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• EDITED *by* CHAPMAN COHEN •

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

Views and Opinions

The King and the People

I IMAGINE that when Macaulay's New Zealander sits on the broken arch of London Bridge contemplating the ruin of St. Paul's, he will, when looking over the record of Great Britain for 1936, smile at the "potter" over the "constitutional crisis" of that year. Expecting to find something of outstanding importance he will be surprised to learn that the "crisis" is not on account of an approaching world-war, the extinction of civilization, or even of the fact of a large part of the population living in a state of semi-starvation. It was on the question of whether the King should be permitted to marry a woman of his own choice or not. The New Zealander might reflect that the woman a man marries ought to be decided by himself, and that on the whole he is much more likely to make a wise choice than would a body of hand-to-mouth politicians. He might also conclude that marriage is at all times a lottery, and the marriage which is decided by the two who are married is likely to be more satisfactory than one that is settled by outsiders.

But we who live in 1936 know that there is what is called a constitutional crisis, so grave that as a consequence we might lose the ripe wisdom of Mr. Malcolm Macdonald, the iron courage and inflexible devotion to principle of Mr. Eden, and the truth-loving, straightforward character of Mr. Baldwin. And all over the right of a man of forty to choose his own wife! The King had evidently made up his mind to select his own mate, and this there is reason to believe has not been a very common thing in the European royal families. If he had married someone that had been thought suitable by his Ministers, there would have been no "crisis." She might have been a fortune-hunting foreign princess for whom he had no great affection, and the King might have solaced himself with a mistress. Such arrangements are not unknown at home and abroad, and never has the conscience of Bishops or Archbishops or of Cabinet Mini-

sters been shocked. Practice and precedent had sanctified the procedure. But here we have a King who has decided to do his own choosing. I congratulate him on his decision, and hope that he will tell Mr. Baldwin, and the Bench of Bishops that he will do as he pleases. The King is within his rights. The office he fills does not bind him to marry a ministerial selection, or a selection of which the Cabinet approves. If their wisdom in making marriages is no better than their skill in managing affairs, the King is fully justified in ignoring them. If he has the courage to stand to his guns the King will have the approval of the majority of decent-minded men and women in the country. Mr. Baldwin's reported statement that the country disapproves the marriage is just bounce. He has no greater right to speak for the country on this issue than I have. And when he unseals his lips we know that it is not always the pure truth that trickles forth. We suspect that "country" here stands for that section that is labelled "Society." The rest of the people will wish the King luck in his choice.

* * *

Where is the Truth?

It must be understood that I am writing this on December 7, and it is not quite clear just what has happened. The people are informed there is a grave constitutional crisis, but on exactly what point it has arisen no one knows. On the one side, it is said that the King wished Mr. Baldwin to pass a Bill that would continue the succession through the Duke of York and his children and relieve Mrs. Simpson from the title and function of Queen. This, if true, is monstrous with regard to the public, and an insult to the woman he is marrying. It is bad enough for the people to be handed on to rulers designated in 1688, but for each one on the throne to hand over the people, as though they were so much cattle, is outrageous. It is also said that Mr. Baldwin declined to do this (really it is a feather in a cap that has been well plucked of decorations) and insisted that the wife of the King must be the Queen and nothing else. But, it is said he also added that his ministers could not agree to the King marrying Mrs. Simpson. And that is outside the bond and is an impertinence. The King must act in public affairs on the advice of his ministers. He may object to their advice, or may create delay, but in the end he is forced to give way. The King is an official with prescribed duties, and it is well that he should remain such. But the matter of his marriage lies entirely within his own choice. The only exception is with regard to marrying a Roman Catholic. Protestant Christians are convinced that if Roman Catholic Christians get the upper hand in this country the nation is doomed to disaster. Roman Catholics, who are also Christians, are convinced that the country is damned individually and collectively if it remains as it is.

If, on the other hand, it is true that the King wished

Mr. Baldwin to pass a Bill that would create a morganatic marriage, and which would leave Mrs. Simpson without the title of Queen, then that would constitute a very serious slight to the lady he is marrying. After all, assuming that the King married Mrs. Simpson, who became as the law now stands Queen of England, there is no reason for assuming that the British Empire would not be as secure under the Kingship of her children as it would be under the Duke of York and his children. We have had within the past century and a half, a stupid monarch, a mad monarch, a thoroughly depraved monarch, an obstinate fussy and prejudiced monarch, a sporting and not very puritanical monarch, and a very ordinary monarch, and the British Empire has managed to come into existence and survive. It is not likely, then, that in the event of the monarchy continuing through Edward the Eighth and Mrs. Simpson, anything very disastrous will happen. So although speaking with every reservation, I hope that the King has not asked for a new Act, which would be derogatory to the lady of his choice, and trust that he will insist on his right to marry whom he pleases. We have been told often lately that in Edward VIII. we have a very human King. Let us hope that he will show himself human in one of the most important events in a man's life. Let the man speak louder than the King. We sympathize with the King and Mrs. Simpson in the situation in which they are placed, and hope the matter concludes in a way consonant with the self-respect of both. Let us also hope that the King has among his subjects a sufficiently large number of healthy-minded men and women to appreciate the painful position in which both he and Mrs. Simpson are placed by law and customs based on primitive ideas of Kingship; and also that a much larger number of men and women have enough healthy romance in their make-up to feel for a man and a woman who are obviously linked together in terms of a real and deep affection.

* * *

The Medicine Men at Work

There is another reason for the present "crisis." For some time there have been whispers concerning the King's orthodoxy. He was said to have raised objections to the religious aspect of the accession oath, although his objection, if it existed, was finally overcome. But no stories have been current concerning his devotion to the Bible, such as were circulated concerning his father—although we have only the word of the parsons for that. It will be remembered that the present row actually began with a speech by the Bishop of Bradford, who evidently is on much the same level concerning the coronation of the King as are savages concerning their sacred rain-maker. The Bishop hinted that the King might show more concern with religion in public, and hinted also that he showed little interest in it in his private life. The King, said the Bishop, needs the Grace of God, and this is acquired at the coronation service—which is exactly, in substance, what savages say concerning their medicine-man chief, by whose grace the sun shines, the rain falls, and the crops grow. The Bishop protested against this magical aspect of the coronation service being weakened in the slightest degree.

In the next place, the question of divorce is just now a very delicate one with the Bishops and the English clergy. There is a Bill for the amendment of the marriage laws before Parliament, and against this is ranged a very large section of the clergy of the Established Church. If the Archbishop of Canterbury, who has described himself as "the chief spokesman of God to my fellow countrymen," per-

mits the suggested marriage of the King with a woman who has divorced her husband (some papers persist in describing Mrs. Simpson as "a divorced woman," which she is not) then, presumably, God, through his chief spokesman, will have decided that the marriage of divorced persons is quite proper, and there will be ructions in the Church. If, on the other hand, one can imagine a wedding of a King, with Archbishops and Bishops left out, that will be a terrific blow for the clergy. And, above all, if the King as a sworn leader of the Protestant Church as established by law, is married by a Nonconformist (most of them would jump at the chance), he is placing another Church above that he is sworn to defend. There is a third possibility, which from the standpoint of orthodoxy is terrible to contemplate. The King, having fallen out with "God's spokesman," may decide to use the perfectly legal form of marriage, the Register Office, and do away with the religious ceremony altogether. And think of the consequences of this to the legion of those who base their choice of dress, from ties to trousers, upon what the King wears! There would be such a boom in marriage before a Registrar that the Church would almost lose the whole of its profitable trade in weddings, with all that it implies in the shape of breeding new customers for its semi-magical business.

* * *

A Blow at Hereditary Monarchy

One thing is certain—whatever happens—the principle of hereditary kingship is likely to receive a very severe jolt. For some years past there has been a systematic attempt to develop the magical aspect of Kingship, always existent with large numbers of the people. The Archbishop of Canterbury, during the Jubilee proceedings, referred to King George as bearing the burden of Empire on his shoulders, when every one ought to know that the King has even less to do with the burden of Empire than any prominent politician. The line of succession has been kept well in front of the public eye, the little children have been photographed and exhibited in all directions, the slightest manifestation of ordinary human feeling has been duly chronicled as though it were a marvel at which the world might well stand still in open-eyed wonder. When the present King succeeded his father, he was hailed as possessing all the virtues that go with an hereditary office, plus a stock of personal virtues of his own. And now the ruler of an Empire is told that he may do nothing, not even select his own wife, if his action does not meet with the approval of a number of officials who are where they are as a consequence of an election that may be secured by more or less dishonourable means, and that he may have no decisive opinions of his own on anything, but must speak and act as his ministers decide.

This last is actually the constitutional position, and it is well that it should be so. In the case of a chief of the State who is *elected*, the people may well be willing to give him a term of power. He can, if necessary, be removed at the end of his stated term of office. But with an hereditary monarchy, to all who have outgrown the infantile state of mind which believes that the King is an incarnation of the tribal joss, or is endowed with qualities such as "common" people cannot hope to possess, the only sensible plan is to reduce him as rapidly as possible to a mere figurehead. Not that this completely removes the danger. For there still remains the primitive feeling that there is something radically different between an hereditary monarch and other people, and the King, if he has strong opinions on any subject, is driven to achieve by backstairs methods what he

is forbidden to achieve by ways that are open and straightforward. This method is, naturally, more effective with those who have not yet shaken off the belief in that "divinity which doth hedge a King," and which the King was once believed to incarnate. But evolution ought to have taught intelligent men and women that primitive instincts and impulses lurk beneath the veneer of civilization we have acquired, and when the coronation comes round the student of anthropology will, we hope, note the performance of ceremonies that had their beginnings in the magical incantations of savages, but which are now manifest in a more elaborate terminology.

* * *

Hope Ahead

And yet, somehow, I feel that whichever way the "crisis" ends the country will be fairly safe. If the King marries Mrs. Simpson and she becomes Queen, the Archbishops and the Bishops and the aristocrats—so many of whom owe their blue-blooded origin to the clandestine amours of a King with a commoner—will knuckle under to it lest worse befall. And if the King were to forego his throne, and consider it well lost in the circumstances, we are still safe. For, as we all know, the virtues of the occupant of the throne go with the office. Victoria was a great Queen, Edward the Seventh was a great King, George the Fifth was an even greater King, and the papers have exhausted themselves over the virtues of Edward the Eighth. And if Edward were to descend from the throne, his successor would inherit all the greatness of his predecessors. That is really the advantage that an hereditary officer has over an elected one. In the latter case each occupant of the office has to make good and justify his position, day by day. But the other inherits the great qualities that go with the office, as surely as he inherits the throne itself. So we are safe. "God save the King" will still be cried, and if it be, as Byron said, "poor economy to save the like," that is perhaps God's look out and not ours.

I leave the above as written, although (December 8) the news is that Mrs Simpson has offered to release the King from the promise of marriage. If the King accepts this it means that the Church, and "Society"—with the mental and moral outlook of "James de la Pluche"—have won. What kind of a situation that leaves it does not require a very great degree of thinking to foresee.

CHAPMAN COHEN.

Savage to Superman

"New occasions teach new duties, time makes ancient good uncouth."—*Lowell*.

"We shall never enfranchise the world without touching people's superstitions."—*G. W. Foote*.

NEARLY eighty years ago Charles Darwin shook the world with the publication of the *Origin of Species*. In his epoch-making book, and its sequel, *The Descent of Man*, he sought to demonstrate that mankind has attained its present state through a gradual process of evolution from a lower and less perfect state. The Christian clergy at once shrieked to the skies, but the days of the stake and the thumb-screw were over, and their protests fortunately had to remain vocal. Darwin quietly proceeded to unfold his views, and soon gained the adhesion of the vast majority of the scientific world.

The animosity of the clergy is quite understandable. For the general admission of the truth of evolution sweeps away at once the old out-of-date Biblical legends which priests had for so many centuries been

accustomed to offer as a sufficient explanation of man's origin and destiny. The grotesque legend of a fallen human race at once disappears, and with it goes the myth of the "Devil," and all the other strange and monstrous explanations that were necessary to harmonize the tangled theological theories put forth. With it also goes the Bibliolatry which, like so many other idolatries, has served to enchain and cramp the human intellect, and to enrich the priests. The Bible of the Ancient Hebrews must now descend from its lofty pedestal and take its due rank with the Rig-Veda, Brahmanas, Koran, and sacred books of other nations.

Nothing more momentous has taken place since the Renaissance, when Europe awoke from the terrible nightmare of the priest-ridden Middle Ages. And, Evolution, this intellectual lever, destined to finally overthrow all existing creeds, has come amongst us so silently that many have scarcely noticed its approach. Opposition there has been, as there is to all new truths; but, compared with the momentous issues at stake, the opposition has been comparatively trifling. Silently and steadily, for near eighty years, Darwinism has been resistlessly pushing its way, till to-day no educated man with a reputation to lose now attempts to contravene it. There has been no "bridal birth of thunder peals," whilst this "great thought has wedded fact." To the clergy and their congregations, whose innocence will not permit them to follow intelligently the niceties of scientific thought, the new theory must appear like Banquo's awful ghost to the amazed Macbeth. They look up suddenly from their Bibles and their prayers, and see the spectral shape in front of them. "Adam" and "Eve," and the talking serpent are driven out from the fabled "Garden of Eden," not by an angel with a flaming sword, but by Charles Darwin with the quill of the scholar.

The triumph is complete. Since Darwin's death, the clergy, who formerly denounced the hated scientist with the whole voluminous vocabulary of theological abhorrence, have, with their usual hypocrisy, claimed him as one of their flock. They actually buried this black sheep in Westminster Abbey in the sure and certain hope of a religion he did not believe in whilst living. Not content with this, they calmly pretend that the teachings of Evolution are wholly in accord with those of the Orthodox Church and the Christian Bible. Only two religious bodies have been reasonably honest in this matter. Poles asunder in so many respects, the Roman Catholic Church and the Salvation Army have remained faithful to Medievalism and Ignorance. On no condition will they part with "Eve" and the forbidden fruit, and the talkative snake. Romanists and Salvationists, in the goodness of their hearts, both alike believe that Charles Darwin and his colleagues are suffering the tortures of the damned in Hell. These unsophisticated and uncultured people no more believe in evolution than they understand the very alphabet of science. But they are honest in their ignorance, which is more than can be said for those who are trying to effect a compromise between the irreconcilables, religion and science; from the Bishops of the Established Church to the fluent liars on Pleasant Sunday Afternoon platforms, who assure their audiences that the great truths of evolution are embodied in the Old Testament without Darwin's tiresome details, and that the discoveries of science are an assistance to prehistoric religion and savage superstition.

To Herbert Spencer belongs the glory of building on Darwin's Foundation a system which survives "four square to all the winds that blow." Spencer's scheme, probably the vastest ever conceived by the

human mind, embraced the story of the evolution of the universe from formless stuff into solar systems, the process being the advance from the simple to the complex, from the indefinite to the coherent. This same process was shown to be in operation in the life-history of the earth. No break between things inanimate and animate being assumed, life, mind in the lower animals, and man; human, social and intellectual development, are in unbroken sequence shown to be parts of the eternal order. *The Synthetic Philosophy*, as its author chose to call it, is nothing more nor less than the law of evolution, as exemplified in nature and in man, in the animal realm and the vegetable and human, the sphere of sense, and the sphere of conscious and moral aspiration. Spencer's system is enduring, for it puts things together, and does not pull to pieces.

Slowly, with lapses into its "loved Egyptian night," mankind is shaking itself free of the last desperate clutches of superstition. Bewildered by the new light, missing at first the guiding hand of the priest, it stands amazed on the threshold of the future. Why the process of freedom is delayed is due entirely to the machinations of the priests, who are defending a vested interest, "wealthy beyond the dreams of avarice." As a sacred caste apart, they at present usurp a position in the body politic out of all proportion to the value of their sorry services. To safeguard their impudent position, they instruct their dupes that scientists and science are devil-born, and leave the poor innocents to act accordingly. Priests are like that, and Christian priests are no exception to the rule of the species. Their own puerile faith began as a heresy, and is now a hoary superstition, producing untold millions of money. That is the history of creeds, and the universal story of Priestcraft.

All this Christian camouflage might succeed were it not for the fact that men have other sources of information to-day than the pulpit-lies of their pastors and masters. The fundamental question of man's place in nature has been solved by scientists, and the wide acceptance of evolution has already begun to bear fruit in all practical affairs of life. In spite of the opposition of all the priests of Christendom, it will, sooner or later, lead mankind to a happier, and sweeter condition of human life, untrammelled by the machinations of Priestcraft. How soon this will happen will depend entirely upon the forces of Democracy, of which the Freethinkers of the world form the spearhead.

MIMNERMUS.

At The Penitent Stool

SCENE: A Village hall. A revival meeting is nearly over. On the rostrum an Evangelist calls upon members of the congregation to come up and testify to their conversion. Old Giles enters at the back of the Hall—late as usual.

Evangelist: Welcome, brother! Thank God you have come to see the Light!

Old Giles: Oy, ay! Me soight bain't zo bad that oy carn't zec it. That there be a noil lamp, bain't it?

E.: Yes, indeed. A symbol of the Eternal Light, shedding its radiance upon us miserable sinners assembled before the Throne of Grace.

O.G.: Moind 'ee doan't upzet 'un; else there'll be the 'Ell of a blaze.

E.: Like that which awaits those who wilfully ignore the Lord's warning.

O.G.: Ay, ay! Me old wumman be just loike that. Careless oi sez she be. Many's the toime oi've warned

'er, an' manys' the toime oi've zaved 'er from 'erzef. *E.:* That is good hearing, brother. Saving of souls is noble work indeed.

O.G.: Noa, noa. It weren't zoles. It were kippers oi zaved. If it 'adn't been for me seizin' the lamp in the nick o' toime, them kippers 'ud 'ave been boiled in paraffin, that they would.

E.: You don't seem to have heard me correctly, brother. But tell me—you have come to give your testimony, have you not?

O.G.: Ay, that oi 'ave!

E. (addressing the congregation): Friends! This erring sheep, who has been snatched from the pit by the saving grace of the Almighty, wishes publicly to testify before you. (*Then addressing Old Giles*) What is your name, brother?

O.G.: Me name, did 'ee zay? Oi be 'Zekiel Giles, as all them volks do know. But wot do 'ee want fer ter know?

E.: How long have you lived in the valley of the shadow?

O.G.: Lived where did 'ee zay?

E.: In the Valley of the Shadow, brother—the Slough of Despond.

O.G.: Oi never lived in no valley; noa, nor in no pond noither. Oi bain't no frog, that oi baint. Oi come from Wurzel's Farm, as all them volks do know. An' oi've lived there noigh on eighty year come Michaelmas.

E.: And now at last in the evening of your days you have come to repent the folly of your former ways.

O.G.: That be roight. Oi wants ter foller me vormal ways wi'out let nor 'indrance, an' oi've come to zee that none do stop me. There be zum as thinks we old volk doan't know wot be the roights an' the wrongs o' the matter. But let oi tell 'em, oi ain't lived in this 'ere neighbour'ood fer nointy year, man an' boy, wi'out learnin' me way about. An oi knows which be right way an' which be wrong, danged if oi doan't!

E.: Excuse me, I think. . . .

O.G.: Doan 'ee interrupt! Oi've zeen it comin'! There be Lord 'This, an' Lady 'That an' Zur Zumbuddy Zumthin'—they all comes 'ere a-buildin' of their noo mansions where nobody wants 'em. They all got their voine moty-cars, an' go ridin' around countryzoide gettin' vatter an' vatter. Zo they doan care fer we poor volk as 'as ter go a-foot; zo they hires zum scrimshankin' laryers to stop our roightful paths. Dang 'em, sez oi!

E.: Excuse me, brother, but you seem. . . .

O.G.: Brother be danged! Oi be old 'nuff ter be yer great-grand-vather. An' oi ain't lived all that toime fer nowt, that oi ain't. An oi ain't goin' ter be put upon noither, that oi bain't. Vurst they robs us of the land; next they gives it to the Church, then they beggars us wi' tithes. An' now, Col darn me if they doan try ter stop us from walkin' on the ground! But roights o' way be roights o' way, sez oi; an' us bain't angels wi' wings yet, not by a long chalk. An' thank goodness for that! Oi'd zooner be a monkey wi' a tail, swingin' from tree to tree, that oi would.

E.: Stop! Stop! You are. . . .

O.G.: Ay, ay—that be wot they all zay. Stop this an' stop that an' stop everything. Stop chillun playin' in the parks on Zunday. Stop volk from goin' ter the pictures on zame day. Stop 'ikin an' bikin' every day. Stop pubs from openin' all day. Bless my zoul! They'll zoon be stoppin' us from goin' ter Church if us wants to. Not that oi wants to, mark 'ee. Vicar do talk a moight o' bunkum by all oi 'ears, which bain't much. But when it comes to stoppin' roights o' way—well, oi'll be danged an' blarsted if they stops *me* from usin' 'em!

E. (*howling into O.G.'s ear*): You have come to the wrong meeting! The meeting to discuss Rights of Way is in the hall next door!

O.G.: Eh? Next door, did 'ee zay? Ah well, it's all the zame to oi. Oi've 'ad me zay 'bout it—that's all oi cares. (*He rises and makes for the exit, escorted by the Evangelist. At the door he stops and asks*): But wot be this yere meetin' vor?

E.: This is a revival meeting.

O.G.: Oho! Zo that's it, is it! A roival meetin! Well, oi be moighty glad oi popped in an' zaid wot oi did. An' may 'E'll take the lot o' ye!

C. S. FRASER.

Child-Life in a Puritan Home

(Concluded from page 774)

BECAUSE of the same misconception of the nature and meaning of human life, play, even in its mildest forms, was regarded as being of the world worldly, in which only the unregenerate indulged. Even little children played marbles and span tops under severe parental protest. Sometimes a lot of us would steal away into a distant field, in order to have a clandestine turn at football; but one of our number had to act as sentinel, that no one might come upon us unawares. During my childhood, I never saw an adult taking part in any sport whatever. Even as recently as twenty years ago, the Principal of a College, who was an ordained minister, was solemnly reprimanded by his Presbytery for giving encouragement to the sinful sporting spirit of the age, by allowing himself to be elected President of the College Cricket Club; and had some of the pious brethren had their way, he would have been deposed from the ministry. I shall never forget the funereal tones in which children were exhorted at class-meetings, to abstain from all irreverence and frivolity, and give themselves to prayer and Bible-reading. Our parents, too, kept dinning the same lesson in our ears: "Remember Children," they used to say, "that you are always in the presence of holy God, and that in his sight seriousness is the most becoming grace."

And this brings me to the sole cause and root of the whole matter, namely the *Puritanical conception of God*, which can only be characterized as *pagan, cruel, monstrous*. The Puritan's Deity was a heartless tyrant, who would not permit little children to give free and full vent to the very nature which he himself had bestowed upon them. How persistently I was reminded that God was watching me, and that every lie I told, and every wrong I did, were recorded in his Books, and would be read out against me at the Day of Judgment. To please him, it was necessary to think about him all the time, read the Bible with diligence, pray without ceasing, and go to church three or four times on Sunday, and ever so many times during the week. God's eye was ever upon me, so that there was no possibility of saying or doing anything without his knowing about it.

On one occasion, I joined a number of boys in a nutting expedition, thereby flatly disobeying my mother. O how sweet was that stolen pleasure, while it lasted, and how my whole being was thrilled, to its core, with delight; but it was a short-lived bliss, for on my return I had administered to me a never-to-be-forgotten punishment. Moreover, within a few hours after this motherly chastisement, a fierce thunderstorm burst upon the community, which was construed into a visible token of heaven's displeasure at my sinful behaviour; and after almost every vivid flash, I was thus comforted: "What a mercy it did

not strike you, my boy; how good God is thus to spare you."

God's tyranny cast its black and all-withering shadow upon everything. I deliberately affirm that life was not worth living; but then, it was infinitely better to live sadly and mournfully for a few years on earth, and after death be endlessly happy in heaven, than to enjoy a sinful life on earth, and afterwards grill and burn forever and forever in hell. Consequently the better a man became the more miserable he was. Lugubriousness was a sign of superior saintliness. It was openly stated that a well-known and pre-eminent man of God, who was a brilliant scholar, being able to speak with fluency in seven different languages, a profound theologian, and an authoritative interpreter of the eternal decrees, had never been known to laugh. He was one of the holiest men that ever lived, being so like him of whom it is recorded that he wept bitterly on several occasions, but not that he laughed even once and children, especially, were advised to aim at a similarly exalted type of piety.

This unrelieved lugubriousness of temper was always in strong evidence at the public services of the church. At such times everybody looked tremendously solemn, as if the final universal conflagration were about to begin, and every two or three minutes all the best people vigorously sighed, moaned, grunted, groaned, or cried, "Amen." I can see them now, those elders and deacons of enviable holiness, with their hair brushed down their foreheads, arrayed in badly-fitted garments of home-made cloth, seated in the Big Pew immediately in front of the Pulpit, and staring with fixed eyes upon the preacher, who was vehemently shouting out God's gracious message in Christ. O what eloquent croakers those superior men of God were, and how some of the children wondered whether they would ever be old and pious enough to be allowed a like high privilege!

In those days, to be a member of the Church was identical with being saved. Every Church member held a certificate for heaven. Hence, to be cut off from Church membership was the most awful calamity that could befall a person. Outside was the big world, lying under the wrath of the Great Judge because of its sins, and doomed to spend all eternity in the flames of hell; and to be flung back into such a wretched world was the greatest curse conceivable. Within my recollection, a young woman was so thrust out for allowing a man of the world to fall in love with, and be married to, her. In excommunicating her, the officiating minister brutally assured her that, were she to die before she repented and was readmitted to membership, she would be undoubtedly committed to the unquenchable flames of Gehenna. Poor soul, she was frightened almost out of her wits; and yet her only crime consisted in marrying a thoroughly honest, upright and good man, who did not happen to be within the pale of the Church.

Children's meetings were frequently held, at which the youngsters were drilled in Bible history and the catechisms. In all such gatherings, the dominant note was that God sat on his throne, night and day, watching the behaviour of children on earth, and that, unless their conduct was in harmony with the teaching of the Church and their parents, he would most certainly cast them into the outer darkness, where they would wail and sludder in infinite torment for ever.

Such was the training of a child in a Puritan home thirty or forty years ago, and naturally the consequences were most disastrous. During all my childhood days I never knew what it was to be spontaneously happy, or genuinely and unreservedly young.

I always had an old head, filled with fears and forebodings, on my young shoulders. Of necessity, therefore, my nature was warped, and my character became woefully one-sided. There was a whole realm of delightful and educative experiences to which I was a total stranger, and to this day I have suffered infinite loss in consequence. A friend, similarly trained in childhood, told me, the other day, that he never knew what it was to be young until he was fifty years of age.

When will parents learn that childhood should be a period of natural, spontaneous, and ebullient happiness, and that any training that robs it of that desirable quality, however well-intentioned, is in the highest degree iniquitous? At the bar of justice and common sense Puritanism stands utterly, absolutely, and eternally condemned. J. T. LLOYD.

Bits from "The Bab Ballads"

A READER who seems impressed with the Gilbertian verses recently given, asks for more. Well, the only difficulty is one of choice:—

There were three niggers of Chickeraboo
Pacifico, Bang-Bang, Pop-chop, who
Exclaimed, one terribly sultry day,
"Oh, let's be kings in a humble way."

The first was a highly-accomplished "bones,"
The next elicited banjo tones,
The third was a quiet, retiring chap,
Who danced an excellent break-down "flap."

So they commandeered three casks, put them a little way out to sea, and each darkie stood on his cask in faith or, perhaps, fore-knowledge.

A ship of several thousand tons,
And mounting seventy-something guns,
Ploughed, every year, the ocean blue,
Discovering kings and countries new.

The brave Rear-Admiral Bailey Pip,
Commanding that magnificent ship,
Perceived one day, his glasses through,
The kings that came from Chickeraboo.

"Dear eyes," said Admiral Pip, "I see
Three flourishing islands on our lee.
And, bless me! most remarkable thing!
On every island stands a king!"

"Come, lower the Admiral's gig," he cried,
"And over the dancing waves I'll glide;
That low obeisance I may do
To those three kings of Chickeraboo!"

He came, he explained, with the best intents, "and Queen Victoria's compliments," and the dusky three signed a printed Alliance form. The kings were pleased; in fact:—

The kings were pleased as they well could be;
The most retiring of the three,
In a "cellar-flap" to his joy gave vent
With a banjo-bones accompaniment.

The Admiral was pleased as well, for

Admiral Pip directly went
To the Lord at the head of the Government,
Who made him, by a stroke of a quill,
Baron de Pippe, of Pippetonville.

and now

Ambassadors, yes, and attachés, too
Are going to sail for Chickeraboo.
And, see, on the good ship's crowded deck,
A bishop, who's going out there on spec.

And let us all hope that blissful things
May come of alliance with darky kings,
And, may we never, whatever we do,
Declare a war with Chickeraboo!

The Bishop of Rum-ti-Foo is very well known, but there is also *The Bishop and the Busman*:—

It was a Bishop bold,
And London was his see,
He was short and stout and round about
And zealous as could be.

His zeal took the form of riding from Fulham, both up and down, on a bus driven by a "bus-directing Jew," and crying out, loudly,

His name is Hash Baz Ben,
And Jedediah too,
And Solomon and Zabulon—
This 'bus-directing Jew.

At first the busman smiled and "rather liked the fun"

But though at first amused,
Yet after seven years,
This Hebrew child got rather riled,
And melted into tears.

He really almost feared
To leave his poor abode,
His nose, and name, and beard became
A byword on that road.

At length he swore an oath,
The reason he would know—
"I'll call and see why ever he
Does persecute me so!"

The good old Bishop sat
On his ancestral chair,
The 'busman came, sent up his name,
And laid his grievance bare.

"Benighted Jew," he said
(The good old Bishop did),
Be Christian, you, instead of Jew—
Become a Christian kid!

Gilbert's bump of reverence is again plainly discernible in *The Reverend Simon Magnus*:—

A rich advowson, highly prized,
For private sale was advertised;
And many a parson made a bid;
The Reverend Simon Magnus did.

He sought the agent's: "Agent, I
Have come prepared at once to buy
(If your demand is not too big)
The cure of Otium-cum-Digge."

"Ah!" said the agent, "there's a berth—
The snuggest vicarage on earth;
No sort of duty (so I hear),
And fifteen hundred pounds a year!"

The Reverend Simon was shown a photograph of the good incumbent. "Ninety-five and in his dotage," said the agent.

"Poor soul!" said Simon. "His decease
Would be a merciful release!"

The agent laughed—the agent blinked—
The agent blew his nose and winked
And poked the parson's ribs in play—
It was that agent's vulgar way.

The Reverend Simon frowned: "I grieve
This light demeanour to perceive;
It's scarcely *comme il faut*, I think:
Now—pray oblige me—do not wink.

"Don't dig my waistcoat into holes—
Your mission is to sell the souls
Of human sheep and human kids—
To that divine who highest bids."

The cleric explains that what he wants is "To wear the lost from wicked ways," but

The agent said, "From what I hear,
This living will not suit, I fear—
There are no poor, no sick at all;
For services there is no call."

The reverend gent looked grave. "Dear me!
Then there is *no* 'society'?"
I mean, of course, no sinners there
Whose souls will be my special care?"

The cunning agent shook his head,
"No, none—except"—(the agent said)—
"The Duke of A., the Earl of B.,
The Marquis C., and Viscount D.

"But you will not be quite alone,
For, though they've chaplains of their own,
Of course this noble well-bred clan
Receive the parish clergyman."

"Oh, silence, sir!" said Simon M.,
"Dukes—earls! What should I care for them?
These worldly ranks I scorn and flout!"
"Of course," the agent said, "no doubt."

"Yet I might show these men of birth
The hollowness of rank on earth."
The agent answered, "Very true—
But I should not, if I were you."

But there are too many to choose from. There is nothing left for others to do but to obtain the volume and make their own selection.

T.H.E.

Acid Drops

The Education Committee of Carnarvon County Schools have asked for a report on the religious convictions held by members of the teaching staffs. A report from the Higher Education Committee stated that "some teachers had drifted from the religion of their fathers, and some were openly hostile to religious instruction." From a brief report in the *Daily Sketch* for November 27, we see that Dr. Grifyd, presumably a member of the Committee, said:—

If a teacher indulges in too much drink he is promptly pulled up. Hostility to religion is just as dangerous as much liking for drink.

And a Dr. Helsby said that there were teachers employed by the authority who were Atheists or Agnostics, and openly boasted about it. The insolence of these two men and those who support them is beyond anything that one can say. But it is very characteristic of the primitive nature of religious belief in a large part of Wales, and particularly of North Wales. These men would overlook hypocrisy, and many other vices, provided sound religious belief existed. They do not mind how hypocritical teachers are, provided they openly profess Christianity. It is sincerity accompanied with unbelief to which they have a strong objection.

But there is a very strong teachers' organization in existence. Is it not time that these teachers made a stand for honesty, character, and ability in education, and not bothered themselves merely about securing financial advantages? After all, the quality of the pupil will depend largely upon the character of the teacher, and what type of character may we expect when only those who have no conception of the whole drift of modern thought and of modern scholarship, or having this knowledge, keep it to themselves and play the hypocrite for fearing of losing promotion, are appointed as teachers? Carnarvon teachers ought to summon up enough courage to decline to answer any questions on this head that are put to them. And they might at the same time appeal to the higher authority against the petty tyranny of these religious bigots.

The Bishop of Ely has decided that women may, if they choose, go into church hatless. The world moves. What we find difficult to understand is why special illumination on this point of supreme social significance, should have been vouchsafed alone to Ely.

The Bishop of Bradford, in a sermon that he preached recently, said:—

The Church of England is a Church of which to be proud on many counts. No other Christian body in the world so consistently tries to unite tradition and progress, authority and freedom, to bring from its treasures things new and old; no other Christian body has so wide a conception of what Christ wants his Church to comprise, or so large a view of the meaning of the great word "Catholic."

We fancy the Church of Rome could make equally preposterous claims; the plain truth being that there is hardly any important reform which was not bitterly opposed by the Church of England. Even one of the latest, Divorce Reform, is opposed, tooth and nail, by almost every Bishop, in the teeth of every decent feeling for justice and humanity. The Bishop of Bradford may be proud of his Church, but its record is something far sorer than he seems to imagine. We doubt whether it has consistently stood for a single great reform in all its 400 years of history—except when it stood at the same time for its own sectarian interests.

Father Ronald Knox, the well-known Roman Catholic convert, has, with the permission of Archbishop Hinsley, produced an abridgment of the Bible. This has raised the ire of one, at least, pious reviewer, who considers it a "lamentable book," and thinks it "a shocking thing that this astonishing production should have a commendatory introduction from the Archbishop of Canterbury." We ourselves think that the only way to make people see that the Bible is "an astonishing production" anyway, is to let them have it complete and unexpurgated; but if it must be abridged, what about Foote and Ball's *Bible Handbook*? This little volume will show what are the real contents of the Bible much more than anything by Fr. Knox. It is a pity that the aforesaid pious reviewer does not seem to have seen it.

Archbishop Averill, the Primate of New Zealand, has been bemoaning the fact that in international relationships, there is no disposition to act upon Christian principles. What are these Christian principles? We bemoan the fact that there is no disposition in Christian circles to settle among themselves this fundamental question.

Observe the special degree of enlightenment the Primate is himself possessed of:—

Aggressive warfare is surely utterly to be condemned, but we cannot shut our eyes to the question of the defence of the people or the duty of safeguarding the peace of the world.

Did it really need supernatural intervention to throw that great light on this question?

The *New York Arbitrator* says:—

We are accused of failing utterly to comprehend what modern Christianity is. Our reply is that 50,000,000 Americans support the Churches which teach antiquated dogmas, and that every one of our accusers professes belief in at least one of the following doctrines: The Holy Bible as inspired Word of God; the direct creation, fall of man and need of a redeeming saviour; the virgin birth, resurrection and ascension of Jesus; Jesus as the judge of mankind, the one perfect man, belief in whom is essential for salvation; the control of the modern world by Jehovah and Jesus.

Samuel Butler had, in *Hudibras*, something to say about this phenomenon:—

What makes all doctrines plain and clear
About four hundred pounds a year,
And that which was proved false before
Proved true again for four hundred more.

The freshman class at Princeton voted 233 to 230 in favour of compulsory chapel attendance. If the 230 are prepared to put their intellectual liberty to the mercy of a vote, compulsory chapel is the best place for them.

From the Melbourne *Rationalist* :—

Sorcery in Australia's two territories—Papua and New Guinea—is not a dead art, but in the accepted areas it has to be carried on *sub rosa*, for sorcery is now the monopoly of the so-called Christian missions. If you are white, you may sorcer seven days of the week; but if you are black, you will run into the Native Administration Regulations.

The relevant Regulation is No. 97, which reads as follows :—any native who—

(a) Practises or attempts to practise sorcery; or
 (b) threatens any native with sorcery, whether practised by himself or by any other native; or
 (c) procures, or attempts to procure, any other native to practise or threaten any native with sorcery; or native to practise or threaten any native with sorcery; or

(d) is found in possession of implements or charms used in sorcery; or

(e) accepts payments or gifts, the intention of which is to propitiate a sorcerer; or

(f) administrate or is in possession of a drug assumedly used for unlawful purposes, shall be guilty of an offence. Penalty: Three pounds, or imprisonment for six months, or both.

Fortunately for Christianity, the Regulations do not apply to Europeans; otherwise several ships would be needed for the modern Exodus of priests, brothers, pastors and what-nots, and votive lamps, candles, unfermented wine, altars, medals, wafers and what-nots, all the personnel and impedimenta of white sorcery.

One of the Anglo-Catholic organs claims that "it is true that English Catholics accept the teachings of modern science and criticism, and find nothing in them antagonistic to the Catholic faith." This is surely a supreme example of disingenuousness, for it all depends on what is meant by "the teachings of modern science and criticism." If they mean what *we* mean by them, then it is quite untrue to say they are not antagonistic to Anglo-Catholicism. Modern Biblical criticism has riddled the Divine pretensions of "Holy Writ." It has shown the Bible to be a compilation, made no one knows where or by whom, of ancient myths and legends for the most part with "heroes" from Adam to Jesus who never had a real existence. And science has shown that such things as Bible miracles are infantile nonsense. Pious writers should not so deliberately mislead their readers.

The same journal utters pæans of praise to missionaries and the wonderful work they are always doing in converting the heathen; yet when one of these great men comes back and "goes all over England to kindle interest in his work"—he often "has to go back to his distant post confessing that his exertions have comparatively failed" in bringing "the resources of Christian civilization within reach of his people." If this is true—and we hope it is—we are delighted to record the fact. It shows that the people are at last beginning to see charity begins at home, and that there are large numbers here in England who could do with the resources of "Christian" civilization. It is good to see that the missionary ramp is being seen through at last.

The outcry of some of our religious journals against the new Divorce Reform Bill is, as would be expected, loud and shrill. In the debate on the subject in the House of Commons it seems that what the *Church Times* calls "the real Christian objection was never mentioned," and what is this Christian objection? Why, that a divorce is impossible because "what God has joined together man cannot put asunder." The members who took part in the debate, instead of asserting that Marriage was a Sacrament, was Holy, was a Sacred Ordination, seemed to look upon it as merely a "secular arrangement, lying in what the late Lord Morley called the bleak and frigid zone of civil contract." In other words, Holy Matrimony instead of being invested with all the sacredness and divinity Christianity can conjure up, was, to our prosaic Parliament, merely "a matter of State arrangement and State law."

Well, is not that the truth? Parliament, as such, is absolutely a secular institution; and the only proper and just way for it to deal with marriage is to look upon it as a civil contract between a man and a woman. The way in which the *Church Times* looks upon marriage and divorce is peculiar to itself, and lots of Christians disagree with it as violently as it disagrees with Parliament. The way in which the relatively small body of Anglo-Catholics—who are by no means united on the question themselves—seeks to impose its peculiar ideas on the rest of the people in this country savours of insolence. Marriage and divorce are slowly but surely shaking off the fetters of ancient superstition; and it will be a good thing when everybody will recognize their purely secular character.

One of our own slogans has now been adopted by the Roman Church. "Eternal vigilance is the price we must pay for freedom" is what we have said on numerous occasions. One of the "Grand Knights" (how fond Catholics are of such absurd titles) of the Knights of St. Columba, Mr. C. Head, declared, the other day, that "continual vigilance is the price Catholics must pay for their freedom." He added that "if Catholics are to remain free, any opposition must be stopped from the commencement." Well, why don't these people try to stop the opposition at any price? Why do they run away? We have never heard yet of any of the Knights of St. Columba do anything to stop opposition except say they are going to do it. It is not talk we want but action—has a single "Grand Knight" ever been daring enough to enter the lists with a Freethinker?

The *Daily Express* which keeps a pet astrologer on the premises much like medieval kings and queens used to do, proudly points out that the Crystal Palace fire was "foretold" by him. These are his words in the *Sunday Express* for November 29. "Fires are scheduled in the London area the beginning of the week." Even if the words "London area" do cover the site of the Crystal Palace, it is pretty safe to bet that a fire is likely to break out anywhere at any time in such a huge city as London. It is just as a fortune-teller is on pretty safe ground in asserting that the client will have a letter during the next day or two, or that he or she is going on a journey. What Mr. Naylor, the astrologer in question, should have done, was to have given the name of the building or buildings to be burnt down. Surely it is possible to read such a trivial thing in the stars? Without astrology, we can predict that some horse is going to win a race next week. And we are right!

The "Freethinker" Circulation Drive

It is proposed to celebrate the coming-of-age of the present editorship by an attempt to create a substantial increase in the circulation of this paper. The plan suggested is :—

(1) Each interested reader is to take an extra copy for a period of twelve months, and to use this copy as a means of interesting a non-subscriber to the point of taking the *Freethinker* regularly.

(2) So soon as this new subscriber is secured, the extra copy may be dropped by the present subscriber. Until this is accomplished, he will regard the extra threepence weekly (for one year) as a fine for his want of success.

The plan is simple, and it is not costly; but it does mean a little work, and whether or not it is more blessed to give than to receive, it is certainly easier for most to give than it is to work. But in this case it is the work alone that will yield permanent benefit. There are many thousands of potential readers in the country; why not try to secure some of them?

THE FREETHINKER

FOUNDED BY G. W. FOOTE

61 Farringdon Street, London, E.C.4

Telephone No.: CENTRAL 2412.

TO CORRESPONDENTS.

- J. BARTON.—It is amusing to find so old a Freethinker reader as yourself having a copy of the paper sent you as a specimen. But in the course of the *Freethinker* Circulation Drive this is bound to occur. We hope that political affairs will turn out not so badly as you appear to imagine.
- J. HUMPHREYS.—It is not easy to define belief in a sentence so as to avoid misunderstanding. The best we can do is to define belief as the emotional aspect of a conviction. It represents the general attitude towards a given proposition or set of propositions. That is one reason why one cannot believe anything without understanding something about it.
- W. WEAVER.—Many thanks for securing extra subscribers.
- S. NEWTON.—Getting better, but we need more rest than we are able to get at present, and now and then get a hint that we must exercise care. But will see what can be done about a Paine Memorial issue of the *Freethinker*.
- J. CLAYTON.—Hope the introduction of Mr. Cohen's works into the Burnley Library will do good. *Pamphlets for the People* will be issued as quickly as possible.
- 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. Rosetti, giving as long notice as possible.
- Friends who send us newspapers would enhance the favour by marking the passages to which they wish us to call attention.
- Orders for literature should be sent to the Business Manager of the Pioneer Press, 61 Farringdon Street, London E.C.4, and not to the Editor.
- The "*Freethinker*" will be forwarded direct from the Publishing Office at the following rates (Home and Abroad):—
One year, 15/-; half year, 7/6; three months, 3/9.
- All cheques and Postal Orders should be made payable to "The Pioneer Press," and crossed "Midland Bank, Ltd., Clerkenwell Branch."
- Lecture notices must reach 61 Farringdon Street, London, E.C.4 by the first post on Tuesday, or they will not be inserted.

Sugar Plums

January twenty-nine, 1937, marks the bi-Centenary of the birth of Thomas Paine. The National Secular Society is making the Annual Dinner on January 23, an occasion for commemorating this event. The Pioneer Press is marking it in an even more useful manner. Paine's unforgivable offence was the publication of the *Age of Reason*. Everything else might have been forgiven him. It was one of the most deadly attacks launched at the great fetish-book of the Christian Church. The *Rights of Man*, *Agrarian Justice*, or *Common Sense*, all else might have been forgiven. To attack the Bible, and to write that attack so that anyone could understand what was written, was to commit an offence that the Christian world has never forgotten. The fact that so many Christian clergymen are now teaching what Paine wrote in 1794, only adds to the original offence.

The Pioneer Press is marking the occasion by issuing a complete edition of the *Age of Reason*, with a sketch of Paine's life and work written by Mr. Chapman Cohen. This introductory sketch will run to about 20,000 words, and the whole, extending to about 260 pages, neatly bound in coloured wrapper, and printed on good paper, will be sold at fourpence. This is the cheapest work

ever issued in the history of Freethought. A very large edition has been printed, but even then the publication has been issued at a heavy loss, counting on every copy being sold. The Pioneer Press is able to issue at this price, only because part of the loss has been covered by the generosity of a few friends. The work will be published in January, and we shall then ask for the help of our friends in distributing it.

"Peace upon earth! was said. We sing it,
And pay a million priests to bring it,
After two thousand years of mass
We've got as far as poison-gas."

These lines were written by Thomas Hardy at Christmas, 1924, and have now been printed on a postcard at one penny each, or ninepence per dozen. A floral design embodying a quotation from Ingersoll is printed on a folding card, at twopence each, or seven for one shilling. Both can be used as the Season's greeting-cards. They have been specially issued by the Executive of the N.S.S., and may be had from the General Secretary, 68 Farringdon Street, London, E.C.4; or from the Pioneer Press, 61 Farringdon Street, London, E.C.4.

We have many times protested against the ignorance or bigotry, or both, shown by many petty magistrates and clerks with regard to the oath. The latest case that we have noted occurred in Otley, and is reported in the *Yorkshire Evening Post* for November 20. A woman sued her husband for desertion and for refusal to maintain her. When asked to take the oath she declined, and was told by the Clerk, Mr. Phil. S. Wade, "Then you had better stand down," and he subsequently informed her, "You will either take the oath properly or stand down." The woman unaware of her legal rights then took the oath.

The clerk ought to have known, and if he did not, he was unfit for his position, that the Oaths Act of 1888 gives everyone the right to affirm where there is a proper objection to an oath. The alternative ought to have been offered. The "You will either take the oath properly or sit down," was downright impertinence, and an ignoring of an alternative that must be known to every one engaged in either the practice or the administration of the law. Why on earth does not some arrangement exist to see that magistrates understand the law affecting witnesses, and also, why is there not some machinery to see that their duties are properly carried out is more than we can understand? Contempt of court on the part of a witness is a punishable offence. Why cannot contempt of the law by magistrates and magistrate's clerks be punishable also?

The Manchester Branch N.S.S. are having a visit from Mr. G. Whitehead, who will speak in the Picture House, Market Street, at 7 p.m. to-day (December 13), on "The Conflict in Spain." Mr. Whitehead is well known to Manchester saints, and with such a topical subject there should be a full house to greet him.

The Glasgow Branch has arranged a full week-end. Mr. R. H. Rosetti will lecture on "A Search for God," in the McLellan Galleries, on Sunday (December 13), at 7 p.m. A supper at Cranstons, Renfield Street, and a visit to the Empire Theatre are arranged for Saturday, December 12. Members and friends are invited to join the party and meet Mr. Rosetti. Branch officials are working hard and well, and they deserve a good response from the large body of Freethinkers in Glasgow.

An American minister, Rev. L. A. Crown of Litchfield, Illinois, offered a prize for the best answer to the question: What is the worst sin? Out of 800 replies sixty declared that "rejection of Jesus" was the worst. It was to one of the sixty that the prize was awarded. Ninety voted for the sin against the Holy Ghost, which was the *bête noire* of Jesus; unfortunately, he forgot to say what it was. Other votes went for slander, kidnapping, drunkenness, starting a nudist colony, Communism, hypocrisy and lying. We are glad to see someone mentioned "lying." There is still hope for the world.

Insanity on an Extensive Scale

A VOLUME with the startling title *The World Gone Mad*, was recently issued by Bale, Sons and Danielson. This unconventional work was almost ignored by the reviewers, presumably owing to its very candid pronouncements concerning politicians, priests and other busy beguilers of the public. The writer has adopted the pen-name of "Martian," and is evidently a Freethinker, who views the world's present proceedings more in sorrow than in anger. Moreover, "Martian" entertains little hope for improvement until a more enlightened general community has been evolved.

The only remedy for industrial and commercial depression is the provision of means for the public's purchase of commodities. Thrift is regarded more as a vice than a virtue when practised by a nation. So when Governments, whatever their political complexion, advise the public in times of monetary scarcity to save, they are really doing their very best to aggravate the evil they foolishly imagine they are striving to remedy. Our author declares that at the very moment when Governments "are doing their best—or worst—to lessen demand, they talk of schemes to raise prices, as if this were possible without further reducing both supply and the demand upon which supply must rest." And, he continues, "It appears to enter the mind of nobody (at least of no one in a responsible position) that a thousand pounds drawn from banks and spent, finds its way back to those banks again in greater part, and eventually, but it may have created many more thousands of additional wealth in its wanderings. This and a dozen other elementary facts in economics appear to be utterly unknown; certainly they are not mentioned in newspapers which devote columns to the clap-trap of politicians or dignitaries of the Church."

Martian attributes the trade depression which so long prostrated the world to the consequences in very large measure of the stupendous burden thrown upon Germany by the politicians at Versailles. He contends that under modern conditions of international trading indemnities curse both him that gives and him that takes. An indemnity can only be met in three ways: By means of money, services or commodities. Obviously, a gigantic debt cannot be paid in gold alone, so it must be liquidated, if at all, by the receipt of goods or services. There seems little doubt that Lloyd George, Winston Churchill and other so-called statesmen really supposed that a huge war debt could be paid by a defeated and demoralized country without any disadvantage to home industry and commerce. Martian seems to think that the truth is now evident. He tells us that: "Anyone can see that goods sent into the creditor countries, without payment or exchange return, must disorganize the industries of those countries. This is dumping on the most blatant and gigantic scale. The same must be said of service, for this means a vast number of Germans or Austrians working for nothing in England, France or Belgium, or paid, if at all, by their own countries." So much for making the Germans pay for the War!

Martian is an unrepentant Free Trader, who regards tariffs as a permanent obstruction to international trade. In dealing with credit he maintains that although this commonly functions as money, it possesses certain important differences.

As Stanley Jevons long since insisted, money is a measure of value and a medium of exchange, and Martian argues that it cannot be overstressed "that the world lives on production and credit; not on money." Under the present system, "production

cannot function in the absence of credit, and without a chance of profit on such production, credit is not forthcoming. . . . Credit is both the oil and the driving power of the industrial machine. If withheld, the machine stops, no matter how many may be willing to produce on the one hand and consume on the other."

Taxation is an eyesore to everyone; yet, apart from income tax and rates, little attention is paid to it by the general public. The late Harold Cox very justly contended that income tax, if properly assessed, is the only legitimate form of taxation. Now, as Martian urges, there is a wide difference between State squandering of the community's money and the investment of capital or credit in industrial undertakings. A paying and going concern utilizes its own money and credit, and its productive influence ramifies in many directions. The State, on the other hand, invites the community to furnish money to finance its undertakings. When a Government loan is floated the taxpayer finds the interest. Also, "business pays a dividend out of its profits, but these profits have to be earned first, but Government interest has to be paid whether the money advanced to it, by way of loans, earns anything or nothing."

Many will remember the late J. M. Robertson's work on *The Fallacy of Saving*, and Martian's viewpoint is very similar. Wherever possible, it certainly seems advisable to hold a little money in reserve for a rainy day. Still, a reasonable expenditure is absolutely essential to national or world prosperity. Much wealth is undoubtedly dissipated in frivolous vices and amusements by nearly all sections of the community, especially by members of the idle class, who find time heavy on their hands. But money spent on serviceable commodities is a constant benefit to the nation. Martian, however, regards all forms of spending with approval. Hoarding, to him, is the certain forerunner of public insolvency. He submits that: "Money saved advantages no one, not even the banks or the exchequer. . . . A race of spend-thrifts must be a race of consumers, and the world with its trade lives by consumption. A country of hoarders must go bankrupt in spite of its money and its savings." Nevertheless, while Imperial or municipal expenditure encourages commerce, its tendency is to enrich a few at the expense of the taxpayers as a whole, who perforce foot the bill.

Martian's chapter on Joint Stock Companies is highly instructive, and the ingenious devices of the shark company promoter, who brazenly swindles the guileless investor, are relentlessly exposed. When the financial manipulator has feathered his nest he usually retires. Some are brought to justice, but only after their victims are ruined. It is true that the shareholders possess the right to demand an inquiry by the Board of Trade, when a bogus balance sheet or other knavery is suspected, but only on the deposit of £100. "Thus says the law," notes Martian, "but, in practice, things are not so easy. In the case of a notorious undertaking that collapsed a few years ago, without one penny of assets out of a million or so, the Board demanded *unlimited costs* as the price of such investigation, and none was ever undertaken until all the money had safely disappeared." Then, to crown this enormity, "the Revenue Authorities put in a claim for income tax on the profits that were shown in a 'cooked' balance sheet, and persisted in their claim after it had been demonstrated that no profits had ever been made at all, and the Revenue claim ranked in front of that of the swindled shareholders, of course."

Many are the themes discussed in this iconoclastic work. Education, Population, the Capital Levy, War and Disarmament, Natural Law and Democratic

Government are some of these. In his chapter on Natural Law, Martian tears to tatters the specious plea that immense riches, on the one hand, and grinding poverty on the other, are inevitable disparities of human society. In his account of man's progress from savagery to civilization, he portrays a constant and partly successful conflict with an unfavourable environment. Our nearest relatives, the manlike apes possess no artificial protection against inclemencies of climate, and in consequence are confined to the tropical regions, in spite of their hairy covering. Man, however, has adopted artificial aids against cold and damp conditions and has wandered to all parts of the planet. Somewhat sweepingly, perhaps, Martian declares that: "Man has no natural weapons of defence; his teeth are small and weak, he is feeble in muscle and none too fleet of foot; he can neither fly nor climb to any extent; in short, in a natural state he is the most conspicuously helpless of all the Primates. Yet he has survived in spite of all natural laws which should have doomed him to extinction ages ago. He has done so by the use of acquired characteristics which have enabled him to set natural laws at defiance." But when man developed the power of speech, utilized his fore-foot as a hand, became a tool-manipulating animal and improved his power of vision, these and other functionings all serving to increase the size and capacity of his brain, he merely subjected one natural law to the influence of another. And Martian clearly shows his awareness of this in a later passage, where he dwells on the degree to which "purely natural laws have been overlaid and rendered abortive by human effort, or, in other words, the employment of some natural laws to abrogate others." Our domiciles in winter weather are naturally chilly but, continues Martian, "that does not prevent us from using the heat stored up by the sun, millions of years ago, in primeval forests, existing to-day as coal seams."

Film stars and pugilists are now far more famous than poets, reformers or philosophers. Intellectual and moral eminence are at a heavy discount with the mindless crowd. Martian pungently compares popular appraisal of the things that really matter with public appreciation of the merely sensational or vulgar. "The public for amusement or excitement, to say nothing of 'sex appeal' is infinitely vaster than the one for instruction or mental elevation. . . . Even a clergyman in a barrel is a better 'draw' than one in a pulpit, even although the latter may be filled with Heavenly Grace."

The whole 370 pages of this racy effort are intensely interesting and, indeed, there was no need for the author to apologize for seeming repetition by citing Herbert Spencer's aphorism that, "Only by varied iteration can alien conceptions be forced on reluctant minds."

T. F. PALMER.

Not to solve the mysteries but to see that they are insoluble, and to rest content in that conclusion, is the task we set ourselves here.—*John Burroughs.*

For the fallen and the weak;
They are slaves who will not choose
Hatred, scoffing and abuse,
Rather than in silence shrink
From the truth they needs must think;
They are slaves who dare not be
In the right with two or three.

James Russell Lowell.

Nationality and Internationalism

V.

WHILE on one hand an outcome of the War has been accentuation of national consciousness, in another direction there has been loosened a stream of influence of an opposite character connected with the doctrine, or doctrines, of Socialism. Since the failure of the political movement of the mid-century, it has permeated largely all labour and trade union organization on the Continent; and concentrates on economic issues—the "abolition of poverty amid plenty," attributed entirely to the rapacity and misdirection of the "Capitalist System." The term is applied particularly to the form industrial action has taken with the introduction of machinery into production. The material implications of the doctrine do not concern us in the present connexion. It divides the industrial world into two classes, the "proletariat" and the "bourgeoisie," engaged in continual "class-war" from their respective positions; though where the line is to be drawn remains undefined. English Trade Unions remained unaffected until the advent of a Socialist propaganda in the '80's, which won their support to the creation of a Labour-Socialist Party in Parliament. Either in a "reformist" or revolutionary guise it affirms that the interests of the "proletariat" are at one in all countries, and in its violent expression negates any sentiment of "patriotism." So we get the slogan of the Communist Manifesto of Marx and Engels of '47: "Workers of the world unite. You have a world to gain and nothing to lose but your chains!"

During the confusion of the Russian Revolution of 1917, a band of fanatical Marxists (the *Bolsheviks*) led by Lenin were enabled to seize power, since held by terrorist repression. With the founding of the Third Communist International (the Comintern) that followed, a general revolutionary onslaught was launched under its auspices.¹ In a manifesto issued from Moscow in 1919 (signed by Lenin, Trotsky and others), its purpose was declared in unequivocal terms. We can only cite here one or two leading passages, though columns could be filled from this and other sources, similar in tenor, developing related methods of action. It declares:—

Seventy-two years have gone by since the Communist Party proclaimed its programme in the form of the Manifesto written by the greatest teachers of the proletarian revolution, Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels. . . . We, Communists, representatives of the revolutionary proletariat of the different countries of Europe, America, and Asia, assembled in Soviet Moscow, feel and consider ourselves followers and fulfillers of the programme proclaimed seventy-two years ago. It is our task now to sum up the practical revolutionary experience of the working-class, to cleanse the movement of its admixture of opportunism and social patriotism, and to unite the forces of all the true revolutionary proletarian parties in order to further and hasten the complete victory of the Communist revolution.

The imperialist war which pitted nation against nation has passed, and is passing into the civil war which lines up class against class. . . . World Capitalism prepares itself for the final battle. Under cover of the "League of Nations," and a deluge of pacifist phrase-mongering, a desperate effort is being made to pull together the tumbling Capitalist system and to direct its forces against the constantly

¹ The first "International" founded by Marx came to an end after the Franco-German War of 1870. It was revived later as the Second, and is mainly comprised in the existing International Federation of Trade Unions, "Moderate" in its aims, and an object of virulent abuse by the Comintern. Sir W. Citrine, the English Trade Union leader, is its new President.

growing proletarian revolt. This monstrous new conspiracy of the Capitalist class must be met by the proletariat by seizure of the political power of the State, turning this power against its class enemies, and using it as a lever to set in motion the economic revolution. . . . Seizure of political power by the proletariat means destruction of the political power of the bourgeoisie. The organized power of the bourgeoisie is in the civil State, with its Capitalist army under control of bourgeois-junker officers, its police and gendarmes, jailers and judges, its priests, government officials, etc. Conquest of the political power means not merely a change in the personnel of ministries, but annihilation of the enemy machinery of government: disarmament of the bourgeoisie, of the counter-revolutionary officers, arming of the proletariat, the revolutionary soldiers, the Red Guard of working men. . . . The Revolutionary era compels the proletariat to make use of the means of battle, which will concentrate its entire energies, namely, mass action, with its logical resultant, direct conflict with the governmental machinery in open combat. All other methods such as revolutionary use of bourgeois parliamentarism, will be of only secondary significance

On the theory that the interests of the "workers" of all countries are at one, the end of this catastrophic transformation is to be the removal of national boundaries, and their obstructive irregularities and prejudices will be rolled out under a class-less universal commonwealth—of sorts. This would certainly render "internationalism" a superfluous concern; even the term would be obsolete.

There is, of course, no such solidarity of interest. No sooner was the Comintern stabilized in Russia than its projectors extended its operations beyond—since world-wide in scope and intention. The disordered condition of Europe favoured these attempts at the outset in Hungary, Germany, Italy, and elsewhere. Violence is a game not confined to one side, and such attempts were presently frustrated by forcible "counter-revolutionary" action. The "theory" broke on the impact of realities, and national feeling emerged strengthened in the lands affected by these machinations, which have had in several cases singular repercussions. As the Bolshevik dogma implies a unified mental outlook in the State, so "totalitarian" notions of another cast have appeared with these conflicts; while milder phases of dictatorship have replaced free institutions in most of the new States. Two developments of special import are Fascism in Italy and Nazi-ism in Germany, both implacably hostile to Marxism. Though lumped together by its supporters, they differ in character and antecedents. They agree with the "Soviet" in the suppression of any counter opinion to the leading Idea, just as their attendant respective brutalities are on all fours.

The Italian cult gets its name from the Roman faces,² and revives the imperial tradition of ancient Rome, employing its insignia and titles in the Fascist organization. The circumstances through which it came into power are familiar. It is founded on one or two basic principles, as, "The interests of all classes must be subordinated to the supreme interest of the State." It has created a national industrial organization—the Corporative State, which is a species of "Socialism" minus interference with the free formation of Capital. Associated therewith is an intensification of military sentiment and training, beginning with the children at school. "We are becoming," says the *Duce*, Mussolini, "not simply a military but a militarized nation." With a corre-

² The bundle of rods bound round the helve of an axe, carried before the magistrate as a symbol of authority. The term has come to be used in polemics, regardless of its real meaning.

sponding equipment, and encouragement of population, this warlike spirit is incited to the achievement of a new Romano-Italian empire to be won by energy and valour at the expense of effete "pacifist" peoples, including the British themselves, which will bring with it prosperity and glory. The Abyssinian adventure is the first step.

The rise of Adolf Hitler from an obscure labourer to the headship of Germany, to a personal ascendancy surpassing all his predecessors, is one of the remarkable events of our time. The Nazi creed, bitterly anti-Marxist and anti-Semitic, has inspired an exalted belief in German's future among its youth. It links with a notion of racial purity and perfection, and a non-Christian, if not anti-Christian doctrine of valour invoking old "pagan" tradition, similar to Carlyle's characterization in his famous lecture on *Odin*. Hence an effort towards complete military rearmament.

These phenomena are forbidding in their portents all round. While giving lip-service to peaceful intentions abroad, the directors of these militant politics pronounce opposite aims at home. In face of the uncertainty of affairs a general advance in armament has gone forward in other States; with special agreements for mutual support beyond the League Covenant. So France approaches the U.S.S.R. which has the largest standing army in the world, and a great air force; towards whom Germany is openly hostile. The Soviet is confronted on its Eastern frontier by the authoritarian power of Japan, and its Asiatic ambitions. Before these inimical circumstances it now appeals to its own youth on grounds of "national" feeling. It is also a member of the League, largely through the offices of the French Left (despite the denunciation cited above), where its representative expresses exemplary sentiments. Yet its subversive propaganda, tempered by expediency, continues. The main tendency in most countries in material concerns is towards a self-sufficing policy, "economic nationalism," as a further aid to security, with a corresponding effect on the so-called Capitalist System, modified thereby in support of "collective solidarity," and also on world trade.

Thus as old supernatural beliefs, source in the past of intolerance and conflict, become discredited, they are replaced by other cults of violence and domination—secular in their springs and purpose.

"Force rules the world still,
Has ruled it, shall rule it;
Meekness is weakness,
Strength is triumphant,
Over the whole earth
Still is it 'Thor's Day!'"

AUSTEN VERNEY.

On Making Oneself Understood

My complacency received a rude shock the other day. One of the keen readers of this journal saw in my article on the way in which much of Christian theological literature found its last resting-place in the "penny box" of second-hand booksellers, not what I meant to convey, but something quite different. He interpreted certain passages as an attack on Blount, Collins, Tindall, Woolston and other great English Deists, and very indignantly wrote to the Editor about it.

Now if this reader so sadly mis-read me, there must be others; and I have to ask myself whether the particular passage pounced upon is really very badly written, or whether this is one of those cases which

crop up sometimes when a writer is unduly careless, and he can only with difficulty be rightly understood.

I am not altogether satisfied with one of the old adages—that easy reading makes bad writing; any more than I am that hard reading makes good writing. One of the greatest of our Freethinkers, John M. Robertson was a difficult writer to follow. His meaning—in my opinion—was always clear; but his style was not to every man's taste, and the consensus of opinion was that, however great his merits in other directions were, he was not what is called a *great* writer. But take up any passage from one of his numerous works, read it carefully, and there can be no mistaking his meaning. Yet Robertson lost at least half his public because of his style—a loss which was theirs more than they thought. He was a born writer, he had always something to say which was worth saying, an individual point of view which showed the powerful analytical mind behind it stored with an immense amount of hard reading and reflection.

It is rather remarkable that there have always been, broadly speaking, two trends in the writing of English. On the one hand, we get the style of an Addison with its elegant and polished sentences; on the other we get the direct, defiant, vigorous English of Defoe, Swift or Paine. The genius is great in either style, and indeed, has survived because of his genius quite as much as because of his style. There may be a few crude sentences in the *Age of Reason*; but it has always seemed to me to be a remarkable piece of English prose, so convincing and lucid. The reader must take his choice in the end as to which style he prefers. I love them both.

As for me, I can only write as I must; and when I wrote in the article in question, that the English Deists, "brought forth an immense number of books"—I had in mind by this last word "replies"—I thought my meaning could escape no reader. The Deists obviously did not bring forth an "immense" number of books; it was their opponents who did this. But the fact that I was so badly misconstrued proves how carefully one must write—or how difficult it is to write so that one's meaning can never be mistaken.

And this brings me to another point. A Spiritualist friend of mine thought that my recent review of a Spiritualist novel showed a distinct sign of my weakening on the question. He felt that the way I dealt with Spiritualism this time proved—to him, at least—that I was beginning to be shaken by the accumulative evidence in favour of survival. Whether this is due to the fact that I tried to be just to the author of the book, or—once again—to my bad writing, I am not sure. In case, therefore, that a similar impression was conveyed to any other reader, let me assure him that I am exactly as I always have been with regard to Spiritualism—an out-and-out unbeliever. I am not "Agnostic" on the question, but thoroughly Atheist. I have read too much about it, and have seen too much at seances, private and public, to make me anything else.

And, finally, it is astonishing how much difference of opinion exists as to what is *great* writing apart from sheer lucidity. The recent discussion on the merits of the English of the Authorized Version of the Bible makes interesting reading. Perhaps it will, at least, clear the question of many side-issues.

H. CUTNER.

Why Socialism?

The Theory and Practice of Socialism, by John Strachey. (Victor Gollancz; 10s. 6d.; also Left Book Club: 488 pp.).

FREETHINKERS, whether Socialists or not, will find this book well worth attention, as there is a deal of what Strachey has to say which helps to clarify many issues. On the other hand, the book should have a salutary influence upon those Communists who are prone to settle a discussion by quoting a passage from Marx and Engels, in a manner which gives the impression that neither Marx nor Engels recognized the importance of ideas in the struggle to build a better state of society.

The Theory and Practice of Socialism consists of thirty-four chapters, under four main headings: "The Economic System": "The Political System": "Socialism and the Working Class": and "The Science of Social Change."

In the first part, the productive and distributive systems of Capitalism and Socialism are described and contrasted; and the question of social planning is discussed. This is done on a basis of an exposition of the actual methods under Capitalism and the U.S.S.R.

The chapter on "Socialism and Communism Distinguished" should be welcomed by those who are not clear as to the distinction. In brief, "First we described a system of planned production for use in which the products are distributed in accordance with the quantity and quality of work done. This is Socialism. Now we have outlined a social system which is also based upon planned production for use, but in which the products are distributed according to need, and work is done according to ability. This is Communism." (pp. 112-113.)

Those who are troubled about incentives to work disappearing under a new system of society, should find the chapter with that heading enlightening. They will find that neither Socialism nor Communism ignores human nature, as often seems to be thought, but strives to develop human adaptability along with the building-up of a new society.

In the second part, the questions of democracy, dictatorship, liberty, religion, war and peace are treated in a way which should prove interesting to Freethinkers and will, doubtless, straighten out various problems for many. All these questions are faced up to either in close connexion with human history in general, or in relation to Capitalist development and the evolution of society in the Soviet Union.

There is no room for quotations, but Strachey's outline of the basis of freedom of thought in a Socialist society deserves careful consideration, while religionists need have no fear provided they do not use their religion as a cover for anti-social activity. They are granted full freedom to worship.

The third section brings us to a short history of the struggles of the British working-class, with historical appraisal of such different folk as Sir Thomas More and his *Utopia*, Robert Owen, the Chartists, William Morris, and others. Various errors and illusions are dealt with, but at all times with a sympathetic treatment that brings out the indebtedness of the present to the fighters of the past.

The specific treatment of the theoretical side of Socialism and Communism is left for the fourth section. Here, the reader who is acquainted with the literature of Marxism is presented with an excellent conspectus, from *The Materialist Conception of History* to *The Way to Socialism*. Those who have picked up only odds and ends of Marxist teaching, will find this section a good basis for study, especially if they have carefully read the preceding parts of the work.

The book closes with an annotated bibliography of Marxist works, and an index. In these days of high-priced books it is well worth 10s. 6d. Members of the Left Book Club have found a solution to the dialectic of a not-too-well lined pocket.

E. EGERTON STAFFORD.

How can the Church be received as a trustworthy guide in the invisible, which falls into so many errors in the visible.—*Draper*.

Correspondence

THE PUBLIC ORDER BILL

TO THE EDITOR OF THE "FREETHINKER"

SIR,—It seems to me that the Freethinking and Rationalist movements should be taking more seriously the increasing curtailment of democratic liberties in England—expression of the contracting economic system. The Public Order Bill is certainly one of the worst attacks on liberty since Stuart times. As the Communists forecast, the National Government has used the public outcry against Fascism to introduce legislation that can be used whenever necessary to smash all working-class movements. It is inevitable with our present Labour leadership that no attempt would be made to resist reaction; but one was astonished to find Mr. Thurtle excusing the Bill. It has been left to Prof. Laski to expose fully what it means.

As an example of the kind of thing that the Freethinking movement has to expect as the result of this kind of tactics, the following events in Holland are illuminating:—

"The Colijn Government has issued the slogan: against Communism and against Fascism! With this it pursues the double object of taking the propagandist wind out of the sails of the Social Democrats, and of camouflaging its measures against the working-class in general.

"Under this slogan: Against Communism and against Fascism, the Colijn Government has, for instance, issued a ban on uniforms which works out in actual practice by permitting Fascist youth to demonstrate in full uniform, but prohibiting its Social Democratic youth from wearing even a red kerchief. The Fascists have initiated a savage campaign against the Freethinkers. The Freethinkers have been the first Dutch party to restore their organizational unity. The Fascists, seeing in unity a danger for their agitation, raided a Freethinkers' meeting in Utrecht and broke it up. The perpetrators 'could not be found,' but afterwards the Freethinkers' broadcast hour was banned." (Imprecorr, December 5).

This is the classic method of reaction to use Fascist disorder to curtail democracy. Labour will shortly pay dearly for its support of Baldwin.

JACK LINDSAY.

[Letters from Messrs W. Kensett, R. Harding, W. Kent and "Goth" are held over till next week.]

Obituary

MR. HENRY BOLL

WE regret to report the death of another North Eastern stalwart, Mr. Henry Boll, who died on Saturday, November 28, at New Herrington, Co. Durham. He had been a member of the N.S.S. for a very long period, and has done useful work for Freethought.

He was a very popular and busy man, and during his career had been associated with many progressive movements. He was a member of Durham County Council for a number of years; one of the founders of the workmen's club and institute; President of the Co-op. Society; as well as being overseer on parish Council, and a member of the assessment committee; and a Trade Union official. His sturdy Freethought was always kept well to the front. A Secular Service was read at the graveside, on Monday, by Mr. J. T. Brighton, before a large gathering of relatives, friends, and representatives of the various bodies with whom he had served.

He leaves four sons and three daughters, who share his Secular opinions; to whom we extend our sympathy.

When man has come to the turnstiles of Night, all the creeds in the world seem to him wonderfully alike and colourless.—Rudyard Kipling.

SUNDAY LECTURE NOTICES, Etc.

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

LONDON

OUTDOOR

NORTH LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (White Stone Pond, Hampstead): 11.30, Mr. L. Ebury.

WEST LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (Hyde Park): 3.30, Sunday, Messrs. Bryant, Evans, Barnes and Tuson. *Freethinker* on sale at Kiosk. Should be ordered in advance to avoid disappointment. *Freethinker* and *Spain and the Church* on sale outside the Park gates.

INDOOR

NORTH LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (The Primrose Restaurant, 66, Heath Street, Hampstead, N.W.3, one minute from Hampstead Underground Station): 7.30, C. Bradlaugh Bonner—"Christianity in the Classroom."

SOUTH LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (Alexandra Hotel, South Side, Clapham Common, S.W.4, opposite Clapham Common Underground): 7.30, Mr. A. E. Fruin (President British Spiritualist Lyceum Union)—"Spiritualism. What it Stands For."

SOUTH PLACE ETHICAL SOCIETY (Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, W.C.1): 11.0, Reginald A. Reynolds—"Civilization and the Backward Races."

WEST LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (The Laurie Arms, Crawford Place, Edgware Road, W.): 7.30, Mrs. Isabel Brown—"War and Fascism."

COUNTRY

INDOOR.

BIRKENHEAD (Wirral) BRANCH N.S.S. (Beechcroft Settlement, Whetstone Lane): 7.0, C. McKelvie (Liverpool)—"Red Herrings."

BRADFORD BRANCH N.S.S. (Laycock's Cafe, Kirkgate, entrance via passage facing Burtons): 7.15, Mr. W. Brayshaw (Secretary Shipley Branch League of Nations Union)—"World Labour Problems."

BURNLEY (Barden House Club): 7.30, Tuesday, December 15, Mr. J. Clayton—"Cremation."

EAST LANCASHIRE RATIONALIST ASSOCIATION (28 Bridge Street, Burnley): 2.30, Mr. J. Clayton—"Jesus Christ and Social Reform."

EDINBURGH BRANCH N.S.S. (Freegardeners' Hall, Picardy Place, Edinburgh): 7.0, Lantern Lecture. Dr. Stephen—"Dating the Past."

GLASGOW SECULAR SOCIETY (East Hall, McLellan Galleries, Sauchiehall Street, Glasgow): 7.0, Mr. R. H. Rosetti—"A Search for God."

GREAT HARWOOD (The Labour Hall, Blackburn Road): 7.30, Mr. J. Clayton—"The Catholic Church and Spain."

LEICESTER SECULAR SOCIETY (Secular Hall, Humberstone Gate): 6.30, Mr. A. Kohn—"Can We Stop War To-day?"

LIVERPOOL BRANCH N.S.S. (Transport Hall, entrance in Christian Street, Islington, Liverpool): 7.0, Miss D. C. Keeling M.B.E., M.A., J.P. (of the Liverpool Personal Service Society)—"The Place of Voluntary Social Service in the Community."

MANCHESTER BRANCH N.S.S. (The Picture House, Market Street, Manchester): 7.0, Mr. G. Whitehead—"The Conflict in Spain." Admission Free. Reserved Seats 6d. and 1s.

SUNDERLAND BRANCH N.S.S. (Co-operative Hall, Green Street): 7.0, Mr. J. T. Brighton.

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