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

Views and Opinions

On Snobs and Snobbery

DURING the Jubilee proceedings comment was made on the simple, unaffected style of the King's language. This has often been remarked, and the compliment paid the King, unlike many that are paid in that quarter was well deserved. His language is without affectation both in style and in enunciation. His voice has none of that artificially acquired adenoidal thickening that comes from constricting certain muscles. In every case this is a product of imitation, something that has been laboriously acquired, and which has settled down into a very bad habit. Neither has the King that terrible pronunciation which leads a man such as Dean Inge to talk about "cultchah," or refer to a "membah" of this or that society, or the B.B.C. to perpetrate a number of atrocities in the impudent attempt to create a set form of speech. The King has none of these stupid tricks; neither has the Prince of Wales, nor the Duke of Kent, nor any other members of the family that I have heard speak through the microphone. They speak English as it is spoken by men and women who are not the victims of an attempt to appear what they are not, and who do not confuse the acquisition of unnatural modes of enunciation with evidence of superior learning.

Why is this so? I do not mean to imply that the members of the Royal Family are the only ones who speak unaffected English. I mean only that there are a large number of people who use an unmistakably affected form of speech, a form they have taken great pains to acquire, and they have done so under the impression that it places them among a "superior" class. I think this phenomenon is worth noting, and, if possible explaining. In my judgment it is pure snobbery, and in offering an explanation of this form of a general complaint, it may be found that the longest way round is the shortest road home.

What is a Snob?

The word "snob" has acquired a very bad reputation. I think the reputation is deserved. Everyone deprecates snobbery, and multitudes are living examples of its practice. When Thackeray wrote his *Book of Snobs*, in which he depicted the various varieties of the species, but supplied no examination or analysis of snobbery, every snob who read the book enjoyed it—and saw every other snob pilloried. It was said, and probably with truth, that if Thackeray had not been a bit of a snob himself he would not have produced so excellent a characterization. But the work left the snob as unaffected as is the tittle-tattling member's of a congregation by the parson's sermon against idle gossip.

The dictionary defines a snob as "a vulgar and contemptible person." There is a secondary definition, "One who is always pretending to be something better than he is," and yet another "one who apes gentility." I do not regard any of these definitions as completely satisfactory. Indeed, they seem to be quite as much a product of snobbery as a definition of it. The one, for instance, which describes a snob as one pretending to be *better* than he is implies a standard of value which most would agree is developed by snobbery. For "better" seems to have reference to a higher social class; and has none to either a moral or an intellectual superiority. It has no reference to individual worth. It is a snobbocratic classification, and illustrates the truth "that which we call a snob would, called by any other name, still be snobbish."

The obvious distinction upon which the definitions cited are based is that between high and low society. But "high" society is not of necessity *better* society, and as Carlyle pointed out, the judge without his robes and the King without his crown would be indistinguishable from the dustman without his shirt. "One who apes gentility" is clearly open to the same criticism because the gentility in question has nothing whatever to do with gentleness or even gentlemanliness. It is too much like the test applied by the servant girl in the old play of "Our Boys"—"he must be a gentleman because he never cleans his own boots." The universality of snobbery is indicated by the snobbery of those responsible for the definitions; and all we can extract from them is the fact that the snob is one who claims to be something that he is not. By itself this would only imply that the snob is an impostor or an hypocrite. To make the definition work we must make it more psychological. So tentatively we may say that it is what a man *is* that makes him a snob, more than what he does. Snobbery has to do with the very nature of a man, not with his outward trappings, or even with his actions.

* * *

Caste and Class

It is possible to get a little light on the subject from another consideration. In societies where caste is

established snobbery is very rare, and even when it exists I think one may assume that it is an importation. Where caste exists a man is born to one station in life, and in that station he remains. He cannot get out of it, he cannot rise above it. He may pretend to be a better man than he is, but that is not snobbery, it is hypocrisy or humbug. Caste keeps the lines of social cleavage clear and distinct.

But in a society where caste exists not, and where the lines that divide class from class are loosely drawn, and where classes merge into each other, we have a different situation. A man born "low down" may in the course of a generation or two be ranked as of "noble" descent, and in such conditions there is every inducement for a man to imitate those above him and to look down on those below him. He tries to be taken for one belonging to a "higher" class by advertising that he does not belong to a "lower" one. It is this that is responsible for that peculiarly British institution, schools, for the sons, or daughters of gentlemen, and leads to contentment with an inferior education for a larger payment. The "lower" class wishes to feel it is in touch with the "higher" class, and the "higher" class, by a kind of inverted snobbery adopts plans which mark it off from the "lower." When the Prince of Wales adopted a bowler hat, hundreds of thousands of men straightway adopted the same kind of head-gear. Somehow it made them feel they were in touch with royalty, and the Prince's grandfather, Edward VII., set going even a craze for appendicitis, and for the same reason. Snobbery is also responsible for the aping of tone and accent and pronunciation which passes with so many as evidence of culture and familiarity with the "upper" circles. In all these instances, and they may be multiplied in many directions, we have true snobbery, the hall mark of which is the value placed upon "class," and a relative weakness of appreciation of individual and intellectual worth.

* * *

Between two Evils

We may now get back to our starting point, that of the absence of affectation in the King's speech and manner. Ever since those far-off days when the King was an incarnation of the tribal joss, the aura of the supernatural or the extra-natural has hung round the person of a King. It was present in the theory of the divine right of Kings, it is there in the ceremonial approach to the person of the King (a survival from the time when to touch a King, or to approach him too closely, exposed the subject—not the King—to danger) in the childish surprise that a King or Queen may behave just as do ordinary men and women, in the herding of thousands of people outside the palace to see the King and Queen show themselves and wave their hands (one feels that little surprise would have been felt if the heavens had opened and a voice had been heard proclaiming: "This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased") or in the confession of one of our sporting lords that when King Edward gave him a cigar to smoke he had a cabinet made for it and preserved it as a heirloom for his family.

The significant thing for the understanding of the social significance of snobbery is that the King stands by himself. In the popular estimation he is separated from the common people as he was when he was an actual manifestation of the divinity. Socially, he is without a rival. No one can aspire to be King, the office is not open. The King will be "kingly" in the eyes of multitudes, whether he is tall or short, stout or thin, ugly or handsome, wise as Plato or next

door to idiocy. The King cannot rise above his station nor sink beneath it. And it is that which bars snobbery to him. He is a caste by himself in a society in which caste for others does not exist. If in passing through the streets he stops to pat a poor child on the head, or takes a cup of tea in a slum dwelling, no one is shocked, everyone is charmed to see a monarch lay aside for a moment his inherited and inevitable greatness and become, even temporarily, human. The King is the fount of all honour and can afford to stoop where other men fear to bend. There is no need for the King to ape the manners of anyone in order to preserve his greatness. There is no need for him to cultivate a university drawl, or painfully to acquire a fashionable pronunciation as evidence of his "class," he need have no fear of being mistaken for a common person, and cannot pretend to be of a higher class than he is. He is the King, and provided he is not of that childlike kind that loves pomp and ceremony he can be himself. In a society such as ours a King may be a fool or a rogue—we have had our share of both—but he simply cannot be a snob.

So it would appear, on analysis, that—for the present at least—we have to choose between snobbery and caste. If the caste system is present we are without snobbery, because the conditions for its existence is not there. Every man's place in the social scale is fixed. But if we have a society in a fluid state, where classes pass from one to the other, and where, as a consequence, men pass from one class to another, and worth is measured in terms of social status, snobbery is to be expected.

But while the position of a King does not make for snobbery in him, it inevitably makes for snobbery in others. It leads to a flunkeyism that is deep-seated and wide-spread. It establishes false standards of value, and absurd estimates of human worth. A non-human visitor from Mars might well ask whether between a fashionable parade at Ascot and a horse parade at the Agricultural Hall, there is any vital difference. A King that rules over a caste system does not create but he perpetuates a society of slaves. In a system where the classes melt into each other, and where elevation from one class to another is possible, we have the worship of titles, the desire to crawl from a "lower" to a "higher" class, until one stands in the shadow of a throne that provides an ideal ground for the cultivation of the Snob. Society is divided into a "higher" and a "lower," and with the elevation depending so largely upon qualities that cannot be expressed in terms of individual worth snobbery is inevitable.

This analysis has not, I am afraid, led to a very lofty view of human nature, but it is, I think, a sound one, and will remain so until we have achieved a further stage of social evolution.

CHAPMAN COHEN.

I cannot say that I am surprised to read a newspaper report of a private in the Royal Engineers who was fined six days' pay because, being very tired, he was fool enough to go to sleep in church. It was the clergyman who noted his offence, and who thoughtfully and kindly reported it to the commanding officer. This is the sort of thing that so endears our ancient army system to the intelligent citizen. Nevertheless, the ancient army system is not without merit, and sometimes works both ways, as it did in the present case. For on the next Sunday the company of Royal Engineers combined to boycott the collection plate of the good clergyman and gave 30s. to the sleeping sinner instead.

"Things that have Interested Me," Arnold Bennett.

The Priestly Profession

"The mystery of sending spiritual gifts is nothing but a trade."—*Dean Swift.*

"Oh, take the cash, and let the credit go,
Nor heed the rumble of a distant drum."
Omar Khayyam.

THE extended publicity given to cases of non-payment of tithes and church rates has called attention to the devious ways in which priests get their living. The men of God themselves are very shy at explaining the true state of affairs. They wish the innocent people in the pews to think that religion is without money and without price, and that they have been chosen specially by Heaven to supervise the religious habits of their countrymen. In reality they are nothing more or less than modern medicine-men engaged in precisely similar work to their coloured prototypes in uncivilized countries.

The results are far from unpleasant to the clergy. They are not crucified or martyred. The average reverend enjoys a comfortable livelihood, and lives in a nice house, a little larger than his neighbours'. The higher ecclesiastics have a far better time than ordinary parsons. The Bench of Bishops alone share £182,000 yearly, including the bachelor Bishop of London, who is always whining of the poverty of the wretched clergy, and who himself enjoys a salary of £200 weekly, a sum sufficient to keep forty ordinary families in comfort. The Archbishop of Canterbury does better still. He follows in the footsteps of the "Carpenter of Nazareth" on a salary of £15,000 yearly, with a palace and a town house thrown in.

Another matter is worth attention. There are over fifty "livings" worth over £1,000 yearly, where the parishes have under a thousand inhabitants. The rector of Stainby-with-Gunby, Lincolnshire, has £2,376 net income a year. The population of this out-of-the-way place numbers 216. The town of March, East Anglia, has about ten thousand inhabitants, many of them Nonconformists. The four churches in the town have "livings" worth, when added together, just under £5,000 a year. In the heart of the City of London £50,000 yearly is spent on ministering to the spiritual needs of a small resident population of caretakers, policemen and their wives, and Jewish people. The latter, who form the vast majority of the total, never trouble the pew openers of the Christian churches. The Church of England possesses property in the City of London proper worth over £2,000,000; to say nothing of the ecclesiastical resources in Greater London over the border. The trustees of Queen Anne's Bounty, and the Ecclesiastical Commissioners, who handle the huge finances of this Church of England, together control property worth millions of money. They supervise the collection of tithes, ground rents, coal royalties, and the revenues from huge blocks of house property all over England.

These things are survivals of the bad old days when priests had far greater power than they possess to-day, and when Cardinals and Archbishops rivalled monarchs in their magnificence, and rode roughshod over the liberties of the English people. They are relics of the days when the youngest son went into the Church as his brothers went into the Army or the Navy. The "fatter" the "living" and the less the work, the better it was considered to be. Even to-day some "livings" are sold to the highest bidder, and advertisements appear in Church periodicals extolling the pleasures of country life, sometimes adding "present holder over seventy years of age."

The specious advertisements of such bodies as the Young Men's Christian Association and the Salvation

Army, besides the innumerable appeals of the many Nonconformist Churches for cash equally remind us that the Christian Religion is a trade and is worked on commercial lines. Missions and meetings are advertised in the same way as hair-restorers and liver-pills. Preachers and revivalists adopt similar methods to circus proprietors and cinema managers, apparently with the same soothing results.

The extent to which ordinary commercial means have displaced the voluntary contributions so long in vogue in connexion with church and chapel audiences is highly significant. The old-fashioned method of collecting cash during the actual service is no longer considered adequate. Even the amateur sale of work and jumble sale are being superseded by up-to-date and efficient substitutes. So much is this the case that trading by religious bodies is considered by ordinary business men as a menace to the welfare of the trading community. Bazaars, conducted on a strictly business basis, are held for the reduction of church debts and the erection of costly places of worship. Missionary and other propagandist societies owe a good proportion of their incomes to sales of goods, and many thousands of pounds are raised annually in this manner for purely religious purposes. At a bazaar held at a provincial town over £1,000 was realized, and a week's missionary exhibition at a seaside resort brought £200 net profit. A sale of work in South London produced £250, and a dozen similar functions realized over £2,000.

Imagine the many similar exhibitions and sales held annually throughout the country for the various religious organizations, missionary and Bible societies. Add to these the 13,000 parish churches, and 10,000 chapels, mission-halls and tin-tabernacles, all of which now look to bazaars, exhibitions and sales as an easy means of raising extra money, and we begin to realize the vast extent of the business of religion. One of the finest examples is seen in the huge trading organization of the Salvation Army, which sells regularly among its members tea, men's and women's clothing, children's toys, musical instruments, books and magazines, and all manner of articles. This "spiritual" organization also touts for emigrants at the usual charges, and draws commission from the railway and shipping companies. Insurance business is also encouraged, thus justifying the pleasantry that innocent Salvationists imagine that they are insured against fire in two worlds—at the modest price of one contribution.

The constantly increasing competition between our modern and competitive medicine-men has had an unexpected result, which would have shocked the more innocent Christians of the Ages of Faith. It has led to the desire to make the Christian Religion a more pleasant, as well as a more profitable, business. To attract paying audiences, lengthy services and long-winded sermons have been cut, and more attention has been paid to the music. Painful Sabbaths have been mitigated by Pleasant Sunday Afternoons. String bands and soloists reinforce the melodramatic addresses "to men only." Missionaries share the pulpit, or platform, with alleged reformed burglars and converted policemen. Audiences must be entertained and not shocked for fear that the collections may suffer. Dogmas which have been an integral part of the Christian Religion for nigh a score of centuries have been politely shelved, and to-day only two organizations, the Romish Church and the Salvation Army, dare to preach hell and a fiery damnation. With the sole object of making money, the clerical pill has been well covered with sugar, even at the cost of honesty. It is worthy of the followers of a creed, which, outraging the spirit of the age, still prays for rain or fine weather, and makes special supplication

to an imaginary "Throne of Grace" for the individual members of a numerous royal family.

The Parliamentary Report of 1891 showed that the annual value of the ancient ecclesiastical endowments of the so-called Church of England amounted then to £5,469,171, exclusive of more modern benefactions. Properties of all kinds have nearly doubled in value since that date. The leading Free Churches are also heavily endowed, and all religious bodies are heavily indebted for support to the "dead hands" of half-forgotten men. These huge figures should make Freethinkers pause and reflect that Freethought propaganda has to make headway not only against the grossest ignorance and belated barbarism, but against a most heavily endowed superstition. In fighting superstition, Freethinkers are opposing an enemy entrenched behind mountains of money-bags. In money lies the power of the clergy, and religion itself is simply a huge vested interest, comparable to the Meat Trust, or the Drink Traffic. There are many anomalies in the Christian Religion, but one of the most outstanding is that priests should amass wealth through preaching the gospel of poverty. Well may the clergy echo the biting words of Iago: "Thus do I make my fool my purse."

MIMNERMUS.

The Ruins and Religion of Ceylon

INNUMERABLE evidences of prehistoric cultures have been unearthed by the archæologist during recent generations. Ancient Crete, Elam, Sumer, an archaic culture in the Indus Valley, with various others have disclosed their age-long preserved secrets to the scientific explorer. Old-time Egypt and Mesopotamia are now commemorated in countless volumes, but relatively little has been chronicled by modern scribes concerning the melancholy memorials of departed glory so abundant in Ceylon.

In 1820, Fagan discovered a few of these fragments of the past, and his inquiries were continued by later observers but, until 1871, little was done to preserve them. The imposing remains of long-deserted and nearly forgotten cities were completely overgrown by the jungle. They were disregarded by the natives, and it is entirely owing to European intervention that these splendid ruins have been studied and restored.

It is commonly assumed that Ceylon contains no ancient monuments of note, and most travellers in the East—even those who visit Kandy or Colombo—take their departure in utter ignorance of its wealth of ancient artistry. Still, there are a few excellent works on Ceylon, and to these Mr. E. C. Mitton has added another, entitled *The Lost Cities of Ceylon* (Murray, 1928), which portrays this beautiful island as a veritable paradise of natural scenery as well as a mausoleum of a once proud civilization.

This well-illustrated volume is replete with curious information. Its author knows the island intimately, and he declares that: "It is well worth while going out East to inspect the Ceylon ruins alone, and specially to see the exquisitely carved moonstones; these have nothing to do with the jewels usually associated with the island, but are semi-circular granite stones of a kind peculiarly associated with Ceylon. A few examples of semi-circular stones in a comparatively plain style have been found in South India outside the temple entrances, but they have little in common with the richly carved specimens in Anuradhapura and Polonnaruwa. The carving on the stones in these ruined cities is as fresh as the day it was done,

and is alive with the spirit of the artist whose hand fashioned the life-like elephants and bullocks, the strange horses, and still stranger lions which run incessantly after one another in a race beginning 2,000 years ago, and stretching to infinity."

Mitton adopts the spelling Cingalese in preference to that of the more correct Sinhalese to signify the races of Ceylon, as this form seems more familiar to the English reader. Tradition tells that the offspring of the lion Sinha became a powerful ruler, and his grandson sailed from India to Ceylon, and there established his monarchy in 543 B.C. In the chronicles compiled by the invaders the defeated and dispossessed natives are referred to in terms of contempt. But the newcomers nevertheless intermarried with them, and probably the tiny remnant of Veddahs (whose high morality was so deservedly praised by Herbert Spencer) who still linger in the rock shelters in Eastern Ceylon are the last representatives of the aboriginal race.

During the reign of Tissa, which began about 307 B.C., Mahinda, the pious son of the humane Indian ruler, Asoka, arrived it is said, by means of levitation to convert the Cingalese to the Buddhist confession. The King was soon converted, and his subjects dutifully adopted the foreign faith. Thus Ceylon became a Buddhist island, and despite its Moslem and Christian inhabitants, so, substantially remains.

Gautama, the great Buddha himself, is reported to have paid three visits to Ceylon, but of these there exists no reliable evidence. Yet ever since its introduction Buddhism, although in a very corrupted form, has continued to dominate the lives of the people and immense multitudes of the faithful constantly revere the giant impression made by Buddha's foot on Adam's Peak in his last sojourn in the island.

While Gautama meditated under the celebrated Bo-tree and received enlightenment he was tenderly protected by a cobra, whose hood sheltered the sage from cold and rain. This survival of a cruder creed, associated with several other excrescences of kindred character is indelibly attached to the popular religion. These superstitions are in no way countenanced by Buddha or his immediate disciples, yet they everywhere influence Buddhist art, and the cobra is a prominent figure in its sculptures.

Anuradapura's ruins are one of the wonders of the Eastern world. Unfortunately, its edifices were mainly timber and have long since crumbled, but the foundations remain. Its ruins now repose amid the shelter of "beautiful spreading 'raintrees,' so-called because their leaves fold together at night, and, opening in the morning, drop dew on the heads of those who pass below. The grass is studded with ruins showing many a specimen of exquisite carving in granite. . . . The three mighty dagabas with their tree-grown summits—great mounds of millions and millions of bricks—can at some points be seen all at once; while the glimmering of the blue or sunset dyed water of Tissa Wewa or Basawak Kulam seen through the trees adds distance and mystery to many a view." Also, a magnificent series of Buddhist sculptures, ranging from the period of Asoka to recent days, may be admired in this ancient capital.

The city was formerly of enormous size. Its walls are still undetected, and the royal palace itself awaits discovery. Most of the ruins examined seem to have been those of sacred structures, and even its public buildings and residential districts remain unexplored. Mitton actually supposes that Anuradhapura equalled London in magnitude, and that it housed "a huge population while presenting evidence of civilization we are accustomed to consider exclusively our own."

After Ceylon's acceptance of Buddhism, the sacred Bo-tree was planted, and within the shadow of a

group of trees propagated from the parent plant reproduces an image of Buddha carved in wood. The sister of Mahinda, the first Buddhist missionary, is said to have carried a branch of the Bo-tree under which Buddha cogitated in India when she came to Ceylon, and from this the great tree of Anuradhapura was miraculously developed. This tree, alleged to be the oldest in the world, has always been the object of deep reverence and awe with the natives, so that its decay and replacement by another tree could scarcely have passed unnoticed. Its age is estimated at 2,200 years, but that does not prove that it was grown from a bough broken from the Indian tree. A temple has been built above it, and a water festival was held in its honour, and the Bo performed miracles. The lame, the halt and the blind prostrated themselves before it, while pilgrims assembled from far and near.

Emerson Tennant, in his great work, *Ceylon*, states that in comparison with this ancient tree, "the oak of Ellerslie is but a sapling, and the Conqueror's oak in Windsor Forest barely numbers half its years. The yew trees of Fountains Abbey are believed to have flourished there 1200 years ago, the olives in the Garden of Gethsemane were full grown when the Saracens were expelled from Jerusalem; and the cypress of Soma, in Lombardy is said to have been a tree in the time of Julius Cæsar; yet the Bo-tree is older than these by a century."

The great dagabas are also striking memorials of the past. Ruanweli is one of the most remarkable of these. Anuradhapura contains eight holy places very sacred to the pious. These are the Bo-tree, the Brazen Palace, of which 1600 pillars remain, Ruanweli and five other famous dagabas.

Amid the ruins of a proud past are the remains of the Temple of the Tooth. The dental relic itself reached Ceylon in 311 A.D., the gift of a Brahman princess, and was deposited in the now deserted Temple. During the incursions of the Tamils from India, when they ravaged Ceylon, much as the Northmen and Saxons once ravaged Britain, this sacred tooth was usually conveyed to a place of safety. And whenever the Kings departed from their capital the tooth accompanied the Cingalese Court. Moreover, a treasure so priceless was occasionally removed from royal custody by the suspicious monks, and at least on one occasion was stolen and carried off to India, and was only restored when ransomed at a heavy charge.

An entertaining and, presumably fictitious record of this relic describes its wanderings from stately temples to deserted caverns and its burial in the secluded recesses of dense pathless forests. Khema, the Sage is reported to have rescued it from the funeral pile of Buddha, while later it arrived in Ceylon hidden in the resplendent tresses of a devout princess. Truly, her hair must have been abundant to conceal a tooth so large. The relic is preserved in Kandy and is borne in procession during the festival of Perahera. It is strictly guarded from profane eyes, but a model is on view in Colombo Museum. The tooth, Mitton states, "is about two inches in length, and the thickness and shape of a man's little finger, and if a tooth at all, is possibly the fossil one of some animal."

It is also to be noted that the Portuguese when they sacked Kandy in 1560, claimed to have captured the original relic, which they afterwards destroyed at Goa, so that the tooth now venerated is probably a monkish substitution.

Various other Buddhist relics have recently come to light, and the inscription attached to one set strongly suggests considerable antiquity. The native Chronicles contain little information concerning the

advent of the sacred tooth in comparison with the detailed account of the coming of the Bo-tree or that holy fetish, the collar-bone, which is venerated by the faithful as the third in importance of Anuradhapura's awe-inspiring and reverence-awakening treasures.

T. F. PALMER.

Scotland For Ever!

SCOTLAND, bestudded with her Manses,
 In Heaven's own favour still advances:
 Her schools disgorge fine lads of parts,
 To rule the Empire or its Marts,
 To shine in medicine-cke in law,
 To preach the word with powerful jaw,
 To keep the British Army right,
 To show the Navy how to fight;
 To gather gear in many a clime,
 Be't rupee, rouble, mark or dime.
 The pickles still the mickles make,
 That early axiom ne'er forsake,
 Ye sons of Scotia: mind your faith
 And siller: see ye keep them baith!
 We've left behind the days of dirks,
 We've civilized with banks and kirks:
 Let Sassenachs sport themselves at Wembley,
 We glory in our May Assembly!
 Our God's the God of Bethel yet,
 He cannot his elect forget!
 From books, plays, paintings that profane,
 He'll keep our hearts. They shall not stain
 Our ransomed souls. We most delight
 Where'er we are, both day and night,
 In our God's Law that keeps us cosy,
 And makes our future bright and rosy!
 Ye Scots, how blessed are your lots,
 How high above the wretched sots,
 Of other lands without God's favour,
 Without peat reek and heathery flavour!
 God give us grace humbly to bear
 The favour thou hast shown us! Where
 Are dwellings for thee to be seen,
 Like these frae Tweed to Aberdeen?
 Anew we bless baith Ben and Glen
 Thou lov'st so well! Amen! Amen!

SIMPLE SANDY.

Acid Drops

Nothing seems beyond the brutality of Fascism. In Italy women are kept in prison because their men-folk will not return to be shot or imprisoned. In Germany (the *Daily Express*, August 19), gives publicity to the fact that little two-year-old Karl Frankel, is being held by the police as a hostage for his mother who has escaped to Denmark. The mother is an opponent of Hitler, and apparently hoped to secure her child after she had made her own escape. She gave a Danish school teacher, Herr Pihl, power of attorney to take the child. But the police have refused to give up the child to anyone but the mother, and she will be arrested whenever she returns to Germany. But there is something even more damnable than this. The child is at present in an institution, and Herr Pihl was told by the head of the institution that the new Germany was interested only in healthy children. Sick children—the child of an anti-Nazi, is considered not healthy—will receive no more than the bare necessities of life. We do not say that this is the conduct of savages, because we do not know of any "savages" who would behave in this manner. It is simply in accord with the records of German Fascism, and when one says that everything is said.

It was pointed out in these columns some weeks ago, that the partition of Abyssinia had been decided on by France, Italy, and Britain some years before the war.

Abyssinia was, of course, not consulted, nor was it a party to the agreement; but then the turkey seldom has a decisive voice in the menu served up on Christmas Day. All that is left to the bird is to inflict indigestion on the contrasting parties. That may, assuming the Italian—British—French plans to work out as originally planned, be the only form of effective retort left to Abyssinia. And there are plenty of historic examples of Empires and conquering nations suffering from this complaint. To swallow more than one can assimilate is always an unhealthy policy; and an organism that cannot see anything eatable without an irresistible desire to swallow it is bound to injure itself.

The fact of this agreement, although known to anyone with a passable memory and a keen eye, is now being made public. But, again, the real reason for neither Britain nor France wishing to carry out the agreement with Italy is not made public, although this is also crystal clear. The promise of the partition of Abyssinia was made to the old Italy. The dispute to-day is with the Italy of the Fascistic Mussolini. The old Italy would have been content with mere economic exploitation, with some share given to other countries. Mussolini, in order to still discontent at home has fallen back on one of the most ancient of dodges—trouble abroad. (These Dictators are so terribly old-fashioned in their ideas and in their methods). Mussolini has ideas of an African Roman Empire, and the occupation of Abyssinia may be only the prelude to an attack on Egypt, for frontier affairs may always be arranged. Therefore, in spite of the original agreement with Italy being reaffirmed by a secret clause in the treaty of 1915, by which Italy bargained its way into the war, the conquest of Abyssinia opens up dangers to the British, and in lesser degree to the French. Hence the present position.

Now one of the declared objects of the Versailles Treaty was "Open covenants openly arrived at." Yet there has been quite as many treaties since the war as there was before, and the invariable reply to the docile Members of Parliament is, "It is not in the public interest" to be told what is being done, or all that is being done. It is to the public interest only to foot the bill, and suffer the consequences of what is done. It is also true that it would not be to the interest of the turkey to know for what reason it is being fattened. Let us say it is kindness, in both cases that leads to the policy of keeping those who ultimately have to pay, from knowing what is being done.

But it seems to us that the time has arrived when—putting aside turkeys and sticking to sheep—Members of Parliament and the nation ought to decline to be kept in ignorance of what is being done in their name, and the consequences of which they have to face. We have a General Election near at hand—unless the Government is to forfeit the profit—to gain which the advertising of the Jubilee ballyhoo was undertaken—and a declaration in support of a policy of none but "Open covenants openly arrived at" might be asked for from candidates. Further, those who agree with this, should also be asked by voters solemnly to declare that if ever they are in power they will not be bound by any secret treaties or by any secret clauses in a treaty that has been signed. This would form a barrier to the bargaining going on between Ministers and groups and other nations that are quite unknown to the responsible public. The British public may not be over-intelligent, but it is not deliberately vicious, and it has enough sense of right to feel the injustice of much that is done in its name, if it can only be told in time.

The chief obstacle to doing what is suggested is that it depends upon getting men in Parliament who have a keen sense of *personal* independence, who are not looking out for jobs or posts, and who are not to be bought by titles or other forms of social distinction. These men require finding.

Meanwhile we may note that Mussolini has placed a distinct issue before the world. Only a fortnight ago he said he was determined to "go ahead until we have established a Fascist Empire." He has also shown the world by what means he will do so. Germany also has avowed its purpose of building another Fascist Empire, and Germany also has made its methods clear to the world. The denial of every civilized right, the torture of women and the murder of children are samples of what we are to expect. We prophesied in 1915, that whatever was the result of the "Great War," it would mean at least the temporary demoralization of the world. But we hardly expected things to be so bad as they have turned out.

At a coroner's inquest held at Hackney on August 19, one of the jury wished to bring in a verdict of murder or manslaughter against God Almighty. He said that in his opinion the death of the man, who formed the subject of the inquest, was due to an act of God. That is precisely the grounds on which men and women are hung. That man can look out for trouble on the Day of Judgment.

The Annual Report of the Trades' Union Congress advocates placing the B.B.C. under the direct control of the Cabinet, with a Board appointed by the Prime Minister. We are not satisfied that this would be a material improvement on the present situation. It would in practice mean the control of opinion by another body instead of by the present one. One cannot imagine very heretical opinions being given a fair hearing, whether these opinions were religious, political, or economic. This would remain the case, whatever complexion the Government happened to have. So long as the B.B.C. claims to be educating the people, it should be a vehicle for the expression of the most divergent opinions on *equal terms*. And it should be a real expression, not a sham, as it has been in nearly every case where the profession has been to present all points of view. Machine made opinion, whoever and whatever is to control, only leads to the creation of a satisfied ignorance—and ignorance the more deadly because it believes itself to be educated.

We see that the tale of Buckfast Abbey being built by the monks is still going the rounds. The yarn will probably pass into history and take its place among religious legends. As a matter of fact the plans were drawn up by ordinary architects, the stonework was carved in the ordinary way, and a few monks worked under the instructions of skilled workmen. The truth of the matter has been pointed out many times, but one never knew religious bodies to let go of any story while it was morally or financially profitable.

Lady Watson, widow of Sir William Watson, the poet, says that when her husband said that before building the new Cathedral the slums of Liverpool should have been cleared out, he was loudly denounced from every pulpit in that city. We quite sympathize with the sentiment expressed, but there is another point of view. After all, slums never interfered with belief in God, it has even encouraged it. And the Cathedral did help to keep the slum-dweller contented, whereas if the slum-dweller had been given a real taste for better homes he might have had excited desires within him that would have demanded still more and still better things. The Cathedral does help to keep slum-dwellers content with their lot, and to make them feel that this is the best country in the world, and to stand up for God and the King.

A good many speakers of the Catholic Evidence Guild claim that they are the only real *free* thinkers. They are absolutely certain that they have the truth; and this certitude must carry with it a sense of freedom and security, thus giving them the task of carrying on the good work of Roman Catholicism unhampered by the uncertainties of all other faiths. It is wonderful how these speakers delude themselves, for the real truth is that almost all Catholics—and particularly the members

of the Catholic Evidence Guild—avoid discussion like poison. If they were so certain, why is it that they can't face a straight question? Why is it that they are afraid of holding a debate on their own platforms? Leaving aside our people, why don't Catholics face the attacks of *informed* Protestants? Why do Catholics censor "infidel" works? Certainty indeed!—the only things a Catholic really has are blind faith and obedience to the "holy" father; and even they are not absolute certainties with a good many Catholics.

It is rather difficult to believe that some popular parsons are quite so—call it mentally shallow—as they write themselves to be, and it would probably be kindest to conclude that the following story is an example of the parsonic practice of inventing personal experiences in order to impress their hearers or readers with the desired moral. Books are compiled of such "experiences," and the Bishop of London has for long been noted for the way in which he "thrills" congregations of over-sexed women and under-sexed men by the experiences which he relates. The practice is, of course, a very ancient one. In the New Testament it may commence, "There was a certain man," and this formula was largely used in sermons for many centuries. It is still with us in sermons, and probably not many outsiders are deceived by it. But the dying Freethinker who whispers his doubts in the ear of the good parson, the woman who is rescued from disaster by another good parson placing his hand on her shoulder and telling her the "old, old story," are well-known features of the theology to-day, and they will probably continue so long as there is any theology left. Not that the disappearance of theology is certain to kill the trafficker in white lies. Theology has not a monopoly even to-day, it is merely the department of life in which one can carry on the trade with the greatest impunity and profit.

All this is preparatory to an incident related by the Reverend "Dick" Sheppard in last week's *Sunday Express*. Feeling depressed, and with a tottering faith in human nature, Mr. Sheppard left his home to attend a meeting. He was behind time, and one would not have been surprised if the Lord had commissioned an angel to catch up with the good "Dick," and transport him to the place of his appointment. But although no angel was forthcoming the Lord did not mean to let his servant continue despondent. So when Mr. Sheppard hailed, boarded, and travelled to his destination on a taxi, the driver "resolutely refused" to take any money. So having got a ride for nothing, Mr. Sheppard turns the incident into an article for the *Sunday Express*—for which we presume payment is made—and the man of God not only saves his fare, but puts money in his purse in addition. In this way the Lord guards his own, confounds his enemies, and cheers up his faithful followers. Mr. Sheppard says his faith in human nature was restored by the good taxi-driver.

I would not on any account cast doubt on the actuality of this incident. To the contrary, this happening can only be applicable as I apply it, if it is absolutely true; for it seems to me that Mr. Sheppard's conception of human nature is very poor indeed. Is human nature such a poor thing that the doing of a kindly act by a taxi-driver is sufficient to restore a man's shattered faith in the decency of mankind? We have not had the religious up-bringing that Mr. Sheppard has had, so when a man swindles us, as one had just swindled Mr. Sheppard, we do not cry out that the universe is barren, and when a man does a decent action we are not transported to a seventh heaven of delight at so remarkable a phenomenon. For not being convinced, as Mr. Sheppard is, that goodness is not, unless it comes from God, and that badness is man's natural state, I know that good actions on the part—even of taxi-drivers—are not so uncommon as to cause us to write a newspaper article about it. To those of the *Sunday Express* readers who use

their intelligence, and that paper must go into the hands of some thoughtful readers, the incident will appear too trivial for notice, granted its occurrence. We can only urge, on the other side, that as the antics of the village idiot are as good material for the psychologist as the performances of a genius, that one may draw lessons of the influence of education and environment on a "Dick" Sheppard from so trivial a thing as the legend of "The Good Taxi-driver and the Depressed Parson."

Some Christians are easily satisfied. Some are so extraordinarily optimistic that we are sure no catastrophe imaginable could lessen their faith that all was well. But we really imagine it impossible to find so unconquerable a contentment as that of Dr. H. D. A. Major, the imperturbable, and in many ways admirable Editor of the *Modern Churchman*. Perhaps he bewails the progress of ultra-modernist semi-rationalism, but he whistles boldly while dogma after dogma falls dead on the theological field. Something supernatural remains if only a hundredth part of Christianity, or only a third of the once Holy Trinity. As Dr. Major bravely cries:—

But suppose the reverent agnosticism of our Form-critics is justified at the bar of history, it will not follow that we have necessarily lost the Christian religion in its most essential form. It may be that these critics have completed the work of the liberation of that religion from the limitations and swathing-bands of the past. God the Creator may be unknown and unknowable. God the Incarnate Son may be a myth and an illusion; but God the Indwelling Spirit remains to us. He is ours and we are His. This suffices.

This sounds very much like, "Let us call whatever we believe in religion and it will do to get on with."

Mr. Louis Golding, the Jewish novelist, has followed in the footsteps of other eulogizers of Lourdes. He has made the "pilgrimage," and though at first he admits the "stage-management" of the whole business, yet later, when he heard 2,000 pilgrims sing "in one endless refrain the two sole words of 'Ave Maria,'" well, "you bowed your head." It is a pity Mr. Golding did not bow his head in shame at the consummate fraud of these credulous pilgrimages to a money-making shrine, instead of bolstering up the sorry affair. Thousands of suffering people go annually in the hope of being cured, without the slightest chance of any relief whatever. Does Mr. Golding know of a single blind person recovering his sight or a single cancer case ever being cured?

A Miss Hebe Spauld has written a little work for boys and girls entitled *World Problems of To-day*. She explains, we are told, in simple language such problems as Nationalism, Fascism, Communism, Production, Distribution, Overpopulation, Race Prejudice and Disarmament. The only solution of these difficult questions which she commends is the "principles of Christ." It seems incredible that any thinking person can really believe that the "principles" of Christ—whatever they are for nobody seems to know exactly—form any solution of anything whatever; but there it is. Write a book and say Christ is the "solution" of all our troubles, and publishers almost fall over one another in their anxiety to get it. Christ is still a good money-maker.

A striking illustration of how religion worked in the days of recognized legal slavery is found in the autobiography of Frederick Douglass. Douglass was a slave and a Christian, and he frequently echoes the sentiments of his religion. He recalls, however, with bitter indignation how from the pulpits slaves were "taught the duty of obedience to our masters, to recognize God as the author of our enslavement, to regard running away as an offence against God and man, to deem our slavery a merciful and beneficial arrangement, to consider our hard hands and dark colour as God's displeasure, and as pointing us out as the proper subjects of slavery." This was quite orthodox Christian teaching, and was repeated

in various forms down through the ages in thousands of Christian pulpits. And there is the plain fact that when slavery died out in Europe the Christian Church hung on to its slaves to the bitter end.

It is worth while recalling that after Douglas had settled in the Northern States he found himself one very cold winter's night in Colonel Ingersoll's "Home town." He found difficulty in obtaining an hotel owing to his colour. Someone advised him to try Ingersoll, where he would be sure of a welcome. Douglas hesitated at applying, as it was late on a cold winter's night. He did manage to secure accommodation, and the next day called upon the man whom he was told would be certain to give him hospitality. The result is best told in Douglas's own words. (We have given the incident in *Bradlaugh and Ingersoll*); but repeat it here;

"Mr. Ingersoll was at home, and if I have ever met a man with real living sunshine in his face, and honest manly kindness in his voice, I met one who possessed those qualities that morning. I received a welcome from Mr. Ingersoll and his family which would have been a cordial to the bruised heart of any proscribed and storm beaten stranger, and one which I can never forget or fail to appreciate. Perhaps there were Christian ministers and Christian families in Peoria at that time, by whom I might have been received in the same gracious manner. In charity I am bound to say there were probably such ministers and families, but I am equally bound to say that in my previous visit I had not found them."

Douglas also refers to a convention amongst slave-owners, which considered that while it was not wrong for slaves to be sold by one Christian to another, it was considered bad form to let non-Christians in on the deal. There is nothing new in this. The Christian Church has been credited, unscrupulous advocates of the type of Messrs. Belloc and Chesterton, with a desire to abolish slavery because in some instances it denounced slave holding. But it was the holding of Christian slaves by non-Christians that was the object of the denunciation. The holding of slaves by the Church was quite in order, and there were special ecclesiastical degrees which forbade the churches or monasteries getting rid of their slaves. They were sacred property.

The Dean of Durham says that heaven is past man's understanding. But surely that is a very good (religious) reason for believing in it. A religion that one can understand is not likely to have a very long life.

The Rev. E. Beal of Dundee is in spiritual sympathy with the Dean of Durham on this question, for he thinks that "It is part of the wisdom of the cross that it looks so foolish." Excellent! When a religion preaches a wisdom that looks like foolishness, and has a heaven that no one can understand, it has hold of something that defies criticism. And it is the only religion that will last—until the human race gets wholly and completely sensible.

One would not question an item of news in the Roman Catholic *Universe*, so we give this item without any lengthy criticism. A man named Albert Pilon, whose "anti-clerical utterances brought him twelve months' imprisonment," appeared on a Catholic platform in Montreal, and told the audience that he had become converted. It is stated that Mr. Pilon had, about a year ago a debate with Father Godbout on the existence of God, and Father Godbout now introduced Mr. Pilon with the information that "God had called him from the error of his ways." That explains it, and if God will only call us we will also believe in him. But it is evident that it depends upon God calling, and when he calls we will certainly do him the civility of listening. But we do not care to do the twelve-months' imprisonment by way of introduction.

One of the religious papers has an article ridiculing the pretensions of Johanna Southcott and her followers of to-day. The writer is, of course, right, but his own religion and beliefs are surely not a whit less silly. Why are the contents of the famous box of the poor deluded woman sillier than some of the stories in the New Testament—Jesus stopping the storm, for instance, or his encounters with the Devil? The writer admits that the Southcottians' publications are "the crazy nonsense of the true believer," but some of the sermons published in his own paper can also be described in this way. In fact, as soon as a religious writer deals with *true* religion, he almost always writes "crazy nonsense."

The Diocesan Chaplain of Chelmsford, the Rev. E. A. Ley, must be congratulated on his outspokenness in dealing with "B.B.C. Religion." He likes the wireless and some of the services from the Cathedrals, but for those from the Studio he has the greatest contempt. Here are some of his words:—

I do not like them. I do not like their fatuous Christian apologetics which do the religious cause no good . . . (they) are dull and uninspiring . . . the morning prayers show little tendency to any rational conception of Almighty God . . . the conductor of the service is too often unctuous and highly artificial in his delivery, so much as to prompt the hand to reach out towards the switch.

We fancy neither Mr. Iremonger nor Sir John Reith will reply. There can be no real answer to the truth.

The Archbishop of Canterbury has discovered a way by which a war between Italy and Abyssinia can be averted. Here it is:—

Meanwhile, it is the manifest duty of all who believe in the over-ruling Providence of God and in the place and power of prayer that the Spirit of God may at this present time guide the statesmen of the world, and particularly the Council of the League of Nations, into the way of justice and peace.

Apart from the fact that God has to be prayed to, to lead the League right, what is he going to do with the prayers of the leading Italian statesmen and people imploring him to give Italy the victory, and the prayers of the leading Abyssinian statesmen and people imploring him to allow *them* to smash Italy's provocative designs? Both nations are just as much Christian as the Archbishop and the League. It is a terrible dilemma for a God to be in, but we wish him luck.

A Catholic paper commenting on the excommunication of the lascivious lemon from Germany says that to be consistent the boycott should also go to "the concupiscent cocoanut, the dallying date, and the passionate pineapple." How delightedly the ordinary German people must obey these (pagan) divine Nazi commands!

The old charge that Jesus and his followers have no humour does not always hold good. In New York, at the Broadway Tabernacle, the Wesleyan Dr. Reisner, had a real bit of fun. First he preached his sermon from behind a cake of ice weighing 1,500 pounds. The subject was entitled "Have Another Cold One." The cake of ice was sure some idea, but it was nothing to the kittenish way in which Dr. Reisner played snowballing with the deacons "using artificial ice shaved fine." Christianity is at last becoming really funny.

A young business woman, giving a paper at the Church Union on, "Is England Christian Still?" said, "If people will not come to our churches to hear our faith we must take it to them." But surely that is what is nearly always being done? And with what success? How many people are actually converted this way? It might take this young business woman some time, but she will learn one day that whether you take the faith to people or bring people to the faith, the result is about the same. True Believers are becoming fewer and fewer—and both the lady and the Church Union know it.

THE FREETHINKER

FOUNDED BY G. W. FOOTE.

EDITORIAL

61 Farringdon Street, London, E.C.4.

Telephone No.: CENTRAL 2412.

TO CORRESPONDENTS.

JOSEPH CLOSE.—Thanks for cuttings. We quite agree with your advice to Freethinkers to take advantage of opportunities for letters in local papers. They are certain to do good.

C. RICHARDSON.—There is no question as to the authoritative character of the works of H. C. Lea. No one of any repute has, so far as we are aware, ever questioned this. His studies in general Church history are of first rate value, and are based on original research.

MR. JACK LINDSAY writes:—Sir,—The *Freethinker* is usually very free from misprints; but I have a complaint, the first word in the last line of my verses last week should be "but" not "put."

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

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.

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

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

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

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

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

Sugar Plums

Teachers, "higher" and "lower"—mentally and otherwise—have been meeting at Oxford, and many good things have been said on behalf of freedom of teaching. The Secretary-General of the International Federation of Teachers put in a plea for liberty, and University teachers and professors—some of them—protested against the restrictions placed upon them, and the punishments meted out if they expressed opinions with which those who had charge of the Universities violently disagreed. But something more than a mere general protest is required if greater freedom of teaching is to be secured, or if even the present freedom, which as some of the speakers said, is greater than in most countries, is to be retained. If we are not to sink to the level of Italy and Germany, which bids fair to sink lower and lower in the intellectual scale, we must avoid anything that tends to injure the quality of the educational staff, elementary and other, of the country. The inquisition into a teacher's opinions and beliefs when he is appointed is bad enough, but the watch kept on him after is worse. Professor Laski is solemnly warned by the University authorities that because he criticized British Institutions while on a visit to Russia, he must place a curb on his tongue. Prof. Dickinson, for a similar offence, meets with the same treatment. This forbids to the teachers of a country the liberty of speech that may be enjoyed even by many working-men.

The worst of it is that in all except a very few cases the warning that it must not be done again is duly acted on. It is not done again. The offender either promptly dries up, or he is much more guarded, that is much less useful than he was. Instead of having a professor in a university who stimulates his students into profitable mental activity, the professor merely tickles them so that they may believe they are engaged in profitable intellectual work. The students do not get the full benefit of the education; the quality of the teacher sinks lower because the really independently-minded teacher finds occupation elsewhere. Most of our readers who have their eyes open and their memories active will recall many cases in which Professors of Universities have been remarkably quiet after being reprimanded by their "heads" for activities out of doors, and so can form some idea of the number who take warning and say what they think is safe, rather than what they believe to be true.

The teacher in the elementary school is still worse off, and tends to the encouragement of a still more timid and less intellectually acute type of mind. His appointment is dependent upon a local council, of which the individual members are—to put it mildly—very poorly equipped for the purpose of directing education, and are often swayed by the narrowest of religious and political prejudices. He is not appointed if his views are known to be in opposition to those of the majority of the Council, and if he happens to get appointed and his views become known later, then he can say good-bye to promotion. So that here again we have at work a plan which tends to lower progressively the quality of the teacher, and to prevent our getting into the ranks of adult citizenship the type we ought to be getting. We begin by denying independence to the teacher, and we naturally finish by selecting a type to whom personal and intellectual independence is of no great value.

We thus find ourselves in sympathy with the *Church Times*, when it asks, how can teachers teach if they have not liberty?—

How could they, without losing their self-respect, crush their children's spirits and train them for moral and intellectual slavery in conformity with what was dictated by a State. . . . This is exactly what teachers are doing in Germany, in Italy, in Russia. Their business is not so to train children that they may be useful men and women, developing their own faculties for free service for their fellows, but to train them to be truculent Nazis, Fascists, and Bolsheviks.

Substantially we agree with this, perhaps more than the *Church Times* does. We do not agree with so training the child that we establish a number of set opinions established by the careful exclusion of all opinions that would tend to disturb them. The *Church Times* agrees with us when the opinions in question are concerned with Bolshevism or Fascism, but it does not agree with us when it is a question of religion—and particularly of its own form of the Christian religion. In fact the *Church Times* agrees that the better way is to "train children to be good Christians." But is there any difference, so far as educational quality is concerned, in using children to be unintelligent vehicles for the transmission of our opinions on religion, than to use them to the same end for our political or sociological opinions? A principle is not changed from good to bad, or from bad to good, merely because we happen to agree for the moment with what is being done.

The *Church Times* might bethink itself, as we have so often pointed out, that the faults which it finds with Bolshevism and Fascism are exactly the cardinal faults of the Christian religion—and of all religion. No Church has laboured harder than the Christian Church to turn out a people who shall all believe alike, think alike, and shout alike. The policy of terrorism to achieve these ends is precisely the policy of the Christian Church—or Churches. The Church has prided itself upon, and counted as one its greatest spiritual assets a "truculent" intolerance, which is quite lively to-day wherever it has the chance of being so. The difference between ourselves

and the *Church Times* is that we are opposed to a truculent intolerance on principle; the *Church Times* dislikes it because it represents a competitor in the same line as itself. And it is a biological law that the struggle is always fiercest between animals of allied species.

Some very good letters from Freethinkers appear in the *Northern Echo* as part of correspondence which has arisen over the address of the Archbishop of York's broadcast on Secularism. There is, unfortunately, no likelihood of frank and outspoken Freethinking being voiced on the air while the present regime rules, so such correspondence as the one noted has to take its place. Some of the Christian correspondents try to combat the belief in the advance of Secularism by the statement that all Secularists are not Atheists. That may be true, but it is also true as Bradlaugh had it that Secularists who really understand the implications of their position are; and so one waits for the inevitable of the timid and the careless thinking into brave and logical thinkers.

Will those who intend to join the West Ham and West London Branches Outing to Hampton Court to-day (August 25), please note the following. Meet at the News Theatre, No. 1 platform, Waterloo Station not later than 10.25 a.m., and not at the time stated last week. Individual tickets must not be taken as the whole party will be covered by one voucher, which the West Ham Secretary will obtain.

Some Elements of Paganism in Christianity

VI.

It would not be unjust to say that the story of the Crucifixion made Christianity quite as much as the story of the Resurrection. It appealed to pity—pity for an innocent being executed in such a barbarous manner. Now and then, even a pious Christian might have some doubt as to the possibility of anybody coming to life again three days after death; but there never could be any question as to the barbarity of being nailed to a cross and allowed slowly to die such an agonizing death. We know through history what "man's inhumanity to man" has been. A long black record of murder, torture and imprisonment, almost impossible to conceive as having deliberately taken place, cold and calculating in its ferocity and savagery. White man and black have both been guilty. Winwood Reade called it the *martyrdom* of man, but that is surely too mild an epithet.

The pictures and sculptures of Jesus hanging on a cross have attracted the sympathy and appealed to Europeans more than those of all other gods put together. The idea is that *this* really took place while, for example, the deaths of Prometheus or Attis are but myths impossible to have happened, fairy stories for the childhood of man, but quite absurd for the intellectuals of Christianity. Few people have ever doubted the reality of the Crucifixion. Jesus *must* have been crucified. It was, of course, just the sort of punishment a Roman Governor was bound to order a man whom he declared to be innocent of all crime. The narratives in the four gospels relating the trial and the crucifixion bear the "stamp of truth." They could have happened exactly as described. A library of books has been written to prove not only that the events took place, but that the Jews and the Jews alone were the real culprits. During the middle ages the story of the death of Jesus, read out to the ignorant mob, or shown in the form of paintings, roused them to fury, and was often responsible for the hideous massacres of the poor men, women and children of Jewish faith.

If the crucifixion ever took place it *ought* to rouse our sympathy, of course. The burning of Vanini, Servetus, and Bruno equally rouse our sympathy. In fact, the judicial murder of any innocent man or woman does so. But in the case of Jesus we are never allowed to forget it. For centuries Jesus dying on the cross has been forced on the people in a thousand ways; and our sympathies are now roused not so much because he died, but as a buttress for the religion of Christianity. Barnum himself never worked up one of his extraordinary side-shows with the unerring skill that priests have played on the feelings of the people in the case of Jesus.

And the curious thing is that the very people who ought to have questioned the whole story, the Jews, have meekly accepted it as an historical fact; and with them, of course, is the "reverent" Rationalist who, refusing to ally himself with "wild" theories, seems to swallow it completely, the two thieves, the darkness and all.

The truth is, there never was the crucifixion—or, for that matter the trial of a Jesus of Nazareth. There simply could not have been one as described by the four gospels. The narratives are a mass of absurd contradictions which are not only silly in themselves, but for which there is not a particle of evidence. The various narratives have been carefully examined by a number of writers who have blown to smithereens their authenticity and credibility. In Strauss's famous *Life of Jesus* will be found a detailed analysis well worth perusal. John M. Robertson's discussion of the subject in *Christianity and Mythology* should also be studied. He points out that in the "primitive" gospel, "as reconstructed by conservative criticism the story of the trial and execution has confessedly no place." Robertson, however, does not dismiss the possibility of some execution having happened, and he is inclined to believe that there may be something in the Talmudic stories of a Jesus being stoned to death on the eve of the Passover (about 100 B.C.), the memory of which may have been worked into the gospel story.

The truth is that the latter is simply an allegory of the Sun-God born at the winter solstice—December 24 or 25—when the sign of Virgo is rising above the horizon. That is why there must always be a virgin birth. As the day lengthens—that is, as he becomes stronger—the spring equinox approaches and the Sun-God is "crucified." He rises into heaven and ripens the corn and other foods, and is thus supposed to give his life to provide substance for his worshippers. Had the crucifixion been an actual one, the date must have been fixed. The fact that it is a movable date surely proves that the story is really an allegory—however much it was later fictionized or dramatized. Easter is celebrated on the Sunday following the date of the next full moon after the vernal equinox; and no explanation can whittle away this connexion with the solar myth.

I have in a former article shown that criminals who were "crucified" were put to death on what was nothing more than a stake. The cross we know, the cross upon which Jesus is represented to have been crucified, was certainly unknown as an instrument of death. One writer declares that the curious thing about this cross, the Latin cross, is that in trying to trace it back, it is not the figure which disappears leaving the cross, but exactly the reverse; that is, a representation of a figure with arms outstretched has been found, without the cross. Some of the paintings of the early Christian Church in the Catacombs at Rome show this figure—looking, by the way, like a very young man or even a girl—standing in the midst of twelve other men. It took some cen-

turies to put the figure on a cross with the nails and the wounds and the other painful and pious horrors.

The oldest known crucifix (in ivory) with a figure upon it is, it is said, one in the British Museum, and an article describing it (in the *Dictionary of the Abbé Vigoroux*), says, "It is to be remarked that the Christ is here represented as still living with the eyes open, and without any mark of physical suffering." The date given is the fifth century, and it is not till the twelfth that Christ is represented as dead after hours of agony.

How hopelessly confused is the whole story of Jesus can be inferred from the passage in Irenæus' work *Against Heresies* (written about 180 A.D.). In this, the famous Christian Father contends that Jesus lived till he was over fifty. There is no suggestion about Jesus being crucified under Pontius Pilate—he could not have been if he lived to fifty years of age—or that he even was crucified. And, of course, there is no cross. Christian theologians do not like this passage, and simply can't explain it; for to call Irenæus a fool is no explanation. The fact remains that Irenæus believed Jesus to have died a natural death; and this goes to prove further how here we are in the presence of a fable that grew with the passing of the years; that was added to and written about in various ways; and that finally emerged in the form we have in our present gospels.

But however much it has been embellished, one thing remains. In the life of the Saviour-God are found many elements drawn from all sorts of sources and legends and myths; and the one thing which forms a base for everything and which is fundamental is Paganism. That surely is proven beyond all reasonable doubt.

H. CUTNER.

Things Worth Knowing*

CHRISTIAN HUMANISM

MUCH may be forgiven to men whose profession forbade recourse to force in an age when force was the only law respected, and yet Charity herself might well stand aghast to see those who represented on earth the Gospel of Love unpack their hearts with curses so venomously that they seem enamoured of the opportunity to consign their fellow-beings to ruin in this world and to perdition in the next. The clergy themselves, indeed, by their worldly and too often flagitious lives had forfeited the respect of their flocks, and when their censures lost effect, it was but natural they should seek to impress upon sinners by copiousness of malediction the salutary fear which the sacredness of their character could no longer ensure. In the following formula, for instance there is a richness of imagination and a particularity of detail which show that its author fairly revelled in his power of malediction, and rolled as a sweet morsel under his tongue every torment which he invoked upon his victim. It was not called forth by the exigencies of a supreme occasion, but was a general form of malediction for petty thieves and similar malefactors:—

By the authority of God the omnipotent Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, and of the sacred canons, and of the holy and unsullied Virgin Mary, the Mother of God, and of all the heavenly Virtues, Angels, Archangels, Thrones, Dominations, Powers, Cherubim, Seraphim, and of the Holy Patri-

archs, Prophets, and all the Apostles and Evangelists, and of the Holy Innocents who alone are worthy in the sight of the Lamb to sing the new song, and of the holy martyrs, and the holy confessors and the holy virgins, and of all the saints and elect of God, we excommunicate this thief, or this malefactor, and we expel him from the holy church of God, that he may be delivered over to eternal torment with Dathan and Abiram and with those who cried to the Lord God, "Away from us we wish not to know Thy ways." And as fire is quenched with water, so may his light be quenched for ever and ever, unless he repent and render full satisfaction. Amen. Be he accursed of God the Father who created man, the Son who suffered for man, accursed of the Holy Ghost which cometh in baptism; accursed of the Holy Cross which the triumphant Christ ascended for our Salvation; accursed of the Holy Virgin Mary, the Mother of God; accursed of St. Michael, the receiver of souls, accursed of the angels and archangels, the princes and the powers, and all the hosts of heaven; accursed of the worthy legions of Prophets and Patriarchs, accursed of St. John, the forerunner and baptizer of Christ; accursed of St. Peter and St. Paul and St. Andrew and all the apostles of Christ, and the other disciples, and the four evangelists who converted the world; accursed of the wonder working band of martyrs whose good works have been pleasing to God; accursed of all the holy virgins who have shunned the world for the love of Christ; accursed of all the saints beloved of God, from the beginning even to the end of the world. Let him be accursed wherever he be, whether at home or abroad, in the road or in the path, or in the wood, or in the water, or in the church. Let him be accursed living or dying, eating, drinking, fasting or athirst, slumbering, sleeping, waking, walking, standing, sitting, lying, working, idling—and bleeding. Let him be accursed in all the forces of his body. Let him be accursed outside and inside; accursed in his hair and accursed in his brain; accursed in the crown of his head, in his temples, in his forehead, in his ears, in his brows, in his eyes, in his cheeks, in his jaws, in his nostrils, in his front teeth, in his back teeth, in his lips, in his throat, in his shoulders, in his upper arms, in his lower arms, in his fingers, in his breast, in his heart, in his stomach and liver, in his kidneys, in his loins, in his hips, in his . . . in his thighs, in his knees, in his shins, in his feet, in his toes, in his nails. Let him be accursed in every joint in his body. Let there be no health in him from the crown of his head to the sole of his foot. May Christ, the Son of the living God, curse him throughout his kingdom, and may heaven with all its Virtues rise up against him in his damnation. Amen, so be it. So be it. Amen.

This would seem to exhaust every possible resource of malediction, and yet the infinite variety with which the Church could invoke the anger of heaven upon her oppressors is shown in another excommunication, launched about the year 1014, by Benedict VIII., against some reckless vassals of William II., Count of Provence, who were endeavouring to obtain from the latter the grant of certain lands claimed by the celebrated monastery of St. Giles. Without being quite so formal and precise in its details of cursing as the foregoing, there is a bold comprehensiveness of imagination about it which befits the supreme head of Christianity, while it is by no means lacking in hearty vigour of imprecation. After excommunicating in general terms and consigning to Satan the audacious men who thus sought to lay unhallowed hands upon the possessions of the Church, the Pope proceeds:—

Let them be accursed in their bodies and let their souls be delivered to destruction and perdition and torture. Let them be damned with the damned; let them be scourged with the ungrateful, let them perish with the proud. Let them be accursed with the Jews who, seeing the incarnate Christ, did not believe, but sought to crucify him. Let them be

* Under this heading will be found from week to week citations from authoritative works, which will be found not merely interesting in themselves, but will also serve as a guide to reading.

accursed with the heretics who sought to destroy the church. Let them be accursed with those who blaspheme the name of God. Let them be accursed with those who despair of the mercy of God. Let them be accursed with those who are damned in hell. Let them be accursed in the four quarters of the earth. In the East be they accursed, and in the West disinherited; in the North interdicted and in the South excommunicate. Be they accursed in the daytime and excommunicate in the night-time. Accursed be they at home and excommunicate abroad; accursed in standing and excommunicate in sitting; accursed in eating; accursed in drinking; accursed in sleeping and excommunicate in waking; accursed when they work and excommunicate when they rest. Let them be accursed in the spring time and excommunicate in the summer; accursed in autumn and excommunicate in the winter. Let them be accursed in this world and excommunicate in the next. Let their lands pass into the hands of the stranger, their wives be given over to perdition, and their children fall before the edge of the sword. Let what they eat be accursed and accursed be what they leave, so that he who eats it shall be accursed. Accursed and excommunicate be the priest who shall give them the body and blood of the Lord, or who shall visit them in sickness. Accursed and excommunicate be who shall carry them to the grave and shall dare to bury them. Let them be excommunicate and accursed with all curses if they do not make amends and render due satisfaction. And know this for truth, that after our death no bishop nor count, nor any secular power shall usurp the seignory of the blessed St. Giles. And if any person attempt it, borne down by all the foregoing curses, they shall never enter the Kingdom of Heaven, for the blessed St. Giles committed his monastery to the lordship of the blessed Peter.

H. C. LEA.

From *Studies of Church History*.

The Deistic Movement

AFTER the Restoration adherence to the Church was considered a test of loyalty. The bishops and clergy were restored to their former privileges, with the important exception that the right of self-taxation through Convocation was rescinded (1664). Archbishop Sheldon, as Canon Molesworth admits, "employed all the powers that belonged to his high place to force on the expulsion of Nonconforming ministers" (p. 50). Not only were conventicles suppressed, but a rigid censorship was held over the press.

The Licensing Act of 1662 ordered that all works concerning divinity, physic, philosophy, or science should be licensed by the Archbishop of Canterbury or Bishop of London, with a saving clause in favour of the Universities for their own publications. No book was to be imported without episcopal license. There were to be no more than twenty master-printers; and these were to be licensed by the archbishop or bishop, and each was to be bound in a recognisance of £300. We may be sure these censors were little disposed to relax their severity in favour of any sceptical speculations. Hobbes, being a favourite with Charles II., his *Leviathan*, first published during the Commonwealth, proved strong enough to break the clerical net, but after the plague and great fire of London the bigots seized the occasion to give expression to the uneasy conscience of the people in a bill against atheism and profaneness. On October 17, 1666, the *Journal of the Commons* orders a Committee to "receive information touching such books as tend to atheism, blasphemy, and profaneness, or against the essence and attributes of

God, and, in particular, the book published in the name of one White and the book of Mr. Hobbes called the *Leviathan*, and to report the matter, with their opinion, to the House." (Mr. White, be it said, was a philosophic Roman Catholic priest, who held the natural mortality of souls.) What steps were taken does not appear. Hobbes, then nearly eighty years old was alarmed. He set himself to inquire into the actual state of the law, but his tract on Heresy, which was the result, was not published until after his death. The *Leviathan* then became scarce. Pepys writes (September 31, 1668): "To my booksellers for Hobbes' *Leviathan*, which is now mightily called for, and what was heretofore sold for eight shillings, I now give twenty-four shillings for it second-hand, and is sold for thirty shillings, it being a book the bishops will not let be printed again."

During the civil wars and afterwards many of the aristocracy resided for a season on the Continent, and there imbibed something of the scepticism which was the natural result of the French religious wars. Despite the supremacy of the Church, the poets and dramatists of the period freely show their contempt for the clergy and their craft.

A sign of the growing spirit of scepticism was the publication (1661) of Joseph Glanvill's treatise on *The Vanity of Dogmatising*, a second edition of which (1665) received the more appropriate name of *Sceptis Scientiæ, doubt and free investigation* being considered the safe guides to knowledge. Notwithstanding his subsequent defence of witchcraft on the ground of evidence, Glanvill was one of the most thoughtful writers of his day, and was one of the first and most zealous members of the Royal Society. He defended the use of reason in religion, which he made to consist mainly in conduct. He also advocated the theory of the pre-existence and transmigration of souls, as a defence of divine justice.

In 1663 the Royal Society was instituted with the object of increasing knowledge by direct experiment and, as Buckle has remarked, the charter granted to that famous institution declares that its object is the extension of natural knowledge as opposed to that which is supernatural (vol. ii., p. 371). That author observes: "Speaking generally, there is no doubt that in the reign of Charles II. the antagonism between physical science and the theological spirit was such as to induce nearly the whole of the clergy to array themselves against the science, and seek to bring it into discredit" (p. 372). South, when orator at the University of Oxford; Gunning, Bishop of Ely, and Barlowe, Bishop of Lincoln, were prominent in the attack. Science, set forth by such men as Sir Isaac Newton, slowly spread, and the belief in astrology, witchcraft, and modern miracles, which but a little before presented little difficulty, gradually began to vanish. In 1660 the majority of educated men still believed in witches; in 1688 the majority disbelieved. The geological speculations of Dr. Thomas Burnet already showed a tendency to disregard, if not discredit, Scripture, and thoughtful men could not but contrast the progress of science founded upon observation with the logomachies of sky-politicians and divines.

During this period the Quakers, as the most heterodox of the sects, suffered greatly. In 1688, when Penn published his *Sandy Foundation Shaken*, in which he impugned the doctrines of the Trinity and imputed righteousness, he was committed to the Tower of London. Being in bad odour, Penn, on his release, got into a fresh scrape for preaching in the open air. The jury refusing to convict, Edward Howell, the recorder, declared "it will never be well with us till something like the Spanish Inquisition be in England" (*Somers' Tracts*, vol. xii., p. 185). In

truth, the doctrines of toleration were but slowly making their way.

Milton died November 8, 1674, leaving in the hands of his friend Cyriac Skinner a manuscript of his thoughts on Christian Doctrine, which, although not printed until 1825, may fitly be considered here. It would seem that the MS., with others, had been sent to Ilzevir, of Amsterdam, who refused to print.

Milton founds his whole belief on the independent reading of Scripture, without which he believed men would have been in a state of complete Agnosticism. Scripture, he admits, has come down to us with corruptions, falsifications, and mutilations, and by this very uncertain guardianship we learn "that the spirit which is given to us in a more certain guide than Scripture." In regard to Jesus, Milton's doctrine is Arian. The dogma of the Trinity he calls "the commonly-received drama of the personalities in the God-head." The Father alone is God. Matter is an efflux of God himself. This view, as Professor Masson observes, places Milton in the company of the Pantheists.

There is no evidence, indeed, of any approach on his part to such thorough and systematized Pantheism as that of his junior contemporary, Spinoza; but the inference from his language is that his mode of imagining Nature had come to be that of a modified or arrested Pantheism, stopping short of Spinoza's mainly a strong prior reservation of that freedom of will for all rational intelligences which Spinoza denied.

In regard to the soul, Milton held with Overton that the whole man died, and that not till the resurrection will he be revived. These opinions show a distinct advance of the poet in a Freethought direction, not only over those of the general run of his contemporaries, but over his own, as expressed in his earlier works, and they warrant us in saying that, although an independent Christian, he cannot be claimed as belonging to any distinct section of the Christian Church.

The advance of scepticism was signalized in 1677 by the abolition of the statute *de heretico comburendo*, a provision, however, preserving the jurisdiction of the archbishops, bishops, and ecclesiastical courts in cases of Atheism, blasphemy, heresy, or schism, with powers not only of excommunication, but of other penalties, not extending to death.

It is evident, from an anonymous *Letter to a Deist*, published in 1677, that objections to Scripture were being circulated in manuscript. Two years later the Licensing Act was allowed to expire. Charles Blount, who laid the stepping-stones from the rational theologians of the seventeenth century to the Deists of the succeeding era, at once issued his plea on behalf of the liberty of the press, and availed himself of the breathing space to publish his *Anima Mundi*, which he followed up with *Great is Diana* and his notes to the *Life of Apollonius*. When James II. came to the throne (1685), the censorship was renewed for seven years.

Of course, this growing liberty was deplored by the clergy. In the *Demonstration of the Law of Nature and of the Truth of the Christian Religion* (1681), by Samuel Parker, the Puritan converted by a bishopric who was flagellated by Andrew Marvell, he complains:—

Atheism and Irreligion are at length become as common as Vice and Debauchery. . . . In short, this is the first Age of the World that I know of in which Atheism ever appeared anywhere in publick open and barefaced. . . . Plebeians and Mechanicks have philosophised themselves to Principles of Impiety, and read their Lectures of Atheism in the Streets and the Highways. And they are able to demonstrate

out of the *Leviathan* that there is no God nor Providence, but that all things come to pass by an eternal Chain of natural Causes. . . . That the Christian Religion has no sufficient proof of its pretence to Divine Authority, and that no wise Man is under any obligation to embrace it, but only as it happens to be commanded by the Laws of the Realm.

Parker himself makes a pretence at reason, but relies on such barefaced forgeries as the testimonies of Josephus and Phlegon, the Acts of Pilate and the epistles between Jesus and King Agbarus, which did duty even later with Addison, notwithstanding the introduction of the Boyle Lectures and the rise of a school of evidential writers, who based supernaturalism upon history and demonstrated an infinite deity beside the universe.

(Reprinted).

J. M. WHEELER.

(To be continued)

Correspondence

TO THE EDITOR OF THE "FREETHINKER."

BRAVO ABYSSINIA!

SIR,—One cannot help but admire the spirit of the Emperor and his people. "An economic mandate would only be the indirect means of obtaining the direct destruction of our liberty." The above words of the Abyssinian Minister in Paris speak volumes. The very idea that a kind of mandate could be given to Italy under the League which would preserve the political integrity of Abyssinia is laughable. In the words of the Minister, "the hypocrisy is too grotesque." Being of a subject race one knows what *words* mean. They are merely words and nothing more. Indeed, for better to be killed than leave the children to be slaves of another nation.

General Smuts fears that the trouble may raise inter-racial feelings, and that every African would sympathize with Abyssinia. Will it be surprising if they do? I believe that not only every African, but all the coloured races of the whole world will do so, and rightly too. This is not war. This is pure and simple murder of a weaker nation by a stronger.

What strikes me as funny is the childlike faith of the Abyssinian Emperor and his people in believing that they will get justice and fair-play from Britain and France. If these nations had been for real justice, would they in the first place have put an embargo on arms? That is another example of hypocrisy. Do they not know that Abyssinia has no manufacture of arms or munitions, whilst Italy is fully equipped for her needs? Do they not know that by putting off the discussions at Geneva they are giving ample time to Italy to be better prepared for the slaughter of the innocents? What are they discussing? In Mr. Lloyd George's words, "how they can deliver Abyssinia on the cheap to Italy, and what measure of economic, strategic and political control can be given to Italy without war."

Poor Abyssinia, if it thinks that by being a Christian country it is going to have justice from their white co-religionists. If justice is meant, the very country whose integrity and independence are at stake would not be ruled out from its discussion. Abyssinia may be a Christian country, but it must remember it is not *white*. The Whites only have the divine right to rule over the Coloured. One wonders what the Holy Father is doing in this time of stress. Perhaps he is counting his beads, sitting in his gorgeous palace surrounded by choice works of art and unlimited wealth. What has he done up to now to avert this massacre between two Christian countries? I remember reading, a few days back, a couple of lines in the papers, supposed to be some pronouncement from the Pope in regard to this impending so-called war. The words seemed so ambiguous that I at least could hardly make head or tail of the meaning. It is high time that as the servant of God he should give his plain opinion of what he thinks of his country, and the part it is going to play.

I should also like to know what has happened to the few luke-warm British correspondents, who in the papers made some sort of a plea for justice for the Abyssinians. Have they come to the conclusion that they have done their duty, or have they been stopped?

INDIAN LADY.

THE SALVATION ARMY

SIR,—I have read with some concern your recent article, "Piety and Pictures," in which you state that "many men, 'reformed' crooks, etc., have been supplied by the Salvation Army" for crowd work in the recent making of a film by the Gaumont Co., and further that "it is disgraceful that artists, who are compelled by economic pressure to do crowd work, should be forced to dress with the social outcasts provided by the Salvation Army."

Both these statements are inaccurate, and whilst all your readers may not see eye to eye with the Organization in question, such wide and sweeping accusations can only cause confusion in the minds of the very large public which has every sympathy with many branches of the work of the Salvation Army.

The Salvation Army, in common with other bodies dealing with unemployed (Statutory and Social), receive particulars from time to time of work which Film Companies have to offer, and the particulars are put up on a "Vacancies" board, together with any other jobs which may be available for the benefit of unemployed men residing in the Hostels. It is quite untrue to say that the men residing in Salvation Army hostels are "reformed crooks." They are, in the main, honest, unemployed British workmen, and I think any of your readers could readily understand an unemployed man being willing to do this kind of work if he can earn a few shillings, but any man making application for such employment does so voluntarily, the Salvation Army holding no jurisdiction over him or his actions.

G. MORRIS.

National Secular Society

REPORT OF EXECUTIVE MEETING HELD AUGUST 15, 1935

THE President, Mr. Chapman Cohen, presided.

Also present: Messrs. Clifton, Saphin, Tuson, Silvester, W. J. W. Easterbrook, Ebury, McLaren, Mrs. Quinton, Junr., Mrs. Venton, Mrs. Grant, and the Secretary.

Minutes of previous meeting read and confirmed. The Financial Statement was presented. New members were admitted to North London, West London, Bethnal Green, South London, Newcastle, Plymouth Branches, and the Parent Society. Messrs McLaren, Sandys, and Mrs. Grant were co-opted as members of the Executive. Messrs. A. C. Rosetti, Clifton, Mrs. Quinton, Junr., and Miss K. B. Kough were elected as a Benevolent Fund Committee.

Lecture reports from Messrs. Brighton, Clayton and Whitehead were presented.

Correspondence was dealt with from Birkenhead, Blackburn, North London, West Ham, Plymouth and J. T. Brighton.

Permission was given for the alteration in the description of the West Ham Branch to the West Ham and District Branch N.S.S.

The meeting endorsed the President's action in arranging legal defence against what appeared to be harsh police treatment towards a Freethought speaker at an open-air meeting. The action had been justified, the charge against the speaker being dismissed.

It was decided to arrange a Social to take place in November.

Some minor matters were dealt with and the meeting closed.

The next Executive Meeting will be held on September 19, 1935.

R. H. ROSETTI,

General Secretary.

SUNDAY LECTURE NOTICES, Etc.

LONDON

INDOOR

BETHNAL GREEN AND HACKNEY BRANCH DISCUSSION SOCIETY (375 Cambridge Road, E.2, opposite Museum Cinema): 8.0, Monday, August 26, J. Marchi—"Is British Imperialism a Menace to World Peace?" Tuesday, August 27, outside the Town Hall, Mare Street, Hackney, 8.0, Mr. P. Goldman.

OUTDOOR

BETHNAL GREEN BRANCH N.S.S. (Victoria Park, near the Bandstand): 6.30, Mr. L. Ebury.

NORTH LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (White Stone Pond, Hampstead): 11.30, Sunday, August 25, Mr. L. Ebury. Highbury Corner, 8.0, Sunday, August 25, Mr. Gee. South Hill Park, Hampstead, 8.0, Monday, August 26, Mr. C. Tuson. Leighton Road, Kentish Town, 8.0, Wednesday, August 28, Mr. L. Ebury.

SOUTH LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (Brockwell Park): 6.15, Sunday, August 25, Mr. E. Gee. Rushcroft Road, Brixton, 8.0, Tuesday, August 27, Mr. L. Ebury. Manor Street, Clapham High Street, 8.0, Friday, August 30, Mr. F. P. Corrigan.

WEST LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (Hyde Park): 3.30, Sunday, Messrs. Gee, Wood, Bryant and Tuson. 6.30, Messrs. Saphin, Wood and Bryant. 7.30, Wednesdays, Messrs. Evans and J. Darby. Thursdays, 7.30, Messrs. Saphin and Gee. Fridays, 7.30, Messrs. Bryant and Connell. Current *Free-thinkers* on sale at The Kiosk.

COUNTRY

OUTDOOR

BLACKBURN BRANCH N.S.S. (Market): 3.0, Mr. C. McKelvie (Liverpool)—"Atheism: An Analysis." 7.0, "The Philosophical Synthesis of Atheism."

CHESTER-LE-STREET (Bridge End): 8.0, Friday, August 23, Mr. J. T. Brighton.

EASINGTON: 8.0, Wednesday, August 28, Mr. J. T. Brighton.

GATESHEAD: 8.0, Tuesday, August 27, Mr. J. T. Brighton.

HIGHAM: August 28, Mr. J. Clayton.

HUNCOAT: Monday, August 26, Mr. J. Clayton.

LIVERPOOL BRANCH N.S.S. (Queen's Drive, opposite Walton Baths): 8.0, Sunday, August 25, Mr. A. Jackson. Belfast Road, Knotty Ash, 8.0, Tuesday, August 27. A Lecture. Corner of High Park Street and Park Road, 8.0, Thursday, August 29, Mr. A. Jackson.

MANCHESTER BRANCH N.S.S. (Platt Fields, Manchester): 3.0 and 7.0, Mr. J. V. Shortt (Liverpool)—"Is Jesus a 'Star' Turn? or, What the Stars Tell," and "Religion, or Social Progress."

MORPETH: 7.0, Saturday, August 24, Mr. J. T. Brighton.

NEW CALDER BRIDGE (nr. Padiham): 11.30, Sunday, August 25, Mr. J. Clayton.

NORTH EASTERN FEDERATION OF N.S.S. BRANCHES NEWCASTLE (Bigg Market): Friday, August 23. Sunderland, August 25 and 26. Hetton, August 27. Sunderland, August 28 to 30. Mr. G. Whitehead will speak at each meeting.

PORTSMOUTH (Todmorden Valley), 7.45, Friday, August 23, Mr. J. Clayton.

TEE-SIDE BRANCH N.S.S., Sunday, August 25, Mr. J. T. Brighton.

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