 suggests that Jesus was "hanged on a tree." Prof. Findlay seems to hint that He was hanged on a tent-peg.

The *British Weekly* praises Dr. Archibald Fleming very highly. It says, "Dr. Fleming is out of sight the most influential Presbyterian minister in England." "Out of sight," is a strange phrase to use about one who is at the same time said to have so many friends that "they must be beyond computation." We are "in the dark" as to how this popular minister can be "out of sight." Surely it is not a misprint for "out of mind," which the proverb says is equivalent to "out of sight."

Convocation is seriously disturbed about the surprising ignorance of Holy Scripture shown by candidates for ordination. These young men, in spite of a call from God, prove particularly well-informed on almost every subject but scripture. In this they fail completely, and church writers are now trying to find some excuse for their ignorance. One of them blames their "antece-dents." School did not give them adequate instruction on the Bible, and nobody bothered about it in their homes. The result is that the candidates "grow up pathetically unfamiliar with the sacred literature of their own religion." Poor young fellows!

The truth really is not quite as simple as that. If scripture is one of the subjects of an exam., then it can be swotted up just like any other subject. Why not? If the candidates do not study the Bible when a knowledge of it is necessary to pass an examination, they cannot blame anything else if they fail. Moreover, there are hundreds of thousands of text-books, many of which, no matter what was the original price, can be picked up for a penny or two pence in a second-hand bookseller's shop. The Bible is taught in schools—though perhaps without that belief in its infallibility such a sacred book requires. The real reason, however, for the ignorance of candidates on the Holy Word is that they recognize a good deal of it, in an age of science and discovery, is just nonsense. And few people can enthuse greatly over nonsense.

May we drop a hint to Convocation? The real scholars of the Bible are Freethinkers. Most of them know the Grand Old Book from cover to cover. They can recite texts by the score, and give its up-to-date history. They know its difficulties and mysteries by heart. That is why they are Freethinkers.

A "League of Decency" has started a campaign in America amongst Catholics, aided by Presbyterians. It is said that over 50,000 followers have pledged themselves to "boycott all (Cinema) theatres displaying indecent films." In any case we deprecate any such absurdity as a censorship. Objectionable films seldom please sufficient people to make their display worth while. But these religionists have a much more definite object than any sort of useful criticism. Their first "crusade" has, as we should have expected, been directed to Sunday opening of cinemas, which, they say: "has blighted the Lord's Day."

What queer names these professional "divines" give themselves. One of the luckiest well-to-do preachers in the Methodist Church is Rodney Smith, M.B.E., who for some occult reason likes to be known as "Gipsy Smith." A "gipsy" with a big income, a fine house, and servants including a chaffeur and a gardner, must be a "modernist" gipsy.

A great deal of talk is going on in the press over the Bishop of Liverpool having permitted Unitarians to speak in the cathedral. But it is nearly all wasted indignation. In the first place it is clear that if Christians will not hang together, they will, to use the old tag, hang separately. As usual, Christians are driven to express liberality when its opposite threatens them with danger. Which brings up the old:—

When the devil was sick, the devil a saint would be.
When the devil was well, the devil a saint was he.

When a Christian professes liberalism in religion, always look round for some danger that is threatening him and his opinions. Christians only cease fighting each other when the presence of a common danger threatens all of them.

And, after all, our sympathy is with the Christian who protests against preachers whose belief is not of the "right" sort being permitted to preach. If Christianity is true then man is to be saved by right belief—not by merely being good men. It is a wonder that some of the bishop's opponents have not drawn his attention to the thirteenth article of the Church of England:—

Works done before the grace of Christ . . . are not pleasant to God . . . neither do they make men meet to receive grace . . . yea rather, for that they are not done as God hath willed and commanded them to be done, we doubt not that they have the nature of sins.

If that means anything at all it means that it doesn't matter a damn what a man does, it is what he believes that counts, and all the professions of good men being saved without being *real* Christians is so much eye-wash.

The Bishop of Liverpool thinks a church is not a church—sometimes. *The Guardian* quite logically declines to see the distinction made by this Bishop. It

is ridiculous to exclude a Unitarian from the pulpit on Sundays if you admit him on Mondays. The Bishop says, "we never admit Unitarians to our pulpit at our regular services." Shall we ask, "When is a service not a (regular) service?"

One of God's ambassador's declared that going to Church on Sunday has proved itself "historically worth while, and it is still educationally and intellectually worth while." Well, it all depends upon the point of view. So far as the parson is concerned it is the only thing that is worth while; for even if all men remained religious and did *not* go to Church what would become of him? He might truly say, "What if a man believes in all the gods in the Pantheon and yet cometh not to Church?"

God Almighty must often have occasion to say "Save me from my friends!" Often it is the fashion to apologise for God when he sends too much or too little rain, that "He knows best." So to send rain when one party prays for it might not be good for another. But now one of God's champions appears in the *Daily Express*, and robs the deity of even this defence. She is a lady who explains that now that the drought extends from "ocean to ocean," the excuse for not praying no longer holds. The drought is everywhere, so we can pray with safety, and the Lord can let go without having anyone complain. "Call you this backing of your friends?"

Under the heading, "A Preacher's Watch-Tower," there is an article in the *Methodist Times* entitled "On Lying Awake." This looks as though the "Preacher's Watch Tower" may be his pulpit.

When we saw in a pious weekly the heading "Long Service at Ealing," we thought of the old jest about a married man whose life is long, or at least "seems" long. Religious services—like married life—have to be judged by interest rather than minutes. Five minutes seems a very long service to most people under most ministers.

The Rev. R. V. Tasker preached at St. Paul's last week, on "The Sin of Omission." Need we say he was castigating his sheep for omitting to allow themselves to be fleeced sufficiently to please the "shepherds of souls." He wanted bigger and better collections.

Fifty Years Ago

THE praises of Spurgeon, so lustily chanted in chorus by the daily papers lately, are another proof that nothing succeeds like success. Twenty-five years ago the London journals treated him as a vulgar eccentricity, a pulpit mountebank, a pious joke, a standing butt for ridicule and laughter. Intellectually, he is very much the same man now that he was then. His creed is as narrow, as sterile, and as alien to all the best thought and culture of the age, and the little loose learning he has been able to pick up is utterly unscientific and ludicrously antiquated. He is at home with authors that no scholar ever reads, except in the spirit with which a biologist might study a fossil organism of some extinct species. He knows next to nothing of the Biblical scholarship of modern Germany and Holland; and it is needless to say that he knows absolutely nothing of that modern Science which is revolutionizing the world of thought, shattering the dynasties of Superstition, and erecting the Republic of Reason. What then has wrought this complete change in the editorial mind? Why this. Gifted by nature with a beautiful soft voice, which makes the dreariest platitudes and the baldest rhetoric attractive, and the wretchedest hymns sound like exquisite poetry. Mr. Spurgeon has held together with a more sober style of preaching the congregation he first gathered by means very similar to those of General Booth. And having, like the leader of the Salvation Army, a talent for organization, he has succeeded in building up a church, in the ecclesiastical sense, out of the ample materials provided for him by centuries of Christian activity.

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THE FREETHINKER

FOUNDED BY G. W. FOOTE.

EDITORIAL :

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Telephone No. : CENTRAL 2412

TO CORRESPONDENTS

L. MARCAN.—Excellent! You did well to protest against the introduction of a religious service by an organization that has nothing to do with religion. If all Freethinkers were equally alert and active, the practice would not be quite so common as it is. But many think more of their comfort than their convictions.

J. EBWORTH.—Much obliged for cutting.

T.H.E.—The articles will be continued as soon as possible. But so many things that call for notice turn up. We are glad to learn that the articles that have already appeared have been helpful to so many.

T. H. BUCKLE AND J. BROWN.—Crowded out. Next week.

G. BOWES.—The kind of Christian charity that Mr. Clayton is experiencing was once very common. Fortunately many places have outgrown it, and Mr. Clayton seems well able to contend with it.

II. ELMES.—Volumes of the *Freethinker* can be had at 17s. 6d. per volume.

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 offices of the National Secular Society and the Secular Society Limited, are now at 68 Farringdon Street, London, E.C.4. Telephone: Central 1367.

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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.

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

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

Sugar Plums

Mr. Cohen did not, after all, attend the Liverpool Mass Meeting of Protest against the Incitement to Seditious Teaching Bill. There was some misunderstanding at the Liverpool end, and Mr. Cohen decided that he could not attend. In order not to disappoint those who had read the notice in last week's *Freethinker*, he sent a brief message to the meeting, and Mr. J. V. Shortt, the President of the Liverpool Branch, read it to the meeting, apparently with great effect, as it was received with prolonged applause. Some passages from it appeared in the *Liverpool Daily Post*. The chief thing is that the meeting was a great success. Mr. Cohen was very sorry to disappoint those who went to the meeting expecting to hear him, but they can rest assured that what was done was in what he considered the best interests of the N.S.S.

In London, the meeting held in Trafalgar Square was also very successful. There were representatives of many organizations, and Mr. Rosetti spoke as representing the N.S.S. We are glad to know that his speech was received with the greatest appreciation by the huge crowd that had assembled—rather later than the advertised time.

But it is not easy to time processions from all parts of London. Many other meetings were held in various parts of the country, and we hope they will do something to end one of the vilest, and one of the most contemptible measures of recent years. This Government seems determined to "save" the country, even though it damns it eternally in the process.

Mr. W. Don Fisher writes that as a method of helping the *Freethinker*, he has decided to contribute one shilling per week, to be used as is thought fit. He sends three shillings as first payment, and hopes that others will be induced to follow his example. We are obliged to Mr. Fisher for his interest in the paper, and will use his contribution, and others that may come along, in defraying the cost of distributing free copies. We do a deal of propaganda in this way, as many of our readers already know.

The Parks Committee of the L.C.C. is putting forward a proposal that all the games that are allowed to be played in the Parks on week-days are to be permitted on Sunday. Common sense will say, why not? If the Lord is not offended because people play tennis on Sunday, why should He be upset if they play cricket or bowls? Provided no competition with heaven is undertaken by performances which turn water into wine, pick up half-crowns from the mouths of fishes, and have walks on the lakes, we do not see anything in the proposal that should further disturb the serenity of the Holy Family.

But the Lord's Day Observance Society promises strong opposition to the proposal; and we take it the Attorney-General, who is its President will support the protest. But then the President of the Lord's Day Observance Society is also the Attorney-General. And we must remember that while he, as President, denounced the opening of Cinemas on Sunday as against religion and morals, he, as Attorney-General, introduced the Racketeering Bill into the House of Commons and spoke in its behalf. So if the L.C.C. adopts the suggestion it need not bother much about the Attorney-General.

The works of Professor Croce and Professor Gentile, two of Italy's leading Philosophers have been placed on the Roman Catholic Index. These two gentlemen may thank their stars that they did not live when the Church had greater powers than it has to-day.

Reason, the monthly organ of the Rationalist Association of India, reprints, with due acknowledgement, Mr. Cohen's two articles on "Religion and Reason," which appeared in a recent issue of the *Freethinker*.

Paris has placed opposite the entrance to the Sorbonne, a new statue of Montaigne, the sceptic, by the sculptor Landowski. Passers-by will probably recall a story told of him, which clearly reveals the sanity of the old Freethinker in contrast with the insanity of his pious countrymen, during a period when religious wars were turning France into a slaughter house. One day an armed force appeared at Montaigne's castle: "What party do you belong to?" demanded the officer. "Do you kill in the name of the Pope or Calvin?" Montaigne replied: "In the name of neither, for I do not kill. In my opinion it is madness for men to tear each other to pieces in the name of a God of charity and mercy."

Jesus the Agitator, is a new book by the author of *Which Jesus?* No wonder he asks such a question. It must be very confusing to the reader. Mr. George Lansbury writes a Preface, but does not attempt to guess at the answer. Even if Jesus was an "Agitator," one has only to listen to the Hyde Park agitators to know that "Agitation" means anything and everything. We are still left wondering "Which Jesus?"

Samuel Romilly

ENGLAND'S conventional attitude is to suppress all mention of even its greatest thinkers, if these thinkers have disgraced themselves by opposing directly and unmistakably the roots of religion.

Samuel Romilly was described by Burke as "the greatest debater the world ever saw," and this was in an age when, and in a sphere where England had reached the zenith of political oratory. The tribute was paid by one of the acknowledged lights of eloquence. Romilly's contemporaries included Wilberforce, whose silver-tones had fascinated princes; William Pitt, a master of words, and Charles James Fox, the owner of the "matchless tongue."

But Romilly was not a mere "spell-binder." He had a most lofty aim ever before him. He wanted favour shown to the underdog. He actually believed in humane conditions for criminals. One looks in vain for an adequate biography of him. But he was a Freethinker. Also he was one of the noblest, wisest and altogether best men the world has ever seen.

Augustine Birrell, a rare figure amongst Nonconformist essayists, says (in *Miscellanies*, in a Lecture on "The House of Commons"): "Romilly was the very perfection in my eyes of a lawyer, a gentleman, and a member of Parliament, whose pure figure stands out in the frieze of our Parliamentary history like the figure of Apollo amongst a herd of satyrs and goats." Mr. Birrell characteristically adds, "I know but one of whom I could honestly say, may my soul be with his. I refer to Sir Samuel Romilly."

If a liberal Christian can say this, we Freethinkers ought never to let Romilly's name be forgotten. Romilly was born March 1, 1757, in England, of a family of French Huguenots, who had found this country what (with all its faults) England formerly boasted of being, an asylum for the persecuted and oppressed of other countries.

As a lawyer, and later M.P., Romilly showed continuous interest in everything which helped to increase human liberty and to remove the inhumanities of legalized cruelty to human beings, even criminal human beings, and also animals. He supported the emancipation of the slave. He urged Wilberforce to greater expedition, and earned that good man's snubs, which he repaid with courtesy and generous praise. He helped every good cause in his day.

Diderot, the great French Atheist, met Romilly in Paris, just after the death of Rousseau, whom both admired. It was at Diderot's suggestion that Romilly brought to England and translated one of the earliest important indictments of human slavery, written by another great Atheist, Condorcet.

Romilly found firm friends amongst Atheists and Deists such as Jeremy Bentham, John Stuart Mill, Edward Gibbon, and Thomas Paine, and that wonderful group of French Freethinkers, which included Roget, Dumont and d'Alembert. Mirabeau most of all found that he and Romilly had much in common. Of Mirabeau one recalls Carlyle's judgment: "Had he lived, the history of France and of the world had been different."

But Romilly's friendships were widespread, and embraced people of differing ideas, but they were always people of ideas, reformers of one sort or another. A friend of Adam Smith, David Hume, Samuel Johnson, Edmund Burke and Elizabeth Fry as well as those already mentioned, could never have been a man of no importance.

David Hume was a Freethinker in a small way, with a very self-important objection to those low-down Atheists. He was dining with Romilly and a number of Romilly's friends. Hume sat next to

Baron d'Holbach. They spoke about "natural religion." "As to Atheists," said Hume, "I don't believe that they even exist. I have never seen one." "You are a bit unlucky," said d'Holbach, "there are seventeen Atheists dining at our table to-day."

Diderot too chaffed Romilly about Hume and the funny English prejudices against calling an Atheist an Atheist. "You English think Atheism a little scandalous, because you believe a trifle in God, whereas we others scarcely believe in anything at all," was Diderot's witty and commonsense comment.

Romilly's own writings include translations of Condorcet and Mirabeau. He wrote most sympathetically about the French Revolution in a thoughtful study on *The Probable Influence in England of the French Revolution*, a book considered seditious at the time. His *Reply to Mr. Madan's "Executive Justice"* was a very serious attack on the barbarous penal laws of his age.

His greatest wish was to abolish capital punishment for minor offences. During his life he partly succeeded in effecting his object by legislation. He made juries courageous in refusing to abet the inhuman laws he could not abolish. The statistics show that in one year alone, while he was in Parliament, 19,178 prisoners were tried for what were then capital offences. Of these only 9,510 were convicted, and 327 executed. "This," he said, was "neither justice, law, nor common humanity." In vain the House of Commons agreed with him. The bigotry of the bishops and the Christian peers postponed till after Romilly was dead the full result of his life-long efforts.

It is interesting to note that this stalwart Freethinker's courageous work was always consistently fought to the death by Lord Chief Justice Ellenborough in the House of Lords. Lord Ellenborough, whose enmity to Shelley and other Freethinkers has rendered his name infamous in history, was the son of the Bishop of Carlisle. Romilly admired William Hone, who was on trial for Blasphemy, and did what he could to help him, although not appearing in the case. The jury, browbeaten with all the bigotry of that unrivalled bigot, refused to obey the Lord Chief's demand for a conviction. Ellenborough was furious at the acquittal. He at once resigned his judgeship, and died soon after from his raging anger and disappointment.

Romilly advocated shorter parliaments, shorter army service, extension of the franchise, codification of law, the abolition of common law (the unwritten law, under which blasphemers were usually tried), the cessation of flogging, especially in the army and navy, the restriction of capital punishment to its present proportions (in his day children of tender age were hanged and those guilty of treason could be disembowelled while still alive). He was always ready to support any remedy or palliative for the cruel industrial laxness as regards child-labour, and the vile restrictions to labour organization.

He boldly appealed to his constituents to support him in his work, and they nobly responded. He did not mince his words when describing the abuses he attacked. He denounced the slave trade as "an abominable and disgraceful traffic that ought to be instantly wiped away; a trade carried on by robbery, rapine and murder." These words disturbed the cultured Commons, and gave great offence to some of Wilberforce's friends, but Romilly remarked, "I should think it criminal to speak of such a trade otherwise than as it really is."

Romilly seemed to support not only Wilberforce's pet reform, but everything that Wilberforce opposed otherwise. Wilberforce boycotted Romilly for ten

years, but this did not prevent the latter from paying Wilberforce the eloquent tribute which is so well known; contrasting Napoleon, then at the height of his glory, with Wilberforce bed-ridden, but serene in the knowledge that the doom of slavery had been hastened by his efforts.

Sir Samuel Romilly had once a chance to show the sort of official he would have made. Almost by accident, the "Cabinet of All the Talents" was formed, and his friend Fox suggested Romilly's name as Solicitor-General. Romilly gladly accepted, but a single year, 1806, was the limit of his opportunities. He was probably the only Solicitor-General of the era who refused to suspend the Habeas Corpus Act, to prosecute a single case of sedition or blasphemy, or to curtail in the slightest degree any civic liberty.

Romilly supported Catholic Emancipation and the abolition of the Corn Laws. About his Freethought there never was secrecy or denial. His constituents knew it, Lord Ellenborough knew it, and he was supported by his constituents to the rare extent of their twice paying his election expenses by a voluntary subscription. His own eloquence was not frothy rhetoric but expressed the living truth.

Samuel Romilly dearly loved the woman he married and lived with for twenty strenuous but domestically happy years. When she died he refused to be comforted by any of the familiar but "vacant chaff, well-meant for grain." A few days after her death he took his own life.

A semi-sceptical friend had attempted to console Romilly in his great loss by quoting some then popular lines which vaguely satisfy a sentimental agnosticism at the expense of truth:—

"I am not answered, but perhaps I am heard."

Romilly admitted the "poetry" of the phrase. He objected to the futility of its "argument."

Sir Samuel Romilly was lamented by thousands who saw in his death a loss to every friend of every form of human emancipation.

GEORGE BEDBOROUGH.

Random Thoughts of an Infidel

THE exact placing of the soul in the human body is always a matter of some difficulty to the apologist who can hardly imagine "the all eternal ego," as residing in the knee caps or intestines, so that usually the onus is placed on the brain, or rather as they metaphorically describe the situation the brain is likened to an organ on which the soul is the organist. The problem then arises as to what is the spiritual position of the hitherto staunch Christian who unfortunately loses his memory? Has he lost his soul either in part or whole, would be an interesting query?

Religion is a business of threats and promises, believe what we tell you and one day you will go to heaven as a reward, be a nasty sceptic and you will partake of some unpleasantness as a punishment, never mind about goodness for its own intrinsic worth, that will never do, you must have a creed, believe in it, and do not think too much.

For hundreds of years these threats and promises have been made, and among the millions that have been concerned there has never been one case supported by concrete evidence where we could say that a man had the reward promised him, or that he went to hell and endured the punishment predicted. It is all a case of poor blind faith and belief.

No other business could be conducted on the same lines that religion is; in ordinary business we usually have to deliver the goods first, with religion we have to pay first, and then have to die to see if the goods have been delivered.

One effect of the remarkable achievements of modern science is to surpass the alleged miracles of Jesus Christ, and to render them common-place. If turning water into wine, and possibly curing neurotics by auto-suggestion can be called miracles, surely the same name would be equally applicable to such twentieth century feats as making silk stockings and sugar from wood, fertiliser from air, cigarette cases from blood, and umbrella handles from milk?

Ask the Church-goer why Churches have lightning conductors, and point out that it is surely strange that God should think of allowing lightning to strike his own houses. They will probably try to explain it away by saying that God does not directly interfere or control the elements, but allows them simply to conform to nature's laws; if this is so, why do they ever pray for rain or fine weather?

The God of the Salvation Army has as many whims and fancies as any. As an instance, he has a peculiar objection to his followers wearing metallic ores fashioned in divers shapes and suspended across the abdomen; neither has he taken kindly to talking pictures, in fact no more than he did to their predecessors the silent films. He objects to alcohol and nicotine, but not to caffeine, he certainly has to be humoured, but if he has aversions to some things, to others he is particularly partial, to wit, music, brass bands and all that they comprise, trumpets, drums, triangles, and cornets and comic opera uniform.

A Christian's point of view is usually quite egoistic; we all have heard the old slogan that the world's all right, and that the real trouble is with the people living in it; certainly we have a beautiful world to live in, is then the God-fearing man satisfied? Oh dear no, what is it he wants then? Another life of the same duration? No! Well, perhaps there is a strain of Oliver Twist in his make-up, and that he desires two lives after this one? Again No. Well, whatever can it be he so greatly desires? Oh nothing much, only life everlasting, not for a thousand years, not a hundred thousand or even a million, but just everlasting, and all to be spent in sublime peace and contentment, greater than has ever been experienced on our mundane plane. The presumption of it all, and in a way the truth of it all, and how in harmony with the latest scientific research, viz., the persistence of matter! Yes, we shall undoubtedly exist and persist alright after death, but perhaps not in the form that the pious expect, a few gallons of water, some carbon and lime and a few other well known chemicals, combined to form a very good fertiliser. . . .

One section of apologists say, "Well, my belief is more modern than the Bible story of Creation and the Creator, I believe that there may be a possible future existence for all living things, and that for all we know all living things may possess a soul." Well, what I should like to know is this . . . as a single human body cell has been isolated and made to continue living, and lead a separate existence of its own, does this cell have a complete soul of its own, or does it merely extract a part of the soul of its former host? This theory of all life possessing souls is liable to lead the propagator into some little difficulty as to where the line should be drawn, should the possibility be granted that perhaps all disease germs have nice little souls of their own, and if so, it would seem feasible that they would be again our companions in the next world.

Christians always like to give their God a chance to be right, they never pray for that which so far has never happened. For instance, they will take full advantage of the changeability of the weather to pray for rain, but they do not pray that the sun will suddenly set at noon-day; they pray that so and so will make a safe journey to somewhere, but they would not think of praying that his pony and trap will turn into an aeroplane to enable him

to get there quicker. Now why is this? Is it that God's power of performing the miraculous is limited, and that one must not ask too much, or is it that they are essentially gamblers, and like that element of chance to be present so that if that which they wish happens they can turn round and say, "My prayers are answered?" Of course, if events turn out the reverse to what they wish, it is a case of God knows what is best for us. He gets praise for the hits, and no blame for the misses.

The degree of degradation to which the average Christian will reduce his God is particularly apparent to the Freethinker; he speaks of his God being Good, and Angry, Kind and Merciful, all terms frequently applied to human beings, and some even to pet dogs.

Some may say, "Why are you not at least tolerant towards Christian sects, even if you do not agree with their principles and beliefs?" and I answer, because they are not, and never have been tolerant towards Free-thought. Free-thought has always been a many-headed Hydra to the Church militant to be ruthlessly exterminated. In any case any organization which has done infinite harm in the past, and which is continuing to do so, even if in a lesser degree at present should be destroyed.

If Jesus Christ was really the Son of God, he must have been all-wise, he must have known all "in heaven and earth." Would it not therefore have been a greater boon to mankind if, instead of raising a man from the dead, he had passed on a few hints and tips on anaesthetics, or modern anti-septic surgery? He would have conferred more permanent benefit than bringing back to life one or two dead men, he would have been the means of preventing thousands from untimely death. Apart from advice (much of which had been given before) on moral conduct, what knowledge did Christ give that proved of immediate and lasting value or that proved his divine being beyond a shadow of doubt? Did he give a certain remedy for leprosy or any practical help to cure the many loathsome diseases of that time? . . . not a thing.

Take the case of a religious munitions inventor, who is having certain trouble with the time fuse of a new type of bomb he is inventing. Does he religiously say his prayers at night and carefully insert a few words asking for divine aid to overcome the technical difficulties he is up against, or is it that all inventors of lethal weapons are Atheists? The inventor of inflammatory bullets in the World War contributed as much to conquering the enemy as many a man in the front line trenches; therefore it is just as reasonable for one to pray for divine help and guidance as the other.

F.G.W.

Our Fatuous Parsons!

WE often hear the idea expressed that Australians should develop a truly Australian outlook in art, in literature, in sport, and so on. This development is, I think, making itself evident in the realms of life stated. There is one sphere, however, in which Australia slavishly follows the Old World. I refer to religion.

The sermons of most Melbourne parsons read like the utterances of either very ignorant men, or intellectually dishonest ones. No person, unless he or she were simple-minded, could take these sermons seriously. They are full of the most unreasonable statements and distortions of the truth. Let us take an example.

On Sunday, January 28, the Rev. Dr. Borcham made reference to the fact that a man, under stress of a great emotion, is unable to express himself in speech, try as he may: that preachers of the Gospel are also, at times, at a loss to know how to express their message adequately in words. Then we have this remarkable statement:—

Finding ourselves so circumstanced, it infinitely comforts us to reflect that, in the crisis of the eternities, Almighty God found Himself confronted by the same embarrassment.

Here is an admission! The almighty, omnipotent, eternal, three-in-one God, suffering from the embarrassment of not knowing how to express Himself! In that case we cannot really blame the Rev. Dr. for his heavy going. Further on we have the illuminating statement:—

Now what Almighty God wanted to say was His own tremendous self.

Another picture of God stumbling along, though how anybody can "say" himself is rather obscure. However, let us follow this up:—

But the pathos of the situation arose from the fact that Almighty God could not say Almighty God, because the men to whom He wished to say it were destitute of any vocabulary into which the sublime thought could be translated.

Now isn't that pathetic! What is the idea of our Christian God coming to? Here is the Ruler of the Universe, the all-knowing director of life, the performer of miracles, unable to make his wishes known to his creatures which he created, because they are "destitute" of a suitable vocabulary. Why then, did he not provide such for men? The Rev. Dr. does not enlighten us on that point. Instead, he proceeds to tell us that God finally chose as his medium of expression, the flesh. Why God should adopt this roundabout method we are not told, at least, not satisfactorily. Dr Borcham says:—

The twitching of the lips, the pallor of the countenance, the crimsoning of the cheeks, the moistening of the eyes, these tell-tale signals are unspeakably more revealing than any mere words could possibly be.

What has this got to do with God's revelation? Where does He come in? The emotional reflexes mentioned are operated solely from the brain, the material brain.

God reveals Himself in the beauty and the wonder of the universe: continues the rev. gentleman. And who, I should like to know, reveals himself in the cruelty, the misery, the poverty, the degradation and the ugliness, that are also in the universe?

Let us pass on to:—

. . . but a million Bibles would not tell what Jesus tells, for, in Jesus, the Word was made flesh, and flesh is a language that the simplest can understand.

The Word was made flesh! What a clear, comprehensive sentence, typical of clerical twaddle. And further, why this eulogy of the flesh? According to the Bible the flesh is to be disregarded; it is the spirit that matters.

Our other example of pious nonsense come from the Rev. W. Cooling. On the same Sunday he says:—

The supreme need of man is to know God. And later, We are all more or less conscious of that need. In every age and among all peoples it finds expression.

Why is that so-called need found among all peoples? Simply because the people are told Sunday after Sunday by the priests that such must be their need. It is told to them from childhood, and it is only an intellectual few who are able to free themselves from this superstitious creed. Why does the Church insist that man must know this God? Because the Church is an interested party, a vested concern, with its thousands of priests who see fit to bolster up the slavish doctrine. A real man or woman does not need a God to lean on. Such can stand on their own feet in the struggle of Life. The great need of man is to free himself from the reactionary ideas, the out-worn dogmas, and the dishonesty of the Christian churches. When Man has done that, he can turn his attention to benefiting the world, to bringing happiness into the lives of others, and thus bringing happiness to himself. We must oppose these parsons, the storm-troops of Christianity. This is difficult, for they rarely emerge into the open. Standing in their pulpits or before a broadcasting microphone, they can put over to the public their pernicious doctrines, well-knowing that they cannot be answered back, and that they will not be called upon to prove their statements or to answer awkward questions from unbelievers. In answer to chal-

lenges from Rationalists, these parsons make reply, "There is nothing to be gained by a debate." They are right. Their creed would certainly not gain as a result. The creed's glaring inconsistencies, its untruths, and its demoralizing effects, would be ruthlessly exposed. Rationalists, we must be militant! We must drag these parsons from their snug retreats and force them to answer. This can only be done by united effort. Don't be lukewarm in your rationalism. Unite and fight!

AUSSIE.

Melbourne, Australia.

"A Sensation Among Presbyterians"

THE above are the somewhat mild terms in which a Presbyterian cleric here in Sydney (N.S.W., Australia) describes the effect of a book just published by Dr. Angus, entitled *Truth and Tradition*.

Dr. Angus, it appears, is a "professor of theology," and the presiding genius, for many years, of the college where aspirants for the Presbyterian pulpits are trained.

Gradually it dawned on a few of the students that some of his teachings were not strictly in keeping with the conventional Presbyterian church beliefs—or, for that matter, with the Christian traditions generally.

The result was that—in some cases, inquiries; and in others, complaints—were made to the governing assembly.

Thenupon, conventions were convened. At these all the Presbyterian heads were present. Reports of the discussions that ensued showed that Dr. Angus was not without supporters—largely, it would seem, because of the esteem in which, personally and intellectually, he was held by them. But at every session there were his opponents—demonstrative, bitter, relentless. Clearly, they realized that, to give way to Dr. Angus, was a further, decisive step in the ending of their jobs—and the imposition they represented on the human race.

And so the miserable business dragged on from month to month and year to year—from session after session of the original body, and then session after session of successively higher bodies.

At some of these sessions the complaint was made that a genuine statement of Dr. Angus's beliefs—precise and definite—could not be got.

Nor could they.

Reports of the proceedings in the daily papers left the average reader, however eager he was to get at the bottom of the matter, still wondering what all the trouble was about.

Now at last—in the book he has published, *Truth and Tradition*—Dr. Angus lets us know what it is that he has been trying to get off his chest.

Among other things, he declares that the Virgin Birth "is historically impossible," and that—respecting physical resurrection—"we hear nothing till half a century after the supposed event," and "of which no proof was given."

We need follow Dr. Angus no further.

In those two statements—the denial of the Virgin Birth and the physical resurrection—he repudiates the whole structure of the Christian faith.

Without these two supports, the entire Christian edifice—from turret to foundation-stone—disappears like dew before the morning sun.

No wonder "a Presbyterian cleric"—to repeat the phrase of a Sydney morning paper—says that Dr. Angus has created "a sensation among Presbyterians," or that another is reported as having said that he has "torn Christianity to shreds."

Not of any great interest can it be to readers of the *Freethinker*, what is the ultimate fate of Dr. Angus and the tutorial position he occupies with regard to the Presbyterian creed.

Nor what he says respecting immaculate conception and physical resurrection.

But it is worth recording that still another head of the Church—even away in our remote Australia—has found that he has more or less got to chuck it; that his sanity simply revolts at the Christian teachings for centuries;

and that he is prepared to declare himself for enlightenment and progress, even if this means his ostracism and persecution by those who would, if they could, have gone on enlisting his services in "the great deception" whereby they might have all the more securely continued to enjoy, at the expense of the human race, their positions of comfort and ease.

Briefly, I would say that Dr. Angus is to-day a Deist, without knowing it; and that Christianity to Deism is a much longer stretch than that which he may next be expected to make—frankly and avowedly, that of a good, serviceable Freethinker.

FRANK HILL.

Sydney, N.S.W., Australia.

Correspondence

REACTION IN FREETHOUGHT

TO THE EDITOR OF THE "FREETHINKER."

SIR,—I am not sure whether anyone was more disappointed than I was on reading the three letters, selected from many, in reply to my article on "Reaction in Freethought." The level of thinking attained by a large number of Freethinkers is evidently lower than I had believed. Not one of the published letters contains an attempt to refute my position.

Over a third of Mr. Ready's letter need not have been written. It is obvious that I am prepared to accept the result of scientific investigation into social conditions, whether it refutes or supports the value of revolutionary activity as a means to bringing about better social conditions. A writer should not need at all times to state the obverse of his argument.

Again, of course, I do not want anyone to accept Communism without enquiry. If Mr. Ready would try to get over his now characteristic talkativeness, and give up smelling incense and enjoying, like Jehovah, the sweet savour of burning flesh, he might be less prone to giving his case away.

When he admits it would be a new experience to him to find Freethinkers believing that Freethought should bring about a fundamental change in the structure of society,* he is voicing the fact that to him and many others, Freethinking is little better than an intellectual pastime. Now, if Freethought is not going to lead to the working out of methods by which a complete reconstruction of society is to be brought about, in what way is it superior to the religious attitude to social questions?

Mr. Ready's suggestion that I am giving lip-service to Freethinking principles, is vulgar clap-trap.

The attempt to show that the latter part of my article is inconsistent with my opening remarks simply reveals incapacity to realize the difference between allowing criticism of the methods for reconstructing society and restricting speech and writing intended to bring about activity in the direction of preventing that reconstruction.

Mr. Kearney and Mr. Morris need not detain us long. To mistake emphatic statement for dogma is common; and when we are told "Fascism is just as much concerned with building a better society" as is Communism, we are tempted to retort—so Christianity professes to be. If analysis ends there, again, what is the value of Freethinking? Mr. Morris so misrepresents my position that I can only ask him and others to read my article again.

When he talks about "economic emancipation by way of mental freedom," and suggests that "until it has been tried and found" illusory, we can look forward to an Age of Freethought, I agree. We can keep on looking forward until it is realized by Freethinkers that mental freedom is relative to and conditioned by economic factors, and that the economic basis of society will have to be changed before we can have Freethought for all.

E. EGERTON STAFFORD.

* It may save correspondence by pointing out that the passage in full in Mr. Ready's letter is, "It would be a new experience to me to find Freethinkers claiming that it would. Is it not our contention that Freethought is a method of approach, not a scheme of settlement of the problems to be tackled?"—(Ed.)

SEA OF GALILEE

SIR,—The reference to me in your issue of 17th instant is quite uninformed. The works now proceeding on the Jordan will not provide an additional gallon of water for the use of anyone. The alteration of the level of the sea of Galilee will however strike a serious blow at the livelihood and health of the numerous inhabitants surrounding the Lake, Muslims and Jews alike, and it is in their interests as well as on account of the sacred associations of the Lake that I wish to preserve its present character.

JOSEPH A. LECKIE.

House of Commons.

Obituary.

ROBERT PARKER

WE regret to intimate the death of Mr. Robert Parker, age 74 years. Born of working-class parents, his school days were soon over. He was, at first, a journalist, later a commercial traveller, and finally a clerk. Three or four years later he retired to "live quietly," he said. But he never lived quietly, and from his youth onwards the Burns cult (and that of other Scottish writers) the Bowling Club and the Socialist and Co-operative movements all got his enthusiastic support. His education had included the usual Bible teaching, and his attendance at Sunday School was regular because compulsory! But sixty years ago Hell was "hot," not the "just comfortable" of to-day, and one result was that early in life he found himself casting off one belief after another till, as he phrased it himself, there was only a thin Theism left. Even that went when the war in 1914 proved that the conception of a loving Father was impossible. Then, joining the Glasgow Secular Society the Secular movement became almost the chief interest in his life. Various posts were held, and later he was President.

Fifteen years ago he underwent a serious operation, and in March of last year another, facing each with courage and good cheer. In a very few years he lost two sons, a daughter, his wife and two sisters. Like the Poet he so much admired he had

. . . misfortunes great and sma'
But aye a heart abune them a'.

In recent years his strength was carefully husbanded by reason of cardiac weakness. On Sunday, June 17, he felt unwell, he said, and in a few minutes he had passed. At the Glasgow Crematorium, on the 20th, the large gathering and its representative character was proof of the esteem in which he was held. He was known to Freethinkers over a wider area than Glasgow, and by all will his death be regretted. To his son and to his sister and the others we offer sincere sympathy. At the house and at the Crematorium, Secular Services were—at his own request—conducted by Mr. Hugh Kerr, Secretary, the Glasgow Branch, R.P.A., of which he was a member.

E.H.

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LONDON.

INDOOR.

SOUTH PLACE ETHICAL SOCIETY (Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, W.C.1) : 11.0, Gerald Heard—"After Dictatorship—What?"

OUTDOOR.

BETHNAL GREEN AND HACKNEY BRANCHES N.S.S. (Victoria Park, near the Bandstand) : 6.0, Mrs. E. Grout—"Christian Evidence."

NORTH LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (White Stone Pond, Hampstead) : 11.30, Sunday, July 1, Mr. L. Ebury. Highbury Corner, 8.0, Mr. C. Tuson. South Hill Park, Hampstead, 8.0, Monday, July 2, Mr. W. P. Campbell Everden. Highbury Corner, 8.0, Thursday, July 5, Mr. W. P. Campbell Everden.

SOUTH LONDON BRANCH (Brockwell Park) : 7.30, Sunday, July 1, Mr. L. Ebury. Rushcroft Road, near Brixton Town Hall, 8.0, Tuesday, July 3, Mr. G. F. Green. Stonhouse Street, High Street, Clapham, 8.0, Wednesday, July 4, A Lecture. Alival Road, Clapham Junction, 8.0, Friday, July 6, Mr. L. Ebury.

WEST HAM BRANCH (Corner of Deanery Road, opposite the Library, Water Lane, Stratford, E.) : 7.0, Mr. H. S. Wisheart—"The Evil of Religion."

WEST LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (Hyde Park) : 12.0, Sunday, Mr. W. B. Collins. 3.30, Platform No. 1, Messrs. Wood and Bryant. Platform No. 2, Messrs. Saphin and Tuson. 6.30, Platform No. 1, Messrs. Collins and Hyatt. Platform No. 2, Messrs. Saphin and others. Wednesday, 7.30, Mr. Campbell Everden. Thursday, 7.30, Messrs. Wood and Saphin. Friday, 7.30, Two Lectures.

COUNTRY.

OUTDOOR.

BLYTHE (Market) : 7.0, Monday, July 2, Mr. J. T. Brighton. BRIERFIELD (Quaker Bridge) : 3.15, Sunday, July 1, Mr. J. Clayton.

CROOK (Market Place) : 7.0, Wednesday, July 4, Mr. J. T. Brighton.

GLASGOW BRANCH N.S.S. (Dunne Square, Paisley) : 8.0, Saturday, June 30, Mrs. M. Whitefield—"Crucifixion and Resurrection." West Regent Street, Glasgow, 8.0, Mrs. M. Whitefield—"Some Modern Superstition."

HANTS AND DORSET BRANCH N.S.S. (491 Wimborne Road, Winton, Bournemouth) : 8.0, A meeting will be held every Tuesday night. Freethinkers on holiday cordially invited.

MANCHESTER BRANCH N.S.S. (Platt Fields, Rusholme) : 7.0, Mr. Sam Cohen, A Lecture.

MORPETH (Market Place) : 7.0, Saturday, June 30, Mr. J. T. Brighton.

NEWCASTLE BRANCH N.S.S. (Bigg Market) : 7.0, Sunday, July 1, Monday, July 2 and Tuesday, July 3. Mr. G. Whitehead will speak each evening.

SOUTH SHIELDS (Would Have Memorial) : 7.0, Wednesday, July 4, Thursday, July 5, and Friday, July 6, Mr. G. Whitehead will speak each evening.

SUNDERLAND (Gill Bridge) : 7.0, Sunday July 1, Mr. J. T. Brighton.

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The very versatile author of the recently-issued "Minerva's Owl."—*Sunday Referee*.

Mr. Simmons' verses are slight in content, but reveal an unusual command of metrical schemes. Rondeaux, villanelles and triolets are his ordinary media and he handles them all with skill.—*Birmingham Gazette*.

Mr. Bayard Simmons gives us the quality of wit with clever versification, particularly in the title poem.—*Poetry Review*.

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