

THE FREETHINKER

• EDITED by CHAPMAN COHEN •
— Founded 1881 —

VOL. LVII.—No. 10

SUNDAY, MARCH 7, 1937

PRICE THREEPENCE

PRINCIPAL CONTENTS

	Page
<i>A Miracle of Journalism—The Editor</i>	145
<i>Place aux Dames—Mimnermus</i>	146
<i>The Science of Ancient Egypt—T. F. Palmer</i>	148
<i>The Great Gentleman—T. H. Elstob</i>	149
<i>The Meaning of Mathematics—H. Preece</i>	150
<i>Masterpieces of Freethought—H. Cutner</i>	154
<i>Our Archbishop and Australia—J.Y.A.</i>	155
<i>The Healing Art in History—Joseph Bryce</i>	155
<i>For Liberty—Louis Borrill</i>	157
<i>A Word About Greece to the Greeks—Dennis R. Earley</i>	158

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

Views and Opinions

A Miracle of Journalism

We know, on the authority of the Bible, that man commenced his existence in a state of innocence. He knew nothing of good or evil. But, alas, that state was of short duration. Woman was created. She appeared as a side-issue, but soon dominated the situation. Ever since man has, in the main, been fashioned in sin and shapen in iniquity. He has not only known evil ways and wicked things, but he has sought them out, and pleased in their enjoyment. And in the history of mankind, only one here and there appears who takes us back to that primitive state when man was pure and the stars in the heavens sang songs to their creator. These rare individuals appear like horses that are born with stripes like a zebra, or babies with a complete covering of hair. To such men we can offer only homage, wondering where they come from and how they manage to remain as examples of the original innocence of the race.

I have just discovered one such embodiment of innocence. He is no other than the editor of *John O'London's Weekly*, a journal that flourishes on publishing scraps about books, and gossip about prominent people (living and dead), to persuade many others that they are acquiring a literary education and a knowledge of history. In the above-named journal, the editor says:—

Only once in my life have I heard a man call himself an Atheist. . . . His avowal took my young breath away. To-day the word is obsolete and meaningless.

My first duty is to congratulate the editor on so carefully avoiding the normal consequences of having lived in so wicked a world as ours. I do not know whether he has still retained his "young breath," certainly his mind still moves and lives in the uncontaminated atmosphere of the nursery. I can quite understand the editor's "young breath" being taken away when he heard a man openly declare himself an Atheist; but

that in all the following years, moving among the wicked denizens of Fleet Street, he should never once have come across a single fellow human being who was an Atheist constitutes a lack of experience approaching what used to be called a miracle—that is, something which simply could not happen, and was therefore put down to the providence of God. Even the Bishop of London—though he has retained in other directions his virginal purity—has not succeeded as our editor has; for he has openly told of the many Atheists whom he encountered in the East-End of London. I don't know whether such Adamic innocence, as the editor's, would qualify one for the post of bank-manager, the treasurer of a Missionary Society, or even for the post of Archbishop of Canterbury, but I feel strongly that a monument ought to be set up in Fleet Street, by the side of the one now there to Lord Northcliffe, as a tribute to two journalists who devoted their lives to the service of truth.

* * *

A Blot on the Escutcheon

The degree to which this St. John of Fleet Street has preserved his intelligence "unspotted from the world," is the more remarkable because in the journal over which he presides there appeared, a few months ago, a notice of a book by Laurence Housman, on his brother, the well-known A. E. Housman. In this there appeared the following:—

Of the poem called "The New Year . . ." he said, "I was then a Deist." "And now," I asked, "what do you call yourself, an Agnostic?" "No, I am an Atheist."

I admit that this is not meeting a man in bodily form, but, after all, if one comes into "spiritual" contact with a man, that is the truest of all associations. So, for such an uncontaminated a person as the editor in question, one cannot say he deliberately hid himself from all who might call themselves Atheists, one can only assume that here is another example of the operations of an inscrutable "providence." I must not close my eyes to the possibility that his staff, glorying, as journalists might well do, in knowing so perfect an example of humanity in its most innocent form, have deliberately kept a knowledge of the existence of Atheists from him, or they may have provided him with an expurgated copy of his paper, or like a very exalted personage, he may have accepted the post as editor on the condition that he had his mother by his side, and it may be due to her maternal watchfulness that her son is what he is, and is kept free from "wicked" acquaintances. I feel myself getting very interested in the psychology of this St. John the Immaculate. Had he lived in New Testament days, how he would have exulted in the treatment measured out by God to the wicked Ananias.

Mere Words!

But loath as I am to act like Satan in Eden, and end the editor's stage of early Edenic ignorance by opening his eyes to the wickedness of this world, I must point out that very certainly the word Atheist is not obsolete. It is in use all over the world, and Christians—who have probably kept from him the fact—are continually appealing for funds to fight Atheism in this country. There have been in the press statements of schools that actually teach Atheism to children, and, where census enumerations include religious descriptions, millions write themselves down as Atheists. Moreover, the general term applied to the Soviet Government of Russia is *Atheistic* Russia. Finally, all dictionaries have something to say about Atheism, and I do not know of one that says the word is obsolete. It is evident that the editor in keeping himself unspotted from the world has paid the price of being in ignorance of a great deal that is going on.

And *meaningless*! Certainly the word is not meaningless to-day. It is used by many millions, and although it may be that these, not having been brought up in Fleet Street, do not know what the meaning of the word is; or it may be that many prefer some other word which means nothing at all, but which our editor would gladly welcome as therefore having at least the odour of religion, yet it must have some meaning to the millions of humans who use it. Even the Archbishop of Canterbury, without whom the marital felicity of the English people would wither as a field that is without moisture, even His Grace, who can, with holy oil and magic murmurs, transform a mere man into a King who is a partaker of the nature and sanctity of the deity, even he cannot call men back from Atheism to Theism if there are no Atheists to be called back. There may be journals without sense and editors without knowledge, but there cannot be a coming back unless there is a departure from. And after all, the word Atheist only means one who is without belief in a god. And if people without belief in a God do not exist, then is the travail of the Archbishop vain. For all men, on the editor's reading, have a god, and their gods have obviously done nothing for them. But the word cannot be at the same time without meaning and yet possess the power that the good and innocent editor of *John O'London's Weekly* believes it to exercise.

* * *

Taking a Risk

It is with the greatest reluctance that I disturb the innocence of the editor, but if he would consult so authoritative a work as Hasting's *Dictionary of Religion and Ethics*, he would find a great deal of information about Atheism in all parts of the world and at all times. But the word is not treated as obsolete, or without meaning. And if the editor would risk losing his mature breath, even as he nearly lost it in his callow youth when meeting his first and last Atheist, I would undertake to introduce him to a very large number of Atheists, yea, even within the limits of Fleet Street, and among those who contribute occasionally to his own journal. I realize the risks so unsophisticated and so innocent a nature would run in thus exposing itself to the crude and rude facts of this world. But in these days men dare the dangers of the stratosphere and face the risk of climbing Everest; they isolate themselves in the frozen regions of the North, and in the vastness of uncharted forests; they risk their lives in making chemical experiments, and in the discovery of the causation of disease—all in the pursuit of knowledge.

So I invite the editor of *John O'London's Weekly*, to join these gallant Companions of the Spirit in the pursuit of knowledge, to risk losing his mature breath,

yea, even the loss of the innocence of his nature and the nature of others, by the discovery that millions of people belong to that tribe of which he knows nothing. Could man die better than in arousing the world to the fact that millions are still using an obsolete term, and still giving a definite meaning to a meaningless word? And should this terrific incidence of information end in the editor of *John O'London's Weekly* losing his breath for ever, then I promise to have erected at a suitable spot some such inscription as the following:—

Here lies an Editor,
His life was pure; his mind was innocent.
What others knew, he knew not,
What he knew not, others knew.
He discovered that there were
Many Atheists,
And for the second time
Lost his breath.
And went where Atheists are
Not admitted,
Where men do not learn anything,
And are secure
Against the shock that Knowledge brings.
Pious parents must learn
It is not enough to train Children
Without Knowledge.
They must be protected from
The shocks that Knowledge brings.
He was unique.

CHAPMAN COHEN.

Place aux Dames!

"Those who expect to reap the blessings of freedom must undergo the fatigues of supporting it."

Thomas Paine.

"True civilization is where every man gives to every other every right he claims for himself."—Ingersoll.

THERE is so much insincerity in politics to-day that it is no wonder that the electorate has become largely indifferent to the blandishments of the various parties. The trouble is that all political candidates are so fearful of losing votes. Like the American aspirant to Congress, who concluded an hour's oration: "These, fellow-citizens, are the considered principles of my life, but, of course, if they don't suit they can be altered." British politicians are not quite so crude as that. Yet Tories talk like Liberals; Liberals spout Socialism; and the Socialists echo Karl Marx and Herbert Spencer at alternate meetings. As if this counter-jumper attitude of "Yes! we have no bananas!" so as to be agreeable to the customer, was likely to lead anywhere, or to influence public opinion in the slightest degree.

Throughout Europe, Republicans and Socialists have long recognized that Priestcraft is always hostile to Democracy, and they have acted accordingly. But British Socialists are too often mealy-mouthed on the subject. "Mum's the word" almost appears to be the watchword of the party. And it is actually left to ex-ministers of religion, who have turned to politics, to ladle out the soothing syrup to the electorate. Thousands of political speeches are made yearly by Socialists, but how many deal with such a subject as the State Church, or with the malign influence of the clergy in politics? But quite a number of pink Socialists spout sentimental nonsense on religious platforms and try to delude their innocent audiences into the belief that the "twelve disciples" were ardent Trade Unionists, and the legendary founder of the Christian Superstition not unlike Keir Hardie. It is

as silly and as contemptible as when a Tory politician pays lip-service to Humanitarianism, and then records his vote for the increase of bombing-planes.

Fortunately for all of us, there are honest people who really believe that there should be some association between precept and practice. And it is interesting to find that it is the ladies who have raised the standard of "Anti-Clericalism." According to the *Daily Herald*, February 18, at the forthcoming National Conference of Labour Women, to be held at Norwich, April 27-29, a resolution will be submitted asking for the disestablishment and disendowment of the State Church. And the ground of their objection is that this particular Church is reactionary on all matters affecting the welfare of women.

These are not only brave words, but they are true words. This State-supported Church of England teaches that woman is "the weaker vessel," and Democracy insists on the equalization of the sexes. And this Church is insulting to all women, for it declares that man's fall from "Paradise" was due to a woman, who actually brought death and damnation to the human race. Indeed, the priestly view of man's partner appears to be: "Frailty, thy name is woman!" For women are excluded from the priesthood. On this matter the priests have followed the monastic teaching of the neurotic Christian Fathers, which has resulted in crowding Europe with monasteries and nunneries. Indeed, the whole attitude of the priests towards women is Eastern and not Western at all. For their Bible is an Oriental book, or, rather, a collection of books, all saturated with the Eastern view of the relation of the sexes which is the very antipodes of Western ideals.

It is the Christian Religion itself which is at fault. The single text: "Thou shalt not suffer a witch to live" cost the lives of tens of thousands of the most helpless of their sex, and has left an indelible stain on this so-called "Religion of Love." The advent of Christianity actually worsened the position of women in the ancient world. Plutarch's *Lives* gives us a picture of women under Paganism, and one has to wait until Shakespeare's day before one encounters the same noble type, fit to be the mothers of heroes.

Even then, Shakespeare himself was a pioneer, and was centuries ahead of the Church in this, as in the rest of his splendid humanism.

This priestly reliance on ancient myth has unforeseen results. The clergy actually denounced the use of chloroform for women in childbirth, by pointing out that it would interfere with the primal curse in the imaginary Garden of Eden. Such a proceeding was worthy of the descendants of those priestly monsters who used to burn men and women alive because they believed in tweedledum rather than tweedledee. If the clergy worshipped crocodiles or cats in the privacy of their own backyards it would not matter so much. But they have usurped a position of enormous importance in the body politic, and the Church of England alone is entrenched behind mountains of money-bags. Charlatans though these priests are, they have the power of the purse-strings. With an annual income of seventeen millions of money, with an army of sixteen thousand priests acting as branch-managers, and a Bench of Bishops in the Upper House of Parliament, they form a perpetual menace to progress. The Archbishops and the Bishops pull the strings, and "when father turns, they all turn." And always on the side of reaction, for, whilst some of them speak patronizingly of progress, it never alters the attitude of the main Black Army of Priests.

Think for a moment of the Anglican Church's power in education! There is only one University in the country free from clerical influence, and that is the University of London. So much for the "upper

crust" of society. Half of the elementary schools of the country are under the thumbs of the priests and the theological bias of nearly two millions of children is assured. In such schools the education is really elementary, but the pupils are taught to respect the clergy, honour the monarchy, and pray for fine or wet weather, and other nonsense.

Although these thimble-riggers pretend that Christianity is a "religion of love," Anglican priests are chaplains in the Army, Navy and Air Force. The police-force appears to be exempt from clerical interference, probably being considered beyond the pale of redemption. Not content with being chaplains, priests bless regimental colours, and christen battle-ships. Should a war break out, these priests trundle portable communion-sets at a safe distance from the front, and draw officers' pay. Although certain of going to "Heaven," they are exempt from fighting. Indeed, they have made hypocrisy one of the fine arts. In times of peace, we are asked to admire their religion of love; in the awful days of war they prate of "a god of battles." Anything to keep the money in the family! And what a family, beside which the Forty Thieves were as innocent as a band of babes in the wood.

With regard to modern views of marriage, this Church of England is hopelessly out-of-date. The Marriage Service in the official Prayer Book is as much a worm-eaten antique as the service in memory of King Charles the Martyr, which used to adorn its pages. The fault is that the Church's views are ancient ignorance stereotyped, and are not acceptable to modern women. Even the reasons advanced in the marriage service for woman's alleged obedience are grotesque, and read like Falstaff's apology for drunkenness! "If Adam fell in a state of innocence, what should Jack Falstaff do in a state of villainy?" What are English people, and where have we fallen, that we should determine such a question as marriage by reference to Oriental myth and the teaching of neurotic monks of twenty centuries ago? "East is East and West is West, and never the twain shall meet."

This State Church pretends to regard marriage as a sacrament, and is adamant with regard to divorce. What a "sacrament" when far too often monogamy is tempered by adultery! The Church's idea is that two uncongenial partners should keep together till one murders the other. As for such things as birth-control and anaesthetics, this out-of-date Church can give no help to the modern woman at all. As a fact this Christian Religion is a creed for slaves, and not for free men and women. It has its roots in the remote past; is Oriental and not Occidental; and is utterly and entirely out of harmony with the trend of modern thought and modern ideals. It is as much of a survival as is Stonehenge, or any relic of the Bronze Age.

The Anglican priests, flushed with their recent victory over the Throne, will attempt further to consolidate their position by the administration of an oath to the new sovereign at the Coronation, which runs:—

Will you preserve unto the bishops and clergy of England, and to the churches there committed to their charge, all such rights and privileges, as by law do or shall appertain to them, or any of them?

And the King will reply: "All this I promise to do." The priests insist that this oath will be binding on the entire nation because of the sovereign's act. But this Church of England itself was established by law, and it therefore follows that what law can make it can also unmake. By raising the standard of revolt the brave ladies of the Labour Movement have focussed attention on the incubus of a State Church, one of whose recent business exploits was obtaining

£60,000,000 from this country in redemption of a priestly tax on farmers, which ought never to have been imposed at all, and which, from first to last, was an act of barefaced robbery, a priestly "racket" on a basic industry.

MIMNERMUS.

The Science of Ancient Egypt

DR. CHARLES SINGER once dubbed the classic Greeks, the spoilt darlings of history. Until recent decades the dawn of science was attributed to that gifted Mediterranean race alone. But, while gratefully acknowledging our debt to the powerful thinkers of early Greece for their priceless services in so many departments of intellectual life, it is no longer possible to ignore the benefits conferred on modern civilization by Egypt and Mesopotamia. For these latter States made invaluable contributions to science, while researches still in progress in the Indus Valley have already revealed conclusive evidences of a superior culture in India in ages far remote.

Science and culture were certainly bequeathed to Christian Europe by the Greeks. Yet, physically and mentally, they, like other peoples, were the products of evolutionary forces. For more than a millennium before Hellenic science emerged, a distinctively scientific advance was made in early Egypt and Mesopotamia.

That science in its strict sense flourished in the Orient at a date so early was barely suspected until recently, and the ancient Greek tradition of the Eastern influences exerted on Hellenic thought and action had faded almost into oblivion. That the Babylonians and Egyptians had developed a very fine technique their architecture and domestic utilities clearly testified. Also, both civilizations possessed a truly mathematical science, and the medical art had made remarkable advances in Egypt. In Babylonia, astronomy was cultivated on an extensive scale despite its astrological impetus. In any case, true science was established in Eastern States centuries before the Ionian Greeks, whose names have come down to us became conversant with natural science and her sister, philosophy.

The chief founders of modern science, Copernicus, Galileo and Vesalius were all acquainted with, and admitted their indebtedness to, the Greeks, but naturally these pioneers knew nothing of the earlier achievements of the dwellers on the banks of the Euphrates and the Nile.

Greece was acclaimed and basked in the splendour of deathless fame, and it became the fashion to ignore or deny the accomplishments of anterior times. As Prof. Farrington states, in his charming little volume, *Science in Antiquity*: "Greek history has often been written as if the mission of Greece had been to save Europe from some dread abstraction called Orientalism. But this is to prolong down the ages a sentiment appropriate only to the generation of Marathon and Salamis. Soberer judgment will recognize the justice of the Greek view, that Greek civilization was a continuation of the older civilizations of Egypt and Mesopotamia."

Recent discoveries in Crete and the Nearer and Further East have revolutionized our concepts of the past. That philosophic thought was current in Egypt 2800 B.C., and that the Babylonian monarch, Hammurabi, had reduced to writing a remarkable code of law, 2000 B.C., was known and conceded. Yet, until recently, many disputed the claim that the Nile and

Euphrates peoples (despite their proficiency in the art of government, their erection of immense monuments and cities, and their production of beautiful works of art) possessed any real acquaintance with theoretical science.

T. H. Huxley once defined science as organized common sense. This special sense may be either pure or applied, but the true test of a science's purity or value can only be manifested through its applications. Farrington cogently urges that "the best proof that our knowledge is genuine is that it enables us to do something. Science is continually tested in action. . . . Behind Euclid's definition of a straight line as 'one that lies evenly on the points of it' one divines the mason with his level. It was a practical problem in each case that stimulated Archimedes to his invention of his screw, of his system of pulleys, of the idea of specific gravity." By the manipulation of matter to obtain a given objective, men learnt by experience to rise to an appreciation of the priceless importance of observation and experiment in their search for truth.

In 4000 B.C., at a date when, in terms of orthodox chronology, our earth was only four years' old, the Egyptians had long possessed a knowledge of the working of metals. A thousand years later they used pens, ink and papyrus as writing materials, and from 3000 to 2500 B.C. their huge pyramids were erected whose ashlar masonry is said to be unsurpassed in the history of mankind. At this distant date the Egyptians were expert agriculturists and dairy farmers. They were also proficient in the production of pottery and glass, were skilful weavers, wood-carvers and constructors of sea-voyaging craft. Their bronze implements and ornaments were accurately proportioned with the twelve per cent of tin alloyed with copper, which ensures the maximum hardness and durability of bronze. To secure such results some acquaintance with scientific principles seems essential.

The arts and crafts of Egypt, its goldsmiths' work, its vine culture and wine pressing, its brewing, its cereal and flax culture, stone cutting and other occupations are sculptured on tombs at Sakkara (2680 to 2540 B.C.). Moreover, the engineering ability which enabled the Egyptians to rear colossal stone monuments, hew from hard rocks and transport immense monoliths, and devise the siphon and bellows plainly indicate very advanced technical knowledge and skill.

Some urge that achievements so striking are yet too empirical in character to sustain their claim to rank as scientific in the full sense, as they show no sign whatever of any endeavour or desire to trace natural phenomena as a whole to the operations of physical causation which is considered the great goal of true science. Whatever the views of Egyptian priests and philosophers may have been concerning the riddles of the universe, they have not descended to us. So far as present knowledge extends the Ionian Greeks of the sixth century B.C. were the earliest to philosophize on the origin and development of the present phase of the cosmos. Lacking that spirit of inquiry which leads men to discover how seeds sown in soil become transformed into plants, or how the food we consume is converted into flesh and blood, the Egyptians seemingly failed to attain a mastery of science considered as partly unified knowledge.

Yet, despite this disadvantage, the Egyptians created a calendar as early as 4236 B.C. Dependent as they were on the annual overflow of their river, some means of determining the time of inundation became imperative. Then as now, necessity was the mother of invention and experience proved that the rising of the Nile was coincident with the appearance in the

Eastern sky of the bright star Sirius, which heralded the rising of the solar orb at the summer solstice. This heliacal rising of Sirius at the time of the Nile's overflow was familiar to the Egyptians in pre-dynastic centuries, and they utilized this coincidence in adjusting the slight irregularities in their calendar. Their year was made up of 365 days or of twelve months, each of which comprised 30 days, while 5 additional sacred days were added.

The Egyptians never attempted to equate their year of 365 days with the solar year, which is longer by about a quarter of a day. This discrepancy was overcome in later Europe by inserting an extra day every fourth year in the calendar. The Egyptians, on the other hand, merely preserved a record of this divergence which, they were fully aware, automatically rights itself every 1460 years. This difference between the solar and calendar year was determined by direct observation of the heliacal rising of Sirius the Dog Star, which occurs a day later every fourth year as reckoned by the calendar.

In medicine and mathematics the Egyptians were completely scientific. A few papyrus rolls have been preserved, and the Rhind papyrus proves their acquaintance with mathematics, while the papyrus named after Edwin Smith demonstrates their medical knowledge. These two records came to light some 90 years since, and at present provide our only sources of information regarding Nilotic science. But probably other documents will be discovered as research proceeds.

The Rhind papyrus is inferentially dated about 1650 B.C., and proves that a decimal system of notation was in use while their geometry served the Egyptians in their building operations. In truth, several problems in mensuration, geometry, and the science of numbers had been solved.

Egyptian progress in medical matters is shown in the Smith papyrus. The information furnished by this priceless record is remarkable. It is described as "a fragment of a surgical treatise dealing with injuries to the body, which are classified by the simple and natural process of passing from the head downwards. It deals with the nose, the skull, the jaw, the ears, the lips, the clavicle vertebræ, the collar bone, shoulder and shoulder-blade, the thorax and breast; and as the discussion of the vertebral column begins the MS. breaks off. Each type of case is dealt with systematically. The injury is mentioned, the symptoms which the examination should reveal are described; next comes the diagnosis, and then the verdict whether the complaint is curable, possibly curable or incurable. Finally the treatment is set forth."

Knowledge of anatomy is clearly displayed and elementary physiology was not unknown. The human body was regarded as an organism with the heart at its centre. Although curative measures were slight, they were entirely free from magic, and the treatise is rationalistic throughout, while the views it expresses may date back as far as 4000 B.C. as it appears to perpetuate much earlier science.

T. F. PALMER.

We must set limits to our wishes, curb our desires, moderate our anger, always remembering that an individual can attain only an infinitesimal share in anything that is worth having; and that, on the other hand, everyone must incur many of the ills of life; in a word, we must bear and forbear; and if we fail to observe this rule, no position of wealth or power will prevent us from feeling wretched.—*Schopenhauer*.

The Great Gentleman

"He is a god and knows what is most right."

Shakespeare.

It was Jesus, of course, who was the great gentleman. We have it on the authority of the Rev. W. H. Elliott, the Radio Parson. It doesn't surprise us in the least. It should be obvious enough that if it has been well within the power of most of our Monarchs to become the first gentlemen in Europe despite their mental and moral shortcomings, the second person of the Trinity could manage the business without the raising of an eye-lid. For Jesus, be it never forgotten, could do anything.

Yet every other month some theological expert reaches the surprising conclusion that Jesus was superlatively good at something. Surely it was just as easy for Jesus to be a first-rate moral-teacher, artist, preacher, humorist, athlete, or sociologist as a second-rater. Omnipotence recognizes no frontiers. Yet we are assured perennially that the all-powerful has again excelled itself. We have this protean personality quite recently put forward as the Great Pacifist and the Great Spiritualist. And now he is the *Great Gentleman*. What is the good of being a Duke if the position doesn't carry with it certain privileges? And what is the good of being a God if one is hampered by the limitations of mortality?

Here the great theologian lowers his brows and tells us we are forgetting that Jesus was Man as well as God. This sounds to us like nonsense; we cannot make sense of that capital M. We turn, as we presume the Radio Parson has done—although there is no evidence of it—to the only account of Jesus that we have. Concrete instances will disclose our point:—

There came down a storm of water, on the lake and they came to him saying Master, Master, we perish. Then he arose and rebuked the wind . . . and there was a calm.

Once Jesus got into the middle of a crowd who were full of wrath, and their demeanour was unpleasant, but

he passed through the midst of them, and on his way.

When there was a difficulty in catching fish, Jesus said "Drop your nets over there. No! ten yards further on." Tons and tons of fish were caught.

And when they came to Jesus for his taxes, he said:—

Lest we should offend the tax-collectors go thou to the sea and cast an hook and take up the fish that first cometh up, and when thou hast opened his mouth, thou shalt find a piece of money, that take and give unto them.

Call Jesus Man then, if you will. It does not alter the fact that such a Man could have been the World's Greatest Sailor, the World's Greatest Traffic Manager, the World's Greatest Chancellor of the Exchequer without appreciable effort.

When it is a question of our immortal souls Jesus becomes God. When he isn't God or forgets he is God, or is fractionally God, then Mr. Elliott informs us that he behaves himself respectably. Mr. Elliott will not, however, let us know whether it was because of that bit of God within him that he refrained from behaving like a cad. Only Theology, the Queen of the Sciences, can answer ungentlemanly questions of that kind.

Mr. Elliott has his own idea of what constitutes a real gentleman—as we all have. Jesus *must*, from Mr. Elliott's first principles, have been a real gentleman, but in order to prove this his conduct must have

coincided with Mr. Elliott's ideas. It is always, Jesus, mark you, who has to toe the mark. No Mayfair pietist will be found putting up a case for the gentility of Jesus by stressing the homely work of that person amongst the shavings. It was this side of Jesus that convinced Keir Hardie that Jesus was a real gentleman. Hardie saw Jesus twirling a glue-pot, and being sent by his superiors for a barrow-load of sky-hooks or putlog holes—these things made their appeal to him. Mr. Elliott stresses the fullness of Jesus of "old-fashioned courtesies," his "infinite patience," his reluctance to "let himself go," but when he did so, even then Jesus took care that "there was no malice in it, nor any sting left to fester in another man's soul." Mr. Elliott plays *Pick and Choose*, or worse, that other game, *Put and Take*, and it is evidently supreme silliness of this kind that endears him to the B.B.C.*

We had a morning to spare, the other week, and we thought we would gather a few general opinions on Mr. Elliott's thesis. We first popped into Paper Buildings and interviewed an eminent K.C. "Would you mind telling me, please, what you think of a person who says:—

Woe unto you also ye lawyers for ye laid men with burdens grievous to be borne and ye yourselves touch not the burdens with one of your fingers.

"Let me get this right," was the reply. "Did the person think this, or say it?"

"He said it." "Well then," he went on, "He was no gentleman." I thanked him, paid my seven-shillings and sixpence and left.

I then interviewed my window-cleaner. "What do you think, Bill, of a person who says to his mother, 'Woman, what have I to do with thee?'" "Not much," said Bill, dogmatically, "a chap who could say that to his ma, was no gentleman."

I then called upon Barney Murgatry in Park Lane.

"What do you think of the person who says Woe unto the Rich, and that it will be harder for a rich man to enter Heaven, than for him to pass through the eye of a needle?" "No gentleman," came the reply.

I looked into a club in Pall Mall. "I have just heard of a man," I commenced. "Was he a householder?" was thrown at me. "Well no. He appears to have wandered about the country-side addressing all those who would listen to him." "Tramp," was the remark. "Also he was accompanied by several women who ministered to him of their substance." "Red," was interjected. With this discouragement I couldn't proceed further.

I then called upon Mr. Tickles, a writer of perfectly divine books on flowers, Jesus and what-nots. "Dear Mr. Tickles," I said "Will you give me your opinion on a person who because he was hungry, and the fig-tree at the road-side *having no figs*, cursed it so badly that it withered and died?" I observed a handkerchief going to Mr. Tickles' eye. "Dear little fig-tree," he murmured, "The thing is disgusting." "Spare your tears, Mr. Tickles, I have only one more remark. This person also said, 'He who calleth his brother a fool is in danger of Hell-fire.'" "I am sorry, young man," he retorted. "But I have to meet Lady Aspidistra at the Savoy in half an hour. Don't come back."

I found myself by some miracle in the Sanctum of his Augustness of Canterbury. "What does your Grace think," I said, "of a person who said to the High Priests and those ecclesiastics who were always very prominent on big occasions, 'Ye complain of the Son of Man's companions, publicans and sinners, but I say unto you Ye serpents, ye generation of vipers, how can you escape the damnation of Hell?'"

* *Portrait of a Gentleman. Sunday Pictorial, February 14.*

"Vine Street," said his Grace. "He would have something to say, I surmise, about your Oil-spraying at the Coronation," I went on. There was nothing wrong with the Archbishop's gentility. I found myself mysteriously on his door-step and without any man-handling.

Perhaps I am wrong in not giving an esoteric significance to the sayings of Jesus, I thought. I saw Simmons the Slogger approaching me in the street, who had just won £20,000 by being knocked out in a couple of seconds at the Albert Hall. Simmons is not a heavy-weight intellectually, but his intuitions are numerous and prompt. "Simmons, old chap," I said, "What do you think of the man who said"—

It is I, be not afraid.

"'it is eye, be not afraid. Blimey, sir, he was a real gent, 'e was."

We daresay the Radio Parson will agree that it is literal-mindedness that is the curse of the age. We hand over to him this one crumb of comfort.

T. H. ELSTOB.

The Meaning of Mathematics

"MATHEMATICS FOR THE MILLION" is the title of a recently published book. Although not, of course, a work of universal appeal, it should nevertheless be of interest to Freethinkers.

"I wrote this book in hospital during a long illness for my own fun," the author informs us. Whether it will be equally amusing to others will depend upon their mental aptitudes. The author also tells us that "The asides and soliloquies should not be taken too seriously. They are put in to sweeten the pill. Maybe many of them have as little nutritive value as saccharine." Nevertheless, many of these are barbed shafts to be appreciated by Freethinkers, but resented by those they are aimed at. "The race superiority of the Nazis," and "Hitler's destruction of German culture," "tiresome disputations about Hegelian dialectic," "the Eugenist contemplating his own superiority," and many other things, are the objects of a virile and provocative satire.

It may be thought strange that such things should find their way into a book on Mathematics, but they all fit into the author's scheme, which is to ram well home the definitely secular nature of his subject. That he is an outspoken Freethinker may be seen from his remarks on "the priestly calendar-makers" of antiquity, who "used one language when they wrote in the proceedings of a learned society, and another language when they gave an interview to the 'sob sisters' of the Sunday Press." And also in his quietly ironical references to some of the great mathematicians of the past, such as "Stiffel, a convert of Luther," who "traced his conversion to the discovery that 666 refers to Pope Leo X"; Napier, who is now famous for his system of logarithms, and attached importance to his own method of identifying the Pope as anti-Christ; Newton, and his work on *The Prophecies of the Book of Daniel*; to say nothing of Bishop Usher, who established that man was created by the "Trinity on October 23, 4004 B.C., at nine o'clock in the morning."

A thorough-going Materialist, he is particularly drastic with the idealism of Plato, who "took measurement out of geometry and put magic in its place," and taught that "geometry is an exercise of disembodied intelligence." He is not quite so hard on Euclid, who "was limited by the social culture in which he lived"; a time when "the leisured class of the Greek City States played with geometry as people play with crossword puzzles and chess to-day." "The fun of the game lay in making it more complicated." A lively sense of humour is shown even in some of the chapter headings, "Euclid without tears, or what you can do with geometry." "The Dawn of Nothing, or how Algebra began." "From Crisis to Crossword Puzzles, or the Beginnings of Arithmetic," is a

chapter which deals with the multitudinous superstitions and magics—religious speculations—which cluster around the subject. And these puerilities are used to emphasize the utilitarian and social character of mathematical progress. "If you are a sensible person," he says after giving a rather lengthy formula, "you will not want to go through any more of this sort of thing until you have seen what earthly use comes out of it."

Never does he lose sight of the practical considerations, and in showing "what earthly use" it all is, he adds to the interest that would naturally follow from a consideration of its evolutionary aspect, in which each step follows in an historical sequence. For the author the history of mathematics is a social development, "a mirror of civilization interlocking with man's common culture." In this way a usually dry subject is made not merely interesting, but positively intriguing. The development from savagery to civilization is mirrored in the growth of mathematics from counting on fingers and toes, with shells and pebbles, and the counting-frame, right up to the calculus and statistics.

The author hopes to "stimulate the interest, and remove the inferiority complex of some of the million or so who have given up hope of learning through the usual channels." As the present writer rates himself as among that number, he is pleased to express his appreciation and thanks to Prof. Hogben, and to add the hope that the work will subsequently be published in a cheaper edition so as to reach a larger public.

H. PREECE.

Acid Drops

The brutalizing of the world goes steadily on. Fifty years ago the shooting out of hand of Ras Desta, the Abyssinian General, would have aroused acid comments in the British press. To-day it has passed, so far as we have observed, without comment. Ras Desta's crime was that he fought to the end. But the action was quite in line with the ethics of German and Italian Fascism, and the war that began with the wholesale slaughter of women and children and unarmed peoples, has proceeded as one might expect. These Fascist leaders are great men, "For they themselves have said it."

Meanwhile Mr. Beverley Nichols reads with dismayed astonishment that our Government has invited the Emperor of Abyssinia to the Coronation. He believes that the moment Mussolini declared Abyssinia belonged to Italy, the rest of the world should have stood to attention. Mr. Nichols does not remember how long it took our Government to recognize Russia. But Mr. Nichols' ideal Government is Hitlerite Germany, and that explains a lot.

The House of Commons Kitchen Committee has declined to do away with tipping in the refreshment rooms. The reason given is one that helps us to understand the mentality of our governors. It is that the proposal is impracticable because if it were adopted the wages of the waiting staff would have to be raised, and the price of food raised in order to cover the extra cost. So in order to make the food cheaper the members must give tips, but if they do not give tips then the cost of the food is lower. And the poor mutt who gave this reply never considered that if one saved in cost what was given in tips, and if one gave in cost what was saved in tips, then the final position in either case was identically the same. If that answer were given on a music hall stage it would give rise to much laughter. In the House of Commons people do not laugh at such reasoning; it is part of the routine. And in all humour there must be an element of the unexpected.

Some of the papers are beginning to print protests against the constant advertising of members of the Royal Family in the newspapers. We have been noting it for years, and it usually takes the papers some time to catch

up with anything that is really important. But we do think that there is little skill being shown in the way it is being done at present. Like the Dukes in *The Gondoliers* who were three a penny, Queens and Dukes at trade fairs and the like are figuring at about the same price, and when things get too cheap they also get too common. The old method was for Royalty to appear occasionally. There could be much gossip about them, but their appearances were rare. But the newspaper advertising campaign was initiated with daily information whenever a Royal baby cut a new tooth (one of the papers actually published a picture of the baby with its new front tooth prominently showing), and there were plenty of obviously arranged pictures of the members of the Royal Family whenever thought advisable. The tactics of film stars were not forgotten. But we are not surprised that some are grumbling that they would like news, not mere gossip; we consider the advertising agents are losing their sense of tact.

In the *Christian World*, for February 25, the Rev. Dr. Rees Griffith remarks: "We know that Paul had been deeply disturbed by the face of Christ long before he set out on his last journey." But how does one get disturbed by a face one has never seen, and of which no picture exists? Paul, like so many others, may have been disturbed by many things, and his disturbance by the sight of things one has not objectively seen is a very common experience. But these experiences come within the field of the physician, and not within that of trustworthy history. Not many scientists would doubt that Paul's description of his conversion when walking along a road, and hearing a voice and seeing a face in the air was of an epileptoid character. He was fortunate in living at a time when people were apt to put down all disease to the action of evil spirits when confronted with experiences as that of Paul's, and to that of good spirits when they did not. Such experiences are common in the history of religion. They are found in men such as George Fox, the founder of Quakerism, in Swedenborg, the founder of Swedenborgianism, in Johanna Southcott, and hundreds of others. Sometimes they result in one becoming the founder of a new religion, at other times one goes to the stake as having had dealings with the devil, and, nowadays, one is put under the care of a—more or less—competent alienist. It is a question of time and good, or bad, fortune. But these cases present no difficulty whatever to the competent student.

We shall be saying more, and at greater length about the Coronation as the time for that event gets nearer. But it is worth noting that the King must promise to:—

Maintain and preserve inviolably the settlement of the Church of England and the doctrine, worship, discipline, and government thereof as by law established in England; and . . . preserve unto the bishops and clergy of England . . . all such rights and privileges as by law do or shall appertain to them.

There has been here an alteration in the original oath, but not one of consequence so far as we are concerned. Suppose that the House of Commons passed an Act disestablishing the Church. Would the King be justified in defying Parliament? We expect that many of the clergy would urge him to do so, although he might remember the case of Charles the first. Probably the expression "as by law do or shall appertain to them," may be taken as provision for this possibility. In that case the promise must mean: "so long as Parliament permits."

Another point has been raised by Mr. Kensit, Secretary of the Protestant Truth Society. (These people have, as is proper, a different kind of truth from that which other people possess. We notice that in practice). But Parliament did draw up and pass the Act of Settlement, and one wonders by what right an alteration is made in that "Settlement" without the matter being brought again before Parliament. This is a serious question, for if ministers are permitted to cancel or alter, on their own decision, one Act of Parliament, they may do it with others. We invite some Member of Parliament to raise the issue.

No one, says *The Spectator*, believes that this country will ever strike an aggressive blow anywhere. Of course not; we never have. The blows we have struck have always been in defence of our rights and liberties, or in defence of the rights and liberties of other people, or for the protection of civilization, or for the defending of religion. If one doubts that, he should consult any reliable school history. But the standing puzzle is that as other countries have never struck blows save in the same spirit and for the same causes, how on earth is it that wars happen? It looks like a blooming miracle.

A student of Wye Agricultural College (a school for "gentlemen"), we understand, was fined for assaulting a commissionaire. The college had been playing a rugby match, and in the evening had gone to the theatre and created a disturbance. The young man charged had been ejected. We are not finding fault with the fine, although a thrashing by the commissionaire would have been more effective. But why did the solicitor prosecuting say he behaved as "one of the biggest roughest in Whitechapel"? A rough from Whitechapel would probably have received a month's imprisonment. The solicitor should have said that the young man from the Wye Agricultural College was behaving just as though he belonged to Oxford, or Cambridge, or London. So far as we know "roughest" do not go to entertainments and try to "break up the show." We think that Mr. M. V. Mackie owes Whitechapel an apology. When Mr. Mackie grows up he may realize that bad behaviour is found in all sections of society. The difference appears to consist in the treatment of those who misbehave.

The Archbishop of Canterbury must look with envy at Applecross (Rosshire). There is no need to issue a recall to religion in that dwelling place of the spirit of the Most High. It is there already, strongly entrenched. So realizes Malcolm Campbell, aged 39, who being a steward on a steamer which sails between the Kyle of Lockaish and Stornoway, has wickedly and stubbornly, and by the inspiration of the Devil, refused to give up his job by declining to sail on Sundays. He has now had proceedings instituted against him. These good people do not need to get back to God, they have got him bad; and we feel certain that some of them are just a trifle disappointed that the Lord God has not wrecked that boat before now. Perhaps the owners are artful enough to get a pillar of the Kirk to sail with the boat, and nowadays the Lord cannot afford:—

A pillar of holy Church to slay,
When they're scarcer and scarcer every day.

If only the Archbishop could be translated to Applecross! How happy he would be, and how happy many others would be!

Since writing the above we see that the steward has sacrificed his job and obeyed the Kirk order. The incident is a reminder of what Christianity once was, what it still is, where it can be, and what it would be again if it had the opportunity.

The B.B.C. which has the infernal impudence to set itself up as an arbiter of correct English usage, calmly informed listeners that "the Government had determined that their weaknesses must be strengthened." That is precisely what the enemies of the Government say is taking place; but perhaps the B.B.C. meant something different from the assertion that the Government's weakness would become more pronounced than it is.

There is nothing like taking the Bible for a guide in our perplexity. This is evidently the view of the Bishop of Durham, who writes to the *Times* explaining that the people are wrong when they assume that there is necessarily a conflict between the Christian law of divorce and Mr. Herbert's Bill. He points out that while St. Mark allows no divorce, Matthew admits it for adultery. Also "knowledge and experience have their rightful influence on the Christian's view of marriage." Which being in-

terpreted appears to mean "A Christian must consult the New Testament first, listen carefully to what the disciples and Our Lord has said—and then do what the devil he likes." Others besides Christians may adopt that plan.

One need not go very far to understand the "causes" of this opposition to married people settling their matrimonial differences in a reasonable manner. And the contradictory views held by leading Christians on the subject are a fine comment on the value of the teachings of Jesus as a guide in the affairs of daily life. The way out would end one aspect of the Education question, and that is to confine the action and the law of the State to considerations derived from a common social life. In England the only legal marriage is a civil marriage, whatever religious ceremonies may accompany it, and when we have reached the point of applying common sense, and a consideration of human needs to life as a whole, the ridiculous interference of these spiritual jacks-in-office will cease.

That well known Catholic convert, Dr. Halliday Sutherland, asserted, the other day, that if it were not for the "appalling" leakages from the Faith, "the magnificent number of conversions and the high birth-rate among Catholics should normally make England preponderantly Catholic by now." It is most amusing to find how men of intelligence can fool themselves in this way. Is it not obvious that the "appalling" leakages take place because Catholics find out that their religion is based on fraud, lies, credulity and superstition? "Appalling" leakages occur just the same in other brands of the Christian religion, and even the appalling number of books turned out by the Christian press of all shades and opinions does not seem to stop the tide of unbelief. The truth is that the Golden Age of Faith and mass conversion has passed—and a very good thing too.

The recent discussion on the "Religion of the Average Man," in the *Morning Post*, has produced the usual crop of letters, quite like the thousands written in previous newspaper religious discussions. The gentleman who summed up the views seemed "to consider faith as a quality which has no dependence on knowledge or reason," upon which the *Church Times* comments that "the assumption that faith is fundamentally irrational is disastrous." Well, is not faith irrational? Is it not a fact that the appeal to belief in miracles, for example, is based on faith and not on fact? In what way can religion be primarily taught if not by an appeal to faith? The *Church Times* considers that if it be admitted that God exists, it is therefore "incredible that he has never spoken." In other words Jesus is God speaking, the Christian Church is his visible body, the Bible is God's Holy Revelation—in a trice we find ourselves in the modern Age of Faith! Though that is, of course, the object of the *Church Times* and similar journals, even they are beginning to see that the "average" man believes less in faith than ever. And that is some comfort.

Fifty Years Ago

WHEN the Lisbon earthquake occurred, Voltaire wrote a famous ode, in which he asked the theologians to reconcile such calamities with their doctrine of a benevolent providence. Instead of answering him, they went on relying on the orthodox old argument of persecution. But surely some reply should be made. Instead of facing the problem of evil, however, the theologians content themselves with saying "it is a mystery." Yes, but the mystery is of their own creation. Scientifically there is no more mystery in death than in life, in disease than in health, in pain than in pleasure, in misery than in welfare; just as there is no more mystery in a volcanic eruption than there is in a bubbling spring. The mystery begins when you set up a theory inconsistent with the facts. Such a theory is that of a God of infinite goodness in the presence of unmerited suffering and unavoidable evil.

The Freethinker, March 6, 1887.

THE FREETHINKER

FOUNDED BY G. W. FOOTE

61 Farringdon Street, London, E.C.4

Telephone No.: CENTRAL 2412.

TO CORRESPONDENTS.

H. T. DERRETT.—Thanks very much for information.

JOHN REID (Glasgow).—We have been informed by a reader that the poem *The Divinity of Blunders*, attributed to Robert Burns, is published by Bardie McPhee, Churchill, Paisley, and is also obtainable from Mr. P. Walsh, 24 Greenbank Street Rutherglen.

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

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.

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.

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.

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.

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

To-day (March 7), Mr. Cohen will lecture in the McLellan Galleries, Sauchiehall Street, Glasgow, on "Paine the Pioneer." There will be no charge for admission but there are reserved seats at one shilling each. The chair will be taken at 7 p.m. Mr. Cohen will attend the Annual Dinner of the Branch on the evening of Saturday, March 6.

Considering the terrible weather on Sunday last, intensely cold roads blocked with snow, and the risky nature of travelling, the audience in the Picton Hall, Liverpool, who came to Mr. Cohen's lecture on "Thomas Paine" was a remarkable one. The large hall was three parts full, and the lecture, a rather lengthy one, was listened to with the greatest attention and with obvious interest. The audience was an evidence that Paine still has a large public. Freethinkers should make the most of it. Mr. Shortt, President of the Liverpool Branch, occupied the chair.

The Annual Conference of the National Secular Society will be held in Liverpool on Whit-Sunday. There will be the usual business sessions, at which all members of the N.S.S. are entitled to be present and vote. The Picton Hall has been booked for the evening public demonstration. Motions for the Agenda must reach the General Secretary by March 17. Branch officials should see that their respective Branches are fully represented, and it is hoped that all members of the Society within a reasonable radius help to make the Conference imposing and successful by their presence.

Numbers 3 and 4 of the *Pamphlets for the People* series, that are being written by Mr. Cohen, will be ready on March 15. There has been some delay in issuing these pamphlets, but Mr. Cohen has been very busy in other directions. The titles are, *What is the Use of Prayer?* and *Christianity and Woman*. The price is, as before, one penny each. Both pamphlets should prove very useful while the Churches are working so hard to capture the unwary and seem to be making a special appeal to women.

The Age of Reason is still selling briskly, although the provinces are not holding their own with London. We wish our friends would take up the matter more seriously. While the name of Paine is in the mind of the general public, the whole Freethought movement may gain from the circulation of his work. If friends would busy themselves with local newsagents and booksellers and induce them to display *The Age of Reason*, the present very large edition would soon be exhausted. Terms will be sent on application.

Those of our readers who have read that very fine novel by Miss Irene Rathbone, *We that were Young*, will be interested to hear that she has written another very powerful story entitled, *They Call it Peace*. (Dent, 9s.) *We that were Young* was a psychological study of the effects of the war on those women who were robbed of husbands and children. *They Call it Peace* is just as vigorous a book, but written on a different theme. It deals very largely with the economical conditions brought about since the war. It concerns some groups of people of varying social positions. The interest of the reader is held from the beginning. Whether one agrees, or disagrees, with Miss Rathbone's conclusions and remedy, one will at least have to admit that the book is written with absolute sincerity and in excellent literary style.

That well-known writer, Robert Sherard, has written a powerful book entitled *Bernard Shaw, Frank Harris and Oscar Wilde* (T. Werner, Laurie, Ltd., 18s.). This book, which is a complete exposure of Frank Harris's *Life of Oscar Wilde*, is written by a man who knew Wilde intimately for 17 years, was in a position to detect, and in this book exposes the fraud committed on the reading public by Frank Harris, whose only purpose was to produce a work of a sensational character. Mr. Sherard shows, and proves, from documentary evidence, that without any exception, the alleged confessions never took place. The book is an eminently readable one, the conversial pages being enlivened by humorous anecdotes. Mr. H. L. Mencken, formerly editor of the *American Mercury*, describes Mr. Sherard's arguments as "completely unanswerable." Mr. Sherard also shows that Bernard Shaw was completely taken in by the fictitious work of Harris, and in the typical Shaw style, refuses to make any amend to Mr. Sherard's arguments. These two books are well worth getting from the library.

Bradford saints are having a return visit from Mr. L. Ebury, who will speak in the Bradford Mechanics' Institute, Town Hall Square, this evening (March 7), on "Belief in God; Man's Folly and His Curse." Mr. Ebury devotes a good deal of his time to platform work in London, and Bradford Freethinkers will no doubt see that he has a warm welcome to their city. The lecture begins at 7.0. Admission is free with some reserved seats.

We are asked again to mention that the West London Branch of the N.S.S. is having a dinner and dance at Union Helvetia, Gerard Place, Shaftesbury Avenue, on Thursday, March 25. Reception at 7, Dinner at 7.30. Tickets are four shillings each, and can be obtained of the Secretary, Mr. C. Tuson, 11 Portland Road, Holland Park, W.11. Early application for tickets is requested.

We wish to call the attention of the many who are interested to the change of address of the *New York Truthseeker*, which is now 38 Park Row, New York, U.S.A.

Masterpieces of Freethought

FORCE AND MATTER

By LUDWIG BUCHNER

II.

BUCHNER, at the outset of his book, quotes a large number of writers to show how most of them agree with the thesis "Matter and Force are separable only in thought; in reality they are one." This was Haeckel's position, and that of the Monists generally.

Force and Matter, says Buchner, "are fundamentally the same thing contemplated from different standpoints"; and his book is more or less an extension of that standpoint. But he goes fully and with infinite patience into a discussion as to what is meant by the terms, and their implication on the whole question of existence. Is matter eternal? Has it been in motion from all eternity? Is there such a thing as "dead" matter?—and so on.

"Matter and Motion," says Buchner, "are eternal," and he cites d'Holbach and Diderot as in full agreement with this view in their day, as well as modern science in his own. And just as "the conception of dead matter is a mere abstraction answering to nothing real," so "a shapeless matter is a non-entity, neither logically conceivable nor empirically present in nature." Matter can only be thought of in some form; while form "did not spring from matter, as Minerva did from the head of Jove, but in the perfection in which we now see it, is the result of slow and laborious evolution, which took millions upon millions of years in the doing."

Matter is indestructible—and so is Force, though Buchner points out that "the indestructibility or conservation of Force has only been observed by scientists during the last forty years—and not without almost insuperable obstacles to general recognition being opposed at first to the new truth." In fact, "the existing amount of Force remains changeless. We can change its effects at our pleasure, but only qualitatively; in its quantity no increase nor diminution is possible." Hence "Force can be neither created nor destroyed"; Matter and Force are, therefore, eternal and indestructible, and there never could have been what is called by Christians the "Creation."

Of course, from all this comes the conception of the "infinity of Matter"; and Buchner has an intensely interesting chapter on this point. "If then we can find no limit," he concludes, "to matter in the minute, still less are we able to find a limit in the vast; we must therefore pronounce matter to be infinite in both directions, in the great as in the small, and to be independent of the limitations of space and time."

It is most interesting to find Buchner quoting the "anonymous" author of the *Elements of Social Science* on the question of creation. Thus:—

The opinion that spirit has created matter is an utterly groundless hypothesis, founded on no shadow of proof. There is not the smallest analogy in its favour, and it would appear as if human reason were yet in its childhood . . . spirit is perishable, for it is absolutely indivisible from the perishable forms of matter . . . it is without exception found in conjunction with a brain, and never creates matter.

And also Tyndal:—

Divorced from matter, where is life to be found? Whatever our *faith* may say, our knowledge shows them to be indissolubly joined. Every meal we eat, and every cup we drink, illustrates the mysterious control of Mind by Matter.

Buchner, as I have already pointed out, takes tre-

mendous pains to make his positions clear. On the question, for example, *What is Matter?* he answers those who "deny or throw doubt upon the existence of matter as such," in this way:—

The logical fallacy . . . lies in this, that the *unknown idiosyncrasy of matter is taken for matter itself*. We indeed do not know what matter is in itself, any more than we know what force is in itself. . . . But this we do know with all certitude, that something is there which attracts, repels, resists, moves, evolves the phenomena of light or of heat, and that when this phenomena is taken away, the phenomena or activities evolved by it come to an end. This something is what we call matter; the phenomena mentioned are its actions; and the cause of these actions; is the force inherent in the matter.

Buchner (rightly or wrongly) had little time for the "idealists." He said that "it is really comical that these philosophic gentry, after they fancy they have demonstrated the non-existence of matter, and have shown that it is merely a thing of thought, yet continue in their writings and expositions to speak again and again of matter and its effects. Did they care to be consistent, they should begin by denying their own existence, for this wholly consists of matter, and should regard themselves as non-existent appearances or phenomenal modes of an unknown something, or as the product of their own imagination."

This passage must have caused a very considerable discussion, for no idealist would take these criticisms lying down. But Buchner never retreated from his position, and he stubbornly insisted that "philosophical spiritualism" (as he called it) was constantly retreating in the face of the victorious "philosophical materialism or realism." He dealt with the question in a long note in his *Man in the Present, Past and Future*, a very valuable work. He could not understand how Lange, for instance, in his *History of Materialism*, could allow himself to support the maxim of Kant that *our ideas do not accommodate themselves to the objects, but the objects to our ideas*. Buchner said that "the simple consequence of this conception would be the absurd assumption that all we recognize is only an illusion of the senses—an assumption which would make an end not only of all philosophy, but of all knowledge." And Buchner was not afraid of a tilt with Kant on this point. He said that Kant's "thing itself" is "a purely ideal entity, or a logical and empirical nonentity of the connection of which with our *conception* proceeding from sensorial recognition, no conception can possibly be formed. A 'thing itself' is inconceivable for the very reason that all things exist only for each other, and without reciprocal relations have no significance. But even if there were a 'thing itself,' it would be absolutely inconceivable or unrecognizable and could claim no value for our action or our thought."

Buchner was thus an uncompromising materialist. He would have no truck with what he thought was the false philosophy of idealism—though he was fully in agreement with the famous saying of Bishop Berkeley: "Few men think; but all will have opinions!" But he did not like the label; he thought it "unsuited to the defenders of a philosophy which regards matter, force and mind not as separate entities, but only as different sides or various phenomenal modes of the same primal or basic principle." Yet he defended his conception of Materialism with unflinching determination, never yielding one iota to the claims of Idealism.

How Buchner treats man and his "soul," will be dealt with next week.

H. CUTNER.

Our Archbishop and Australia

BELOW we republish an article, sent to us by a reader in Sydney, N.S.W., Australia, with this enclosure: "The attached is a leader that appeared here in the *Labour Daily*, a paper with a daily circulation of at least 150,000; and it clearly reveals, I consider, the contempt that is everywhere felt regarding the hypocrisy and imposture of the Archbishop of Canterbury."

The article is as follows:—

The action of the Archbishop of Canterbury, Dr. Cosmo Lang, and certain of his immediate episcopal inferiors in directing a combined tirade of invective against the exiled Edward of Windsor will outrage the feelings of millions with an inherent sense of fair play. Further than that, it will provide proof positive that the recent constitutional crisis was one of malice aforethought and that the part played in it by a certain Church dignitary was not as adventitious as it has since been claimed.

Prior to the abdication, the Archbishop of Canterbury failed to make a single utterance in public concerning those things about which he has now become so openly bitter. If Edward's choice had not been in the direction of abdication, would the Archbishop still have remained silent? It is one thing to have the moral courage of a Savonarola and denounce the excesses of the Ruling Princes, but it is an entirely different thing to wait until all the dirty work has been done and then to hit a man when he is supposed to be down. This latter is neither Christian nor manly.

It must not be forgotten that the Archbishop of Canterbury speaks in a dual capacity. As head of the Established Church he is Primate of all England, occupying a spiritual rôle in the nation's affairs, but, at the same time, he is also a member of the reactionary House of Lords, and, as such, participates in the political affairs of the nation, in which capacity he is invariably found speaking on behalf of the vested interests of acquisitive society. Edward represented a definite and undisguised challenge to the Princes of Privilege. So the utterances of Dr. Cosmo Lang, while directed ostensibly to moral issues allegedly involved, cannot be divorced from the materialistic interests on whose behalf he has so often been an active protagonist heretofore in the House of Lords.

That the Primate of England should stoop so dangerously close to undignified abuse of a man no longer in a position to defend himself publicly, and that he should take the advantage of his position in a national broadcast after the abdication had become a *fait accompli*, to make sweeping charges unsupported by a tittle of factual evidence will create a state of affairs beyond the comprehension of millions of devout laymen. The Archbishop of Canterbury has a responsibility to uphold the dignity of his high office equally with the former King, but while Edward studiously refrained from anything in the nature of retaliation in order not to undermine the position of his successor, the Primate has deliberately embarked upon a campaign to destroy the private reputation of Edward. By crude suggestion and irresponsible acceptance of scandal-mongering, he is seeking to destroy the regard of the people for one against whom neither Church nor State uttered one word for forty-two years.

It is necessary, therefore, to consider bluntly and frankly the vested interests that the Archbishop of Canterbury is now seeking to defend. Edward had no time for smug hypocrisy, and inevitably clashed with those who prefer to gloss over the realities of life; but such resentment as is now voiced springs from motives that are far deeper in the recesses of acquisitive society. The Primate of England not only has a spiritual office, but is also the head of a very large financial organization based upon its revenues from landed estates.

Edward, in the eyes of entrenched greed, committed the heinous sin of commission against what was sup-

posed to be "his own class," when he demonstrated his democratic idealism and his determination that something must be done to correct the social evils existing in twentieth century England. That stand came at a most inopportune time for the Church, as 5,000 British farmers had just marched to No. 10 Downing Street to protest against the Church Tithes still levied in accordance with the usages of the feudal system. "Queen Anne's Bounty" required that those farmers should make a yearly payment representing one-tenth of their income, and, because of their inability to do so, yeoman farmers in recent months have been forced to entrench themselves in their farms to resist the bailiffs arriving with foreclosure orders signed by officers of the Church.

Again, Edward refused to condone the terrible slum conditions to be found in the cities of England. That such slums were, in many cases, owned by Church authorities did not quell his criticism, but merely added a barbed point to it. So Church dignitaries were being rapidly forced into a position where they must remove the slum blot, and thereby forfeit large revenues, or otherwise face a public scandal.

Again, it must not be forgotten that high dignitaries of the Church were found to be large shareholders in munition firms, and actually drew dividends from that nefarious trade during the war. Such interests found it impossible to accept passively a man whose innate honesty and predilection for plain speaking made it inevitable that some day he might pillory them also publicly. That explains why these people are prepared to vilify Edward now that he is in a position where he cannot retaliate.

Christian precepts demand that Church leaders as well as Church laymen should observe the Divine principle of "Let him who is without sin cast the first stone." The Church made it possible for George IV. to go through the ceremony ofmorganatic marriage with the twice-widowed Mrs. Fitzherbert, a Roman Catholic, and then married him to Princess Caroline. On that occasion it was able to cite as a precedent the marriage of Henry VIII., to Catherine Parr. Even more recently the Church has openly condoned far graver offences in Monarchs than any objection it has yet raised to Edward. But Edward had the fundamental honesty not only to avow his love, but also to join issue on the grave social problems. So when the Archbishop of Canterbury now takes the platform against Edward, he is speaking as a politician and not as a Churchman. J.Y.A.

The Healing Art in History

THE practice of medicine is probably as old as man himself; even many of the lower animals have discovered remedies for their ailments, and fly to them immediately in case of trouble.

Egyptian. The medical records of Egypt are said to date back as far as 4000 B.C. According to a high medical authority, there are extant 20 Egyptian medical papyri, one of which is dated 1500 B.C., and consists of 107 pages. These contain, besides remedies, folk-lore, priestly tradition and magic, with no underlying knowledge of the structure of the body, and no unifying theory of disease, except the elementary nature of malign influence. This is what one might expect to find in those days. At certain periods, to touch a dead body in Egypt was an abomination, so that any knowledge of the anatomy of the human body, so essential to the progressive study of medicine and surgery, was practically impossible. But even to-day with all the medical knowledge easily accessible to the public, there are countless thousands in our civilization who are no further advanced in their ideas of the cure of disease than the ancient Egyptians.

Hindu. The Hindus appear to have had, at a very

early period, considerable knowledge of the rudimentary principles of medicine and surgery; and there are two Hindu writers to whom we are indebted for information as to the scope of the healing art in their day. Their pharmacopœia contained mercury, arsenic and zinc, and many drugs of permanent value. There is also a hundred surgical instruments described as being used by them. It is said to be uncertain whether the Greeks derived their knowledge from the Hindus, through the medium of the Egyptian priesthood, or whether the Hindus acquired their skill and knowledge through contact with Western civilization, resulting from the conquests of Alexander. But there is strong evidence to show that the Orientals themselves arrived at a comparatively high state of medical and surgical skill before contact with Grecian influence. But, owing to the same lack of anatomical knowledge their principles of practice remained stationary for many centuries.

Chinese. Among the Chinese medical knowledge always remained in a very elementary state, while their surgery was a very crude and barbarous nature. If literature and art are regarded as the standard of a nation's civilization, the Chinese undoubtedly attained to a high rank among ancient peoples. But their contribution to the literature and knowledge of medicine and surgery is practically nil. The Abbe Huc speaks of a College of Medicine in Pekin in his day, but his experiences with physicians in his travels are not at all complimentary to their efficiency. One of the principal Missionary Societies is said to have laboured nine years in China before they ever made a single convert. The Chinese had no use for the "Gospel," which, like the Greeks of St. Paul's time, they regarded as foolishness. But the introduction of "medical" missions not only "saved the face" of the missionaries, but was gladly welcomed by the wily "heathen Chinese."

Babylon. Prof. Fayce, the archæologist, says that the doctor had long been an established institution in ancient Babylon; that while the bulk of the populace had recourse to religious charms and ceremonies, there was an increasing number of the educated who looked for aid in their maladies rather to the physician with his medicines than to the sorcerer or priest with his charms. There is in the British Museum fragments of an edition from the library of Nineveh, of an old and renowned treatise on medicines. In this work an attempt is made to classify and describe diseases, and to enumerate the various remedies that had been proposed for them.

Greek. The apparently mythical figure of Æsculapius, to the worship of whom many temples were erected in the Greek cities, was always associated with the cult of healing, which was, of course, of a religious character. The custom was to convey the sick person to the temple of this god, and many records of wonderful cures were preserved on the walls of the temples. Miracles of faith-healing which are ascribed to the sacred shrine at Lourdes, are the modern counterpart of the miracles of healing ascribed to the temple of Æsculapius. Although Æsculapius is usually regarded as a Greek deity, there is little doubt that he was imported from Egypt. And it is said that there is a strong resemblance between the miraculous conception of this god and the miraculous healing claimed by the cult, and the same stories related of Jesus Christ in the New Testament. But there is no Greek medical literature until the time of Hippocrates, about 400 B.C.

The medical work of Hippocrates brings us into a different world atmosphere altogether, not only with regard to medicine, but also in the general outlook in its approach to world problems. As opposed to the religious idea that disease was due to divine visitation

and displeasure (an idea still fostered by the priesthood) he taught that it was governed by natural laws. And by the close observation of the courses that diseases follow, he was able to apply to their treatment more practical and material ideas. The necessary consequence of the results of observation was the separation of the pursuits of the physician from those of the priests in whose hands it had been from time immemorial. His works show an extent of knowledge answering to the authority and greatness of his name, and it is said by those best competent to judge, that his vivid descriptions have never been excelled, if indeed they have ever been equalled. It says a good deal for the towering personality of this great Greek physician that his method, his influence, and his ideas, dominated the medical world for nearly two thousand years. He was the first to apply a rational treatment to the study of disease and medicine. And even to-day in the medical profession his name is spoken of with a feeling akin to reverence.

The next name of importance in Greek medicine is that of Claudius Galen, who lived in the second century. He travelled a good deal, and after his student days he settled and practised in Rome. He was imbued with Hippocratic doctrines, and wrote fifteen books on anatomy and physiology. While he was not an epoch-maker, his original researches entitle him to rank as one of the greatest of those who have devoted their lives to the pursuit of the healing art.

Roman. Hygienic laws existed in Rome as early as 450 B.C. One of these forbids burials within the city walls; and instructions were issued to the town officials to attend to the cleaning of the streets and to the distribution of water. The physicians in Rome at that period were either slaves, or people in a very subordinate position. Their status, however, was very much improved by Julius Cæsar, who conferred citizenship on all who practised medicine at Rome, in order to induce physicians to settle there. While the Latin-speaking peoples did not produce any notable physicians, like the Greeks, their organizing genius made medicine and surgery a public concern. The finest monument to the Roman care for the public health stands yet for all to see in the remains of the fourteen great aqueducts which supplied the city with 300,000,000 gallons of water daily for the use of the populace. They had a well-organized medical military service, and public physicians were appointed to the various towns and institutions. But the greatest contribution of Rome to Medicine—and it is a very great one—is the hospital system, especially those of a military character. I remember, many years ago, a Methodist parson speaking in Manchester, making the audacious claim that it was Jesus Christ who built Manchester Hospital. It would be much nearer the truth to say that Julius Cæsar built it. The public care of the sick, and especially of the poor, owe more to Roman incentive than to any other cause.

Arabian. What is called the Arabian school of medicine was an off-shoot of the Greeks, and forms an interesting chapter in the history of medicine and surgery. But even a brief treatment of it would require to be prefaced by a slight sketch of the rise and spread of Mahomedanism, and need separate treatment. They were the forerunners who brought medical knowledge to the awakening West. Dr. Charles Singer, in his *History of Medicine* reproduces two small vignettes from a thirteenth century manuscript. One of them represents a Jew receiving from an Eastern Potentate a medical work in Arabic; and the other shows the Jew presenting it, translated into Latin, to a European monarch. It is a pictorial representation of the source of the revival of learning in the

West during the Middle Ages. The Jews were collaborators with the Arabs in medical pursuits and practice, and but for these translations, a knowledge of ancient scientific and medical works would not have been possible.

JOSEPH BRYCE.

For Liberty

It has become almost a common experience among progressives nowadays to open their newspapers with a feeling of anxiety regarding what new blow the rising tide of Fascist advance may have dealt democracy. The death of German democracy was the first funeral which began the long funeral procession of European democracies: Spain's betrayal follows close upon the military coup in Greece, and the setting up of the skeleton of a totalitarian regime in Roumania. With new victories the authoritatively-minded grow bold. Every reactionary group in every European country not yet come to power looks with envious eyes upon their victorious foreign brethren. There is a Fifth International now, the International of Fascism, distinguished from all other Internationals of the "left," by its complete ruthlessness and complete international solidarity. With the alliance of Hitler, Mussolini and the dictators who attend them (friendships bought with the guns, planes and gas, which brought the satellites victory), we are potentially faced in this country with the prospect of any of these gentlemen arming their reactionary British confrères, or National Government paternalism running away into strong Government.

What are we going to do about it; this menace which offers the prospect of a type of life that would make freethinking and intellectual liberty impossible. What for us makes life rich, and in some instances tolerable, would be denied. Possibly a British Fascist regime would not be so openly and tactlessly brutal and "ungentlemanly" as the rubber truncheons-and-torture-camp variety of the Continental Fascism, but it would be as effective in suppressing independent thought. Probably it would take something from the example of paternal but Fascist-militarist Japan, which has a "Dangerous Thought Surveillance Committee," and a police which is always on the watch for "red" thoughts.

What can we do about it? If we are wise we can and will do what French democracy did when it found itself gravely menaced by the growth, and by Government encouragement, of Fascist leagues, ideals and methods. The French parties of the left formed a People's Front, which having as its programme a certain decided and immediately practicable number of reforms, went to the country with these and was elected, pledged to carry them out. Its subsequent energetic leadership and timely active reminders from its constituents and from the rank and file, secured the demands of its supporters. Of most concern, however, to those who care for intellectual liberty was its passing of reforms aimed at making the expression of unorthodox opinions the legitimate and accessible right of every citizen; previously either in their press, through their lectures or public meetings, progressives were (they are still, but to a much less extent), subjected to all sorts of intimidations. The Blum Government secured the rights of minorities constitutionally working for reform. In other ways, of course, it has curbed reaction, but its action in this sphere has been valuable and of particular interest to all who value intellectual liberty.

There is no reason to suppose that a British People's Front would fight shy of a similar reform; many Labour M.P.'s, for instance, are in favour of a repeal

of the Blasphemy Laws, and the organizations that would coalesce to make a British People's Front are similarly liberally inclined. The manifesto recently issued to the press under the signature of a number of eminent Liberals, Socialists and men of no party political opinions, shows a considerable degree of unanimity among intellectuals, at the same time as it makes the plea for a popular front, with the caution that "the scattered forces of progress should call a truce to the civil war that now divides them, and cooperate for the defence of those democratic principles which are common to them all." This paragraph is the keynote of the whole. The agreement inherent in the common signature by men so diverse as Dr. Barnes, Bishop of Birmingham and Professor Julian Huxley, is a hopeful beginning and portends that the idea may spread downwards among people with less individualist differences.

The People's Front idea has an immediately practical relevance to the present situation. It is not too much to say that home politics are dominated by the necessary totalitarian organization of nations for war—Fascism and the fear of war. But without some freedom from these obsessions there can be no real social progress or dissemination of culture, as the above-quoted report recognizes, but with these all hope of social progress and cultural advance will be put back for a decade, or even smothered completely.

This is another aspect of the problem of maintaining intellectual liberty. Without the secondary possibility of some aggression by reactionaries with African or Indian troops, or arming of some of the reactionaries in this country, by foreign Fascists, which the strength of a People's Front could destroy, there is the possibility that a Government arming for war, as all undoubtedly are, will be forced towards a semi-Fascist war-sparring state of society. And very little independent opinion will be allowed then.

This development has begun. According to Mr. D. N. Pritt, K.C., in the House of Commons, on July 10 last, "Since 1913 the right to express any unpopular view in this country has gone back a century and a half." A People's Front Government would abolish the minor restrictions upon the traditional liberty of the British citizen, which have been slowly slipped upon him in the past few years.

The other acts of a British Left, united and strong against reaction, would be either the implementing of an Anglo-Franco-Soviet Pact—expressly open to any other entrants—or the strengthening by British leadership of the peace forces, in the League of Nations; and, as important, the building of that more secure, more stable social justice, the basis upon which our freedom rests.

So, that People's Front, what about it?

LOUIS BORRILL.

RELIGION AND PROOF

If you go to any believer in religion—in any of the greater religions, I mean—and ask him why he believes in his religion he has always one answer: "Because it is true." And if you continue and say to him, "How do you know it is true?" he will reply, "Because there is full evidence to prove it." He imagines that he is guided by his reason, that it is his logical faculty that is satisfied, and his religion can be proved irrefragably. And yet it is strange that if any religion is based on ascertained fact, if any religion is demonstrably true, no one can be brought to see this truth, to accept this proof, except believers who do not require it. The Jew cannot be brought to admit the truth of Christianity, let the Christian argue ever so wisely; nor will the Christian accept Mohammedanism or Buddhism as containing any truth at all, no matter how the adherents of these faiths may argue.—H. Fielding.

A Word about Greece to the Greeks

THERE has always been talk of uniting the Protestant and Greek Orthodox Churches, though chiefly—I am always pleased to remind myself—on the part of the Greeks.

That similarities do exist cannot be denied, but whether they will ever exist to that sympathetic degree that a Protestant will say before he retires for the night, "God bless my father and my mother, my brothers and my sisters, my relatives and my friends—and the Greeks," is, however desirable, doubtful.

It was a sudden downpour of rain which, catching me wholly unprepared for it, drove me to seek shelter in the entrance-door of a Greek Orthodox Church.

If conditions were bad outside the church, they were not less ominous within, for, the afternoon being well-advanced, there was little light in either place. However, such light as there was, revealed, just inside the door, tray upon tray of tapers.

Tapers! My father, I remembered, used to light his pipe with them. There was always a box of them on the mantelpiece. They were so much cleaner than spills, my mother had often remarked; and, sometimes, as a little boy, I used to soften them before the fire and weave them into queer and, often, intricate designs.

At church, on Sunday evenings, the sexton had used them to light the oil lamps. Occasionally I had helped him, and enjoyed, with all a boy's pleasure in such things, the gradual transformation of the gloomy old edifice into a bright and cheerful house. The first flickering lights came from the altar candles and played sparklingly upon the silver crucifix. Next, the choir stalls loomed into view; the old oak seeming to warm and soften as the flames crept round the burners. Next, the pulpit; then, the organ, with its clean keyboard, dark frame and silver pipes. And so on, until all the lamps were lit, and scarcely a shadow remained in the corners; then we extinguished the taper and watched the last thin thread of smoke leave the dying spark, and smelt the familiar and pungent scent of warm wick and wet wax.

It is peculiar how I associate that smell of the cooling candle with the winter and wet weather; perhaps it is because I went to bed by candle-light and, on very damp, dark mornings, got up by it. Strange how the words suggest themselves—wet wick, warm wax, winter, wet weather—yes, and wind. You cannot help but remember, too, how the candle's flame behaved in the wind. Perhaps you, too, have taken a candle outside on a wind-driven night, to see if the garden-gate was closed, or the tap frozen; and have cupped your hands about the flame to shield it from the draught, though your best efforts in that direction did not make its eventual extinction more uncertain. And you must, also, have left the flame a little while to battle with the wind alone, and have wondered, as you tried to set the catch on the gate, at the way it flew and ruffled—like a flag—horizontally from the wick; how pertinaciously it clung, almost as if it were tied to the candle's end by its tail; and how it disappeared only when it had elongated so much and become so thin as to have no semblance of a tail left at all. Then, it was gone, but so suddenly, so completely, that you could not tell whether you had watched it go out, or, in the moment that it did so, closed your eyes.

Since those days I have used a thousand candles; have seen them singly in bottles and collectively in chandeliers: I have shuffled cards in one's varying light and dined at tables glittering beneath their massed brilliance: and yet, in all my life, I have never bought a candle.

That is not so strange, perhaps. At home I could always find a new candle in the cupboard: I certainly cannot recall a single occasion when I looked for one in vain. Whenever a candle was needed, and wherever it was needed, it was always there. The nearest I ever got to buying one was borrowing one. I never even noticed a candle up for sale. How they came—whence they came—when they came: these things were not of much concern to me. If I concerned myself at all with their origin, it was merely to suppose that they were brought; by whom, the grocer, the oil-merchant, or the vegetable dealer—I never found out.

And, until that night—only a few nights ago, when the

rain drove me into a church, I was still unaware of the precise classification under which the candle exists, whether as a commodity, vegetable, animal or mineral. How was I to know that it was a religious indulgence, purchasable in church, and of a size proportionate to one's means? How am I to know, *now*, what their sale implies? Sacrifice? It might be, both to pride and pocket of the poor. Sacrilege?—It might be, to turn a church into a bazaar. Or, possibly, just super-salesmanship?

Dear Heavens! If, as some have suggested, we, the Protestants—in England, especially, as materialistic in our religion as our conservative spirit will permit—united with them (the Greeks), what might not be the outcome of it? For, if candles, why not razor-blades? Our donations can still be distributed among the poor, and to greater use; and, in addition our beards of yesterday, to-day, and to-morrow, could be dedicated to the apostles.

And now, as I lay my indignant pen aside, softly down the years of nights that have passed since childhood's days, comes my mother's last "goodnight" to me, as, tired from many a scamper in field and hay-rick, bearing a lighted candle in my hand, I climb the wooden steps to bed—"Good night, my son. Beware of the grease." You must know, my mother was a notably poor speller.

DENNIS R. EARLEY.

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

KINGSTON-ON-THAMES BRANCH (17 Grange Road, Kingston-on-Thames): 8.0, each Thursday evening, lectures, discussions, etc.

BETHNAL GREEN AND HACKNEY BRANCH N.S.S. (Bethnal Green Public Library, Cambridge Road, E.2): 8.0, Thursday, March 11, Mr. H. S. Wishart—"Freethought Defeats Religion."

NORTH LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (The Primrose Restaurant, 66, Heath Street, Hampstead, N.W.3, one minute from Hampstead Underground Station): 7.30, Debate—"Was Marx Correct?" *Affir.*: Mr. P. Dooley (Communist Party). *Neg.*: Mr. H. Cutner.

SOUTH LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (Alexandra Hotel, South Side, Clapham Common, S.W.4, opposite Clapham Common Station, Underground): 7.30, Mr. P. J. Hand—"True Rationalism; The Path to Faith."

SOUTH PLACE ETHICAL SOCIETY (Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, W.C.1): 11.0, Professor H. Levy, D.Sc.—"Heresy Hunting."

WEST LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (The Laurie Arms, Crawford Place, Edgware Road, W.): 7.30, Dr. Israel Mattuck, Rabbi, Liberal Jewish Synagogue—"The Fundamentals of Modern Judaism."

COUNTRY

INDOOR.

BIRMINGHAM BRANCH N.S.S. (Shakespeare Rooms, Edmund Street): 7.0, Debate—"Should Religion be Taught in Schools."

BRADFORD BRANCH N.S.S. (Mechanics' Institute, Town Hall Square Bradford): 7.0, Mr. L. Ebury—"Belief in God; Man's Folly and His Curse." Reserved seats 6d. and 1s. each.

EAST LANCASHIRE RATIONALIST ASSOCIATION (28 Bridge Street, Burnley): 2.30, Mr. Jack Clayton—"Secularism."

(Continued on page 159)

PRIMITIVE SURVIVALS IN MODERN THOUGHT

CHAPMAN COHEN

Cloth, gilt, 2s. 6d. Postage 2d. Stiff paper
1s. 6d. Postage 2d.

THE PIONEER PRESS,
61 Farringdon St., London,
E.C.4

DEFENCE OF FREE SPEECH

BY

G. W. FOOTE

Price 6d. Postage 1d.

THE MIRACLES OF ST. MARTIN

BY

C. CLAYTON DOYE

Price post free 7d.

SEX EDUCATION CENTRE

UNITY THEATRE CLUB,
BRITANNIA STREET, KING'S CROSS, W.C.1

Monday, March 8th at 7.30

ABORTION LAW REFORM

Speakers: ALICE JENKINS, JANET CHANCE

Admission 6d.

BRAIN and MIND

— BY —

Dr. ARTHUR LYNCH.

This is an introduction to a scientific psychology along lines on which Dr. Lynch is entitled to speak as an authority. It is a pamphlet which all should read.

Price - 6d. By post - 7d.

Shakespeare & other Literary Essays

BY

G. W. FOOTE

Price 3s. 6d. Postage 3d

THE REVENUES OF RELIGION

BY

ALAN HANDSACRE

Cloth 2s. 6d. Postage 3d. Paper 1s. 6d. Postage 2d

DETERMINISM OR FREE-WILL?

An Exposition of the Subject in the Light of the
Doctrines of Evolution.

By CHAPMAN COHEN.

Half-Cloth, 2s. 6d. Postage 2½d.

SECOND EDITION.

THE PIONEER PRESS, 61 Farringdon Street, E.C.4.

LETTERS TO THE LORD

Chapman Cohen

This work shows Mr. Cohen at his best
and his wittiest.

Price 1s. By post 1s. 2d. Cloth, by post 2s. 2d.

Issued for the Secular Society, Limited by
the Pioneer Press, 61 Farringdon St., E.C.4
LONDON

GLASGOW SECULAR SOCIETY (East Hall, McLellan Galleries, Sauchiehall Street, Glasgow): 7.0, Mr. Chapman Cohen—"Paine the Pioneer; The Man Who Shook the World."

LEICESTER SECULAR SOCIETY (Secular Hall, Humberstone Gate): 6.30, 56th Anniversary of the opening of the Secular Hall. Mr. George Bedborough, and special programme.

LIVERPOOL BRANCH N.S.S. (Transport Hall, entrance in Christian Street, Islington, Liverpool): 7.0, Mr. J. V. Shortt—"Death."

PRESTON BRANCH N.S.S. (Hesketh Buildings, entrance Ormskirk Road): 7.15, Mr. J. Avis (Blackpool)—"Factors of Heredity."

SUNDERLAND BRANCH N.S.S. (Co-operative Hall, Green Street): 7.0, Mr. A. Flanders.

BOOKS FOR SALE—Charles Bradlaugh, *His Life and Work*, by his daughter, 2 Vols. *Life and Letters of Herbert Spencer*, by D. Duncan. Also several other works, all in good condition.—GUY, 8 South Bank, Queensbury, Bradford.

The Book That Shook The Churches

The Age Of Reason

THOMAS PAINE

With Critical Introduction by CHAPMAN COHEN

For more than Thirty Years Men and Women went to prison to vindicate the right to publish and circulate this book

This is a complete edition of Paine's immortal work, and covers, with introduction (44 pages), 250 pages of close type, well printed on good paper with portrait cover. Price 4d., postage 2½d., or strongly bound in cloth with portrait on plate paper, 1s. 6d., postage 3d.

This is the cheapest work ever published in the history of the Freethought Movement. No other book ever shook the Churches so thoroughly, and its wide circulation to-day will repeat the effect it produced more than a century ago. It is simple enough for a child and profound enough for a philosopher. Paine's book appealed to the people in 1794; it appeals to the public to-day.

INGERSOLL'S

famous

AN ORATION ON THOMAS PAINE

One of the most eloquent
tributes to the greatness
of Thomas Paine

Price 2d. Postage ½d.

CREED AND CHARACTER

CHAPMAN COHEN

1. Religion and Race Survival
2. Christianity and Social Life
3. The Case of the Jew
4. A Lesson from Spain

Price 3d.

Postage 1d.

TO LONDON FREETHINKERS

Will the members of the N.S.S. and its Branches, who are in favour of the proposal to form a Club, as a Social and Educational Centre in London, please communicate with the Secretary of the West London Branch, N.S.S.

If sufficient support is forthcoming a meeting will be arranged to discuss the details of the proposal, and will be announced in the *Freethinker*.

C. TUSON, *Hon. Secretary*,
West London Branch N.S.S.

13 Portland Road,
Holland Park, W.11.