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PRINCIPAL CONTENTS

	Page
<i>The Great Lying Church—The Editor</i>	721
<i>Chelmsford's Call for Cash—Mimnermus</i>	723
<i>What I Believe—Herbert Cescinsky</i>	724
<i>London in Roman Days—T. F. Palmer</i>	725
<i>Religion in Hospital—Louis Borrill</i>	730
<i>Arrah na Poguc—J. Effel</i>	730
<i>God is Love—Dorothea Mills</i>	731
<i>The Revolt of the Lord—Robert S. Blum</i>	732

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

Views and Opinions

The Great Lying Church
 "The great lying Church" runs true to form. It was a Christian writer, Herder, who said that "Christian truth equalled Punic faith," and the latter was a byword in the ancient world for lying and deceit. From the first moment that the Christian Church appears in history its radical untruthfulness is evident. Scores upon scores of documents were deliberately fabricated to bolster up the claims of the Church. Early Christian lies were so rife that St. Augustine in his essay *Contra Mendacium*, (*Against Lying*), raised a strong protest against the lies and "frauds" of Christian writers. These were numerous enough, in all conscience. Putting on one side the fantastical stories told by Christian writers of visions, struggles with demons, conversations with angels and devils, as being due to a distorted or perverted imagination, the quantity of deliberate lying is mountainous. In the early centuries scores of documents supposed to be "inspired," other than those contained in the Authorized Bible and the New Testament, were fabricated. There were gospels written by Jesus, letters written by the Virgin Mary, an official report by Pontius Pilate of the trial of Jesus, and manufactured gospels by all the New Testament evangelists. Later the Church produced document after document to suit its claims, the best known of which are the famous Isidorian Decretals, on which the claim for papal supremacy is based. These were forged in the ninth century and were dated back to the early Christian centuries. Add to these such things as faked miracles, interpolations in ancient documents, falsification of testimonies, creation of lying myths about religious and non-religious opponents, tales of death-bed recantations, lies concerning the character of famous unbelievers, and I think it will be admitted that no other institution the world has even seen has so lengthly and so persistent a record of deliberate lying as is possessed by the Christian Church. Says Lecky:—

The Fathers laid down as a distinct proposition that pious frauds were justifiable and even laudable. . . . All ecclesiastical literature became tainted with an unblushing mendacity. . . . Generation after generation it (lying for the glory of God) became more universal; it continued till the very sense of truth and the very love of truth seemed blotted out from the minds of men. That this is no exaggerated picture of the condition at which the middle ages arrived is known to all who have any acquaintance with its literature. . . . Not only did they (the priesthood) pursue with the grossest calumny every enemy to their faith, not only did they encircle every saint with a halo of palpable fiction, not only did they invent tens of thousands of miracles for the purpose of stimulating devotion, they very naturally brought into all other subjects the indifference to truth they had acquired in theology.

No one who knows anything of Christian history will say that this picture is too highly-coloured. When one bears in mind how much of Roman Catholic writing is taken up with exposing the lies of Protestants, and how much of Protestant writing is taken up with detecting the lies of Roman Catholics, it becomes impossible to exaggerate the impetus that the Christian Church has given to sanctified lying. If Christian lies are less numerous than they were, it is because the growth of non-religious currents of thought and the greater regard for truth created by the scientific spirit, together with the spread of education, have made deliberate lying less profitable than it was when the Christian Church stood dominant in European history. No wonder the Church created the phrase "Christian truth." It was well to distinguish truth from what the non-Christian world understood by the term. Nothing like "Christian truth" was known until Christianity was born. Nothing like it is likely to exist after the Church has disappeared.

* * *

The Latest Lie

"The great lying Church" runs true to form. In September there will be held in London a Conference of the International Union of Freethinkers. It has not been held in London since 1888; since then it has been held in the different capitals of Europe, and in many it has been received with honour by the municipal authorities. I was present in the one that was held in Rome, when the municipality placed the Collegio Romano at the service of the Congress. There were loud protests from the "Prisoner of the Vatican," and in England the Roman Catholic Cardinal protested against what he called an insult to the Holy Father. The Conference was held, however, and, so far as heaven was concerned, nothing happened. All the Church did was to adopt the childish plan of closing the Vatican to all but accredited pilgrims. No certificate of stupidity was demanded before fools were admitted. Their religion was quite sound.

But the opportunity offered by the International Union of Freethinkers Congress in London was not to be missed. It gave the Church a chance to show that time had not robbed it altogether of its capacity for lying. The Roman Catholic papers were first in the field with the announcement that a "Congress of the Godless" was to be held, perhaps within sight of Westminster Abbey and the Westminster Cathedral. That was followed by the notice that Moscow had ordered a Conference of the Godless to be held in London, and an appeal was made to the type upon which the Vatican lives, to write to the papers protesting, and also to write to Members of Parliament asking them to press the Government to forbid such a gathering. I think it possible the question may be raised in Parliament, although it is unlikely the Government will do anything—unless it appoints a Committee to study non-intervention, and in that case something definite may be done by 1950 to forbid the Conference of 1938.

It is hardly necessary to say that Moscow has had nothing to do with the Conference being held in London, although I hope that some representatives from Moscow will be present. But there is and has been no secret about the matter. Moscow did not even ask that the International Union should be held in London. The International itself did not ask that it should be held here. There is no secret and no mystery about the matter. The International Union of Freethinkers was invited to hold its Conference in London by the National Secular Society, the Union of Ethical Societies, the South Place Ethical Society, and the Rationalist Press Association. No "Society of the Godless" had anything to do with it. Indeed, I imagine that a number of the united membership of the societies named would repudiate the name of Atheist. I regret it, and hope that one day they will adopt that name. There is, as I have so often pointed out, no logical halting place between the belief in God and Atheist. At present many take a rest somewhere in between the two, and, mistaking a resting-place for a bed, go contentedly to sleep. But the longest nap has its awakening—unless it merges into the last sleep of all, where even Roman Catholic propagandists have to cease their Munchausen-like activities.

* * *

Society and Religion

But the Roman Church has not a monopoly of lying for the greater glory of God. It extends to Protestantism, although Protestantism has not been able to ply this Christian occupation as energetically and as widely as Catholics have done—mainly because it appeared upon the scene at a date when the world was beginning to pay a little more regard to truth, as science understands the term. But so far as it could—in such things as death-beds, falsification of history, lies about opponents, etc.—Protestants have put up quite a respectable show, enough to enable one to see what they would have accomplished had they been first in the field. And the Roman Catholic cry has encouraged a Mr. A. Denville, M.P. for Newcastle Central, to express his "disapproval" of this Conference "of Atheists." Mr. Denville does not, at least in the notice of his speech, which appears in the *North Mail and Newcastle Chronicle*, ask that the Government shall prevent the Conference being held in London; he takes his stand upon high moral ground. He trembles for the well-being of the family and the very foundations of society. Thus:—

Once you destroy religion, whatever form it may take, you lose everything worth while in this world. Family life will disappear and with it the most valuable foundation for society that we can have.

Now Mr. Denville represents Newcastle Central in Parliament. It is his lot to help make the laws of the country, and therefore he is naturally alarmed lest, should people give up belief in a God, marriage and the family would disappear, everything we possess worth having would go—including a seat in Parliament—and the foundations of Society would break up. This picture should give Tyneside Atheists furiously to think. If they think about nothing else, it should cause them to think about Mr. Denville. For Mr. Denville is not stopped by the fact that some form of family life exists in the animal world, and also that family life does exist, in various forms, all over the human world. In fact it would seem that so long as babies are born, some kind of mother-attention is required, and this in some non-godly way is linked with the attachment of the male to both the mother and the baby. God or no God, one is inclined to think that this kind of trinitarian relationship must exist, if the human race is to persist. Getting babies and rearing them is one of the oldest of human occupations, far older than producing and rearing chickens. Somehow I cannot picture a time when men and women will not have babies, and having them, have a family, and having a family, will not tend it. There seems something loose somewhere in Mr. Denville's reasoning—if one may so call it.

Society also is a very ancient thing in the world. Anthropologists know quite well that it really antedates gods. I can assure Mr. Denville that this is so, although, apparently, he has never bothered much about the essential nature of human society. That was not necessary to become M.P. for Newcastle Central. But man was always a gregarious animal—before he had any religion, or any gods—and being gregarious he lived in some kind of a society, and has never been able to live without it. How does Mr. Denville think human Society began? And how does he think human Society has continued? Perhaps he would reply to this as Thackeray did to the American reporter, who asked him "What do the English people think about Martin Tupper?" "Sir," replied Thackeray, "the English people do not think about Martin Tupper." So Mr. Denville might reply to my questions, "Sir, I do not think about these things. I am a Member of Parliament, and it is not my business to think about the nature of Society." And I should sympathetically agree with him. Were it otherwise, Mr. Denville might realize that all social institutions, even the great institution of language, and not omitting religion, arise out of society. One may think of society undergoing changes, of age-long institutions being wiped away to be replaced by new ones, and there is always room for discussion as to whether these changes are good or bad. But if one cares to dream of those far-off days when the sun has grown cold, and the last handful of men and women are shivering to extinction, human society will still exist, and will continue until only one person is left. But I must apologize. I may be taking Mr. Denville out of his depth.

There is, one notes, a certain catholicity about Mr. Denville. His strictures apply only to Atheism. So long as people believe in a religion, any religion, things will be well, if not so well. Men and women will fall in love, they will beget children, each will have affection for the other, and society will pursue its usual blundering path. So long as they believe in a God! If Atheism rules, then the love of man for woman and woman for man, the affection of parents for children and of children for parents, the loyalty of friend for friend, the sense of public well-being, the desire for justice, the sense of the beauty of nature, the thirst for knowledge and the love of adventure—all these things will die, unless we have re-

ligion. But, alack and alack, Atheism is getting more common; religion is becoming more tenuous; the day of reckoning is approaching; and Mr. Denville solemnly calls the attention of the patrons of a sale of work at St. Cuthbert's Church, Newcastle-on-Tyne, to the threatening situation.

But there is one chance. A sufficient number of people may cling to religion to keep human society going. It matters not what religion you have, "whatever form it may take," so long as it is religion it will serve. Mr. Denville is catholic in his views—all comprehensive in his real or affected ignorance. Perhaps he remembers that there are all sorts of religious folk in Newcastle, and at election time a vote is a vote, no matter by whom given. Therefore any sort of religion will do.

CHAPMAN COHEN.

Chelmsford's Call for Cash

"The fact that a believer is happier than a sceptic is no more to the point than the fact that a drunken man is happier than a sober one."—Bernard Shaw.

THE Right-Reverend Henry, Bishop of Chelmsford, has written a letter to the church-people of his diocese. It has none of the charm that distinguishes such epistolary correspondence as that of Byron, or Cowper, but, doubtless, it will serve its purpose. For, it is a pastoral letter, and, in the final analysis, may be considered as a business communication. Starting with "My dear friends," he asks, without too much circumlocution, for the modest sum of £5,000 annually. He asks also for the prayers of his people, but especially for that £5,000. This money is desperately needed, he urges, for the work of the diocese, and is to be devoted to the building of new churches, and to adding to the number of the clergy. The Rt. Rev. Father-in-God adds the following quaint reasons for his appeal for money:—

Never was there a time when the Christian influence was so needed in our land, people are hungering and thirsting for the teaching of Jesus Christ, which is the only possible solution of our social, national, and international problems. But how can they hear without a preacher?

What on earth is the Rt. Rev. Father-in-God talking about? According to the history books, this country has been under Christian influence since the time of Augustine A.D. 597, and it is now A.D. 1937. It never seems to occur to his lordship that the present very troubled state of our social and national life has anything to do with the thirteen centuries of blind worship of Christian nostrums by believers, or that it throws any sort of doubt upon the sufficiency of this particular worship.

This Christian influence for the extension of which the bishop wants £5,000 yearly, is surely one of the most ineffectual things in the world. How otherwise can we account for the existence in this country alone of 400,000 unfit, and 343,000 overcrowded houses; a huge army of unemployed men and women; and a miserably low standard of living for so large a proportion of our population? Surely, so long as these unfortunate human beings are there in festering masses, without robust health, without decent homes, without hope, they are a menace to us as well as a misery to themselves. And, are we not entitled to be sceptical of the value of this Christian influence, which is so noticeably imperceptible and ineffective in its alleged working?

As for the flamboyant statement that people are hungering and thirsting for the teaching of Christ, this is not borne out by the facts. Churches are half

empty; Sunday schools are depleted; collections are less than they used to be. In the matter of divorce, the State Church is defied openly. Nor is the presence of Christian influence very marked in the upper crust of society. Never since the Rome of the Cæsars have the rich so flaunted their riches as the "smart set" of our own day. Indeed, it would be difficult to parallel such a set of human beings, so idle, so dissolute, so profoundly uninterested in anything save their degenerate selves. Their fathers, their grandfathers, may have been so wealthy, but they were patrons of the arts, and they were interested in men and movements. To-day, the crazy gang of the younger aristocrats is a libel on the human race. Does the dear bishop suggest that these creatures, who have all their lives been subjected to Christian influence, are hungering and thirsting for Christ? And, if thirteen centuries of Christian teaching cannot produce a finer result among people with leisure and opportunity, what is the use of cadging five pound notes to carry the sorry farce one act further?

It should be a truism that if the Christian Church is to serve the needs of the modern world, it must know that world, and it must learn its language. It does neither the one nor the other. Official religion uses the language of two thousand years ago, the vocabulary of the pre-scientific world. It still uses modes of thought and language belonging to the far-off time when the legends of a talking-snake in the legendary Garden of Eden, and the miraculous happenings of Noah's Ark, were credible. This makes it impossible for a large number of good and thoughtful people to attend the services of a church that continues to talk as if the world's clock struck at Jerusalem two thousand years ago and has never moved since.

If it is conceded that the "Genesis" account of "Adam" and "Eve" is legendary, why do the clergy still insist on the fall of mankind, when there was no fall at all? The framework of the old theology has gone to pieces, and it is no use pretending otherwise. People are not hungering and thirsting for such old-world rubbish, and the bishop lays himself open to serious criticism by using such language in an appeal for people's cash. "You cannot pay people with words," says a French proverb. This is precisely what the Bishop is trying to do. His words are borrowed from a dead language, and are used to bolster up a dying creed.

So far, after fifteen hundred years, Christianity has not only failed to cure our national ills, but has even intensified those we have. Yet the bishop claims that his patent panacea would help in international affairs. The Christian Religion was the religion of Abyssinia, but it never prevented that unhappy country being the last stronghold of human slavery. Spain was one of the most Christian countries in the world, but this did not prevent her being turned into the cock-pit of Europe, and her sons being "butchered to make a Roman holiday."

A few years back, and a great part of the Christian world was plunged into the sanguinary chaos of the great war. Where was this Christian influence in August, 1914, and of what use is it likely to be in another international upheaval? It has been the clerical boast that Christianity had civilized Europe. That gigantic upheaval meant that brute force had usurped the place of reason. At one terrible stroke we were back in the times of sheer barbarism and savagery, and millions of dead men were shovelled under crimson soil. The pre-war conditions were the fruit of centuries of evolution, centuries of moral and intellectual advance; a labour not of yesterday, but very many yesteryears of European civilization. Humanity had been hoodwinked by Priests, who,

while professing to be disciples of the "Prince of Peace," blessed regimental flags, christened battle-ships, and took officers' pay while acting as army chaplains.

O, most ironic conclusion! It is for this most impotent of all creeds that the Bishop of Chelmsford is asking for thousands of pounds. Not only that, but his lordship is asking for the money on the ground that Christianity is the only panacea for the ills of the world. It is not the first time in history that men have sold "pills to cure earthquakes," but it has never been done with more effrontery and assurance than in the present instance. Yet it is plain that the bishop himself is a survival from the bad old days of ignorance. He dwells in another hemisphere, breathes another atmosphere than the twentieth century. He is a descendant of those Roman augurs, who, it is said, could not help smiling when they passed one another. The witch-doctors of uncivilized countries should hail him as a most distinguished member of their profession.

MIMNERMUS.

What I Believe

(Concluded from page 715)

THE more the attempts made to describe Deities (remember there are many in this world) the greater is the resultant absurdity and confusion. Think of the battling between rival "Almightinesses" and trace this to its obvious logical conclusion.

In every other walk of life, other than in religion, for every statement of fact, or even of theory (which is far more than the scientific counterpart of the average religious belief) the world demands evidence, and of such nature that it shall be criticism-proof. Only religion, in this and every other country, claims exemption; yet the fact that many religions exist must be a proof that they cannot all be inspired; at the most, only one can be, and it is more than probable that all are false.

The criticism then arises: Why are religions (not one, but many, remember) so world-prevalent? I think there are two reasons. In the first place, in the primitive world, and right up to the end of the rightly-called Dark Ages, the field of science—by which I mean organized knowledge—was small, whereas that of belief—or ignorance, which is the absence of knowledge, and in this sense is not an offensive term—was wide. What a person did not know, he attributed to the Will of God. As science progressed (fought tooth and nail, with burning and torture by the Church, be it remembered) belief, with its attendant ignorance, fell back and yielded its territory. We owe the emergence from utter barbarism to science, not one whit to the Church. Yet it is so much easier to solve all problems by the use of the term Act of God, than to spend laborious lives in experiment and research, always ill-rewarded, and, in earlier ages, violently persecuted, in the task of finding out the truth. Always remember that the Church, as such, in all its history, in all its hundreds of denominations, has never given a surgeon, a doctor or a scientist to the world, and if such existed, he would have had to throw his belief overboard in the pursuit of his science. I do not say that no scientists believe in religion; many do, or profess so to do, but it is obvious to anyone of ordinary intelligence that such men must keep their science and their religion in water-tight compartments. I have never heard, nor am I likely to hear, of any chemist or physicist trying to solve a problem by prayer. Also, every exact scientist admits, by impli-

cation, that the field of science is not, and cannot be, subject to the caprices of a Deity. Therefore, to the unscientific theologian (and I cannot imagine a scientific one) "My ignorance" and "My God" are interchangeable terms. This is the easy method of solving problems, and, to the masses it is likely to remain popular.

Now for the second reason for the prevalence of religion. As a general rule, the professor of religion, whether the Anglican divine, or the medicine-man of the savage tribe, has an easier life than the run of his fellow men. Even if the rewards were lacking, there would still be the sense of power over the minds of others, which would in itself be a reward. Even respect is an inducement in itself; if this did not exist, the life of the poor curate would be more than unpleasant; it would be impossible. The civilized world respects the minister who takes care of its souls (but who takes no measures to prove that these souls have any existence) far more than the plumber, who cures leaks in water-taps which threaten to flood houses, or firemen who rescue people from burning buildings.

Strip religion of all its rewards, and I venture to state that, in a couple of generations, it would die out entirely, in civilized lands. There has been nothing more striking, yet more unnoticed, in the last fifty years, than the decline in belief. What can a Church expect which dogmatizes, but is careful not to explain, and more careful still not to debate? Let us imagine an archbishopric vacant, stripped of all emoluments and all power, and imagine the number of applicants there would be for the post. Take away all wealth from the Church, substitute open-air forums, or park chairs for the Churches with all their parade and pomp, and what would be the result?

One thing in conclusion. Why do scientists, who are frankly agnostic in their scientific life, truckle to religion? The late Professor Thomas Henry Huxley was the striking exception. Where is his successor, as brave and as outspoken? If religion be true, in all its doctrines and implications, then all science must be false. If science be the truth, then why truckle to what must be idle and ignorant fable? Is it to avoid social ostracism? If so, then the worse for society.

To conclude: I believe that the modern telescope and the second law of thermodynamics have rendered the existence of a God impossible.

HERBERT CESCINSKY.

* A well-known Bishop lamented, in the recent daily press, that a clergyman, on £380 per annum, could not afford to send his son to Marlborough. He had no word for the average general practitioner, who is even worse off, as a rule, and who does more practical good in one day than the clergyman does in ten years.

The rapid increase of natural knowledge, which is the chief characteristic of our age, is effected in various ways. The main army of science moves to the conquest of new worlds slowly and surely, nor ever cedes an inch of the territory gained. But the advance is covered and facilitated by the ceaseless activity of clouds of light troops provided with a weapon—always efficient, if not always an arm of precision—the scientific imagination. It is the business of these *enfants perdus* of science to make raids into the realm of ignorance wherever they see, or think they see, a chance; and cheerfully to accept defeat, or it may be annihilation, as the reward of error. Unfortunately, the public, which watches the progress of the campaign, too often mistakes a dashing incursion of the Uhlans for a forward movement of the main body; fondly imagining that the strategic movement to the rear, which occasionally follows, indicates a battle lost by science.—T. H. Huxley.

London in Roman Days

The most diminutive counties in England are Hunts, Rutland and Middlesex. Yet Middlesex is richer in archaeological relics than any other area. In dimly distant centuries, the men of the Old Stone Period fashioned their flint and bone implements near the banks of the Thames, and were the contemporaries of the dangerous grisly bear, the giant elk, the mastodon and the mammoth. At a later stage, there dwelt the people who polished their stone appliances, who were in turn succeeded by artificers in bronze, and then by workers in iron.

Along the shores of the river the companions of Caesar made their expeditions into Britain, and a few generations later, Aulus Plautius pitched his camp on an eminence overlooking the stream on a spot where the Roman transports were safely harboured in a serviceable creek. And it was on this hill that the world's mightiest modern metropolis was destined to arise.

That the aboriginal tribes of Britain frequented the banks of the Thames throughout a prolonged prehistoric period, their pottery, implements, weapons and artistic adornments dredged in boundless profusion from the river sediment, conclusively proves. But, although many antiquaries and archaeologists have advanced the view that an extensive settlement was already in existence on the site now occupied by London, there is no certain proof that it served as a human habitation until Roman times. Moreover, if a prehistoric London ever existed it was never more than a fishing station. It is true that the name *Londinium* is apparently a variant of the Celtic *Lyn-dun*, which appears to signify a fort on a lake or lagoon, for the Thames was then a tidal estuary which extended over the low-lying region in which Rotherhithe, Newington, Southwark and Lambeth now stand. Still, although the bed of the river has yielded countless evidences of man's presence, very few specimens of prehistoric workmanship have been discovered in the soil of London itself. As F. W. Reader urges, it is difficult "to conceive that if any considerable British town preceded *Londinium*, all traces of it in the form of pottery fragments, etc., should by reason of subsequent occupation have been entirely obliterated."

It seems significant that Julius Cæsar, who sailed past the presumed settlement, never so much as noticed its existence. Yet, as C. E. Vulliamy remarks in his scholarly and instructive monograph: *The Archaeology of Middlesex and London* (Methuen, ros. 6d.): "He must have passed close to it when, in 54 B.C., he moved along the right bank of the Thames in search of a crossing. He was aiming a blow at the stronghold of Cassivellaunus (Verulamium, St. Albans), and he took his men across the river at the first fordable point."

The river was then much wider and perhaps deeper than it is to-day, and it played a predominant part in the succeeding conquest of the country when the Romans, in A.D. 43, under the command of Aulus Plautius, and with native assistance established their colony. Colchester was then the leading British city and its capture became the primary objective of the invaders. Apparently Plautius selected as his military base an upland on the northern bank of the river, and from this rude encampment London has since developed. As Vulliamy observes: "The choice of the Roman general was certainly a good one. To the east of the site spread the marshes of the Lea; to the north, but at some distance, was the heavily-timbered region of the clay; to the west beyond the little valley of the Wall-

brook was another hill, available for future development, and beyond that the valley of the Fleet or Holebourne; while on the southern side flowed the tidal waters of the Thames."

While Colchester remained the capital of Southern Britain, the new port of Londinium soon became a commercial centre of considerable extent. All went well with the Romans until the Iceni were exasperated into rebellion in 61 A.D. Camulodunum (Colchester) was plundered and its Romano-British inhabitants slain by the rebels and then Verulamium (St. Albans) and Londinium were sacked and incinerated. When the Romans, led by Suetonius, eventually succeeded in suppressing this sanguinary revolt, London was reduced to a collection of charred ruins. The destruction of the new city by Boudicca (Boadicea) was noted by Tacitus, who mentions it as a famous trading port to which many merchants repaired. Still, despite the disaster, London speedily recovered its former standing, and under the mild rule of Agricola, south eastern Britain as a whole enjoyed the advantages of comparative security and well-being.

Londinium was a busy and prosperous port at the time of Hadrian's visit in 119, but its period of maximum opulence is placed by various authorities during the years 211-275. In this Golden Age Britain experienced a state of tranquillity denied her for many coming centuries. For the impending piracy of the Saxons who soon infested the North Sea and Channel, necessitated the organization and maintenance of special defences against their ravages. These proved efficacious for a time, but with the declining strength of the Imperial Power, Britain, an outlying province, became increasingly vulnerable to enemy attack as its capacity for resistance was weakened.

The Picts and Scots now broke through the northern defences, while the Germanic pirates pillaged the southern and eastern coasts. Even London was assailed by the bold sea rovers, but a timely counterthrust directed by Theodosius swept the invaders away. Britain's defences, however, were seriously weakened in 383, when Maximus, an aspiring soldier, who commanded the Roman troops in Britain, declared himself Emperor and transported the legions for the conquest of Gaul. Britain was now so powerless that it became a comparatively easy conquest. Subsequently, the Romans endeavoured to strengthen and restore the military defences, but in vain. In the opening years of the fifth century, the remnants of the remaining Romano-British troops departed, and when, in 410, the Britons appealed to the Emperor Honorius for aid, proud Rome herself was about to fall and her suppliants were advised to seek their own security.

The Roman wall encircling the City is the most imposing monument that survives of Imperial times. Knowledge concerning London Wall is incomplete. Vulliamy reminds us that: "It must be remembered that systematic archaeological investigation never has been, and never can be carried out in London; and that our knowledge of the wall depends almost entirely on what has been casually discovered in the course of building operations, and to a lesser extent upon records, old maps, drawings and engravings."

This ancient enclosure embraced an area of some 300 acres, and its circuit is estimated as slightly more than three miles. London was confined within the Roman defences until the Middle Ages, and the larger part of the structure was still standing in 1766, when, during the reconstruction and rebuilding then conducted, much of it was demolished. At an earlier period some of its materials were incorporated in the masonry of the Tower, while other sections were dis-

mantled in the thirteenth century to accommodate the Blackfriars' Monastery.

At London Bridge the Thames is only 900 feet wide, but is much wider both above and below. That a bridge spanned the river in Roman times is fairly inferred, especially as a Roman settlement existed in Southwark at an early date, and some mode of communication must have been established. Certainly, the stream may have been crossed by ferry boat, but that the men who constructed the Roman roads failed to erect a bridge across the river is highly improbable. Nevertheless, no positive evidence of a bridge's existence is so far forthcoming.

Various efforts have been made to reconstruct the arrangements of Londinium, but with little success. Information of its topography is exceedingly scanty. Excavations have disclosed the remains of sundry buildings, several walls, and a Roman gateway. But as Vulliamy rather sadly concludes: "The days of slow excavation, when picks and spades did the work, and the rubbish was taken away by carts and horses, are now over. Our City contractors go about their job with remorseless efficiency and alarming speed." In consequence, he continues: "much that would be of supreme interest is unavoidably lost or broken or disregarded."

Yet, there is no question that the sanitary conditions of Roman London were excellent and form a striking contrast to the pestridden state of the Capital and other centres of population in later Christian centuries. Also, the Roman water supply, heating appliances and drainage system were of a very superior character. Three Roman baths have come to light within the City, one from Cannon Street, another from Threadneedle Street and another off the Strand.

Many Roman interments have been discovered, and their situation serves to assist our understanding of the topography of old-time London. The rational Romans forbade burial within the walls of a town, or in the vicinity of dwellings, and, indeed, the greater number of burials were made beyond the boundaries of its enclosures. But two cemeteries within the walls, as well as a few isolated interments, have been traced. One sepulchral site of an early date perhaps goes back to a time when the town did not extend to its later dimensions. The other was discovered within the western division of the enclosure where St. Paul's now stands, and it extended to the site of Warwick Square, Newgate Street, and St. Martin's le Grand. The corpse was burned in these burials which indicates an early date. Vulliamy observes that: "Cremated burials of the Romano-British period (ashes and calcined bones placed in pottery or glass) are generally of an earlier period than inhumations, and in view of the known regulations it is probable that the western cemetery belongs to a time before the building of the wall and before the full development of the town. Most of the pottery associated with the burials can be ascribed without hesitation to the latter half of the first century."

A splendid fragment of a sculptured river deity was found in the Wallbrook—a City stream partly vaulted over in the fifteenth century, which, until the Great Fire, constituted one of its main sewers—and is now in the London Museum. A Mithraic cult is commemorated by a slab in the same collection while sculptured remains of Mother Goddesses and various miniature figures of Venus are preserved in the British and Guildhall Museums. The bountiful female divinities are seen seated holding flowers and fruits, and it is suggested that "they are probably Celtic goddesses in a Romanized form, and embody the powers of kindly abundance."

T. F. PALMER.

Acid Drops

It is not difficult to get numerous and laudatory reviews of either a new edition of the Bible or of a book about the Bible, so long as nothing is done to weaken belief in the Bible. What will get very little notice in our public press is the *truth* about the Bible. On that matter our press gets worse, rather than better, for either it resorts to the lie direct or the lie by suggestion. Anyway, we are not surprised that the new edition of the Bible as literature should have received so many newspaper reviews, and so much praise. Once upon a time some of the newspapers might have objected to the Bible being treated as mere literature. To-day the press falls into line with one of the most palpable frauds that is being worked on the public.

For whatever beauties our English Bible possesses, as literature, has nothing whatever to do with the Bible itself. It owes its literary value entirely to the translators. No one believes that if the original of Omar Khayyam's famous poem had been literally presented to the British public, it would have gained its present place in public esteem. It was Omar *plus* Fitzgerald that did the trick. A quite legitimate one in this case, because it was obvious and unconcealed by Fitzgerald. But in the case of the Bible the trick is not obvious to the general public, and it is a trick on the part of those who prepare such a work, and on those who praise it. Praise of the Bible is asked for on the ground of its literary value—a value that it owes entirely to the labours of generations of skilled writers (which might have been utilized in presenting many other books to the world with a similar effect) and when that praise is granted it is utilized for boosting a different Bible altogether, a Bible that is the fetish book of a religion, and the charter of established superstitions. It is a vicious trick that is played upon the public, and the pity is that so many writers who must have brains enough to realize this, lack the courage to expose the fraud. Instead of that they join in the swindle thinking they are demonstrating their sense of fairness. They are merely exhibiting their stupidity, or their timidity.

That whatever credit, as literature, given to the English Bible, is wholly due to the translation, is proven by the fact that no one dreams of naming the Bible in French, or German, or Dutch, or Spanish as supreme examples of national literature. Literally translated the Bible in English would be unattractive to anyone who is not interested in the study of primitive customs, and parts of it are so indecent to modern ears that it could not be read aloud even in Church.

There is a touch of the old worship of the Bible as a fetish-book in some of the comments that have been raised. We refer to the criticisms that certain portions of the Bible have been omitted, and that the editors have dispensed with chapter headings, verse divisions, etc. This is the one thing in which the editors were justified. They claimed merely to present a portion of the Bible as literature, and in so doing they were justified in cutting it up as they pleased. The criticism raised against this version of the Bible is interesting, because it is a reminder to those who need it that once the great fetish-book is divested of its customary trappings, some people are likely to recognize its true nature. It is like presenting an Archbishop without his glorified witch-doctor trappings, a king or a queen without their stage scenery and special setting. It is advisable to retain much of the trappings of the primitive past, if the primitive form of human mentality is to be preserved. Even to-day the Lord Chamberlain will not permit a representation on the stage of Queen Victoria as the fussy, pompous, conceited and intolerant woman she was, over-impressed with the consciousness of her own position and the status of the class of which she was the figurehead.

We do wish the Churches would cease to offer up prayers for rain. On the day before the present rainy spell began, the Churches sent out a call for prayer for rain. Then the rain commenced, and now it does not seem inclined to stop. The religious world is dumb in face of this prompt generous—too generous—answer to prayer. We suggest the probability that God Almighty is "riled" at the impertinence of Christians in telling him how to run his own universe. He must have known for how long there had been no rain, and it really was impertinent of the clergy to order their followers to suggest to him that he did not understand his own business. "Rain?" says he. "I'll give 'em rain"! And now the clergy will soon be offering God more prayers, asking him to be good enough not to be "so bloomin' whole-sale," and not to get so unpleasant over a piece of friendly advice.

From 1922 to 1936, according to the Annual Report of the Board of Education, the number of children in Church Schools has decreased by some 400,000. No one suggests that education has suffered by this particular shrinkage. The children are all accommodated in Council Schools, where the education is on a higher scale. And if a sound education paved the way for religion, the Churches might stand quietly by and reap their reward. But that we know is not the case. Once the years of childhood are passed—unfortunately in many instances these persist for an indefinite period—the chance of a man or woman becoming a Christian is very small indeed. The Councils are ready to build schools when the circumstances demand them. They are, in fact, compelled to do so by law. But religious forces behind the Government, not merely the existing Government, but previous ones also, have forced the offer of large sums of money to sectarianism for the building of schools. The schools remain the property of the Churches, and one day we may see a move on the part of the Church to sell the schools back to the State-schools which have already been largely purchased by public money.

We are not, therefore, surprised to find the Bishop of Chichester, in a recent speech, appealing to the cupidity of Churchmen to dip their hands into the public purse while the opportunity is there. Addressing a Diocesan Conference, the Bishop stressed the "unprecedented way" in which the Education Act of 1936 says to the Churches:—

For every new school that you will build we will pay you three-quarters of the cost. And it will still be a real Church School, with the head-teacher a Churchman, and most of the assistant teachers Churchmen as well, and with Church school managers managing the school. It is an extraordinary offer. . . . It is quite without precedent that the State should be willing and able to find three-quarters of the cost of building a new Church school, provided it be used for senior children.

We quite agree that the offer is unprecedented. It is a piece of sheer sectarian brigandage. But even the present Government (we are not sure that any other Government would not be equally ready to buy Church support by the same methods) does not press the Churches to build schools. It simply says you must pay something; otherwise the bribe would be too obvious. And so it makes the Churches a present of fifteen shillings to every five shillings they contribute—and this to give children a less efficient education than it can get in State-provided schools, and where there is at least no formal appointment of teachers on account of their religious opinions.

It is good news that the Nine-Power Conference, which is to deal with the Chinese-Japanese War, will say nothing that will impeach Japan's "honour." The delegates appear to be soaked in W. S. Gilbert. We can imagine the famous Savoyard writing a libretto in which the Judge, in trying a burglary case, impresses upon the jury that nothing must be said or done that would cast any reflection upon the "honour" of the gentleman in the dock. After all burglary is a very ancient profes-

sion, and those engaged in it have their own code of honour that should command the respect of outsiders. We think it was recently remarked in these pages that national "honour" is quite different from that which obtains among individuals.

Bishop Danson of Carlisle, told a Rotary Club meeting, the other day, that every young man to-day ought to know the business-end of a rifle. He ought to be taught to shoot just as he is taught to swim. Of course, the Bishop did not mean that they were to accustom themselves to shooting someone. Nothing would be farther from his thought. It was so that they would induce others not to practise the use of a rifle.

The recent films dealing with the lives of notable people—such as Pasteur, Zola, the Brownings, and others—have led an American writer to collect materials for filming the lives of certain Popes. We have an idea that the Censor would step in pretty heavily if the film representations of some of the Popes came anywhere near the truth. How would Alexander VI., for example, and the hectic scenes which he produced at the Vatican, with his mistresses and his daughter Lucrezia Borgia, come out on the screen if truthfully represented? Even though a certain amount of "nudism" is allowed in some of our revues on the stage, the picture of the charming Lucrezia in the considerably less than scanty costume she is said to have worn at some orgies, would not be likely to be passed by our Roman Catholic Film Censor. Nor would the famous poisoning scenes for which Alexander VI. was notorious.

Alexander VII. does not seem to have been much behind his better-known brother-in-Christ in licentiousness, while John XII. was guilty of the foulest crimes. John XIII. was almost, if not quite, as bad—in fact if a really true picture of these Popes were given the whole Roman Catholic world would be up in arms. Personally we wish it was given; millions of people would then know exactly how Catholicism worked out in practice in "high places." At the moment, very few non-Catholics and fewer Catholics know much about the history of the earlier Popes of Rome. The truth would be a genuine, if not a divine revelation.

The Catholic Guild for converting Jews does not seem to be very enthusiastic about the job—either because the money to do it with is not flowing in, or because the results are very meagre and disappointing. These are not the reasons given, however, by Canon Vance, the other day, when he presided over a meeting of the Guild. He said that this was not "the most opportune moment to force Christianity or the Catholic religion upon the Jews, remembering that they had their hands very full now, and were undergoing bitter trials and persecutions."

Canon Vance, might, however, have bethought himself that the example of Jew-baiting was set by the Church to which he belongs, and the pathologic degenerates who are in power in Germany might well reply their behaviour is only carrying a step further the practice of the most Christian of the Christian ages. And even to-day, the absurd charges brought against the Jews, not in Germany alone, but in this country by the English Branch of the Fascist movement, appeals to the most ignorant of our own population because it bases itself on the religious prejudices created by the Christian Church. We must not let even those leaders of the Christian Church, who to their credit, have protested against the ill-treatment of the Jews, use their non-Christian feelings as a commendation of the Christian creed. The real question suggested by the Jew-baiting now existing, is "Would these brutalities have been possible had the Christian Church never existed?" We should like some one to face this question.

The progress of religion proceeds apace, but—backwards! This is the testimony of the Rev. J. Edgar Noble:—

At a recent Committee, representing the Cardiff and Swansea District class-leaders, grave concern was expressed that in this District, out of 1,166 classes, 686 do not meet.

As these Class Leaders believe in miracles, here is a brilliant opportunity to perform a few. Of course, being Methodists, they won't turn water into wine exactly, but how about making cups of tea out of old newspapers?

More testimonials for the Holy Scriptures. The Rev. Dr. W. B. Selbie declares:—

It is of the essence of Christianity that it enables men to "look not at the things which are seen but at the things which are not seen."

Looking at things which cannot be seen is much the same as eating food which isn't there.

A recent paragraph in this journal describing the Church chaplaincies attached to all of Mussolini's new armies, may have given foreign readers the impression that in our own country no such army chaplaincies exist. Let us quote from the *Methodist Recorder*, which describes the regular procedure of the training methods in the British Army:—

These young men of an average age of nineteen years undergo preliminary training before joining their respective battalions. In that training the chaplain plays a large and officially recognized part, for, in addition to the customary parade services, he has his scheduled place in the training scheme, at stated times during duty hours each week, and "religious instruction" is in that curriculum intended to prepare the recruit for his army life.

It is of interest to observe that in order to kill our enemies with the utmost efficiency, the young men must not simply drill and follow the instructions of gun, bayonet and bomb experts. The Church chaplain "plays a large part" in the glorious work.

Verily the Lord cannot be "mindful of his own" when, on the top of sending away his afflicted pilgrims from Lourdes without cure, he now "visits" the place with disastrous floods, in which "many people are feared to have been drowned"—according to the report of the Bordeaux correspondent of the *Daily Telegraph*. Even "the esplanade before the Rosary Church and the grotto, where Bernadette Soubirous, the 14-year-old peasant girl, saw her visions in 1858, are flooded," he adds. . . . Yes: and we anticipate that "much monies," as Shylock said, will be required to pray for the "repose of the soul" of little Bernadette in this new crisis. Oh Lourdes!

The Lord has also "visited" Damascus with floods, sweeping villages away, drowning more than 1,000 people and leaving 10,000 homeless. For "the ways of the Lord are—" well, much changed since striking blind a traveller on that road in order to move him with the "holy spirit." Alas! it is hard nowadays to journey "in the steps of St. Paul," or Moses, these days, when murder cries out from the "holy city" and slaughter and strife affect the profits.

We have had several letters of late as to what amount of religion is embodied in the Boy Scout Movement. The best answer is to give a statement made by one of the leaders of the movement in the *Daily Telegraph Jamaica Supplement* of August 5 last:—

At a time when the heads of, at any rate, the Christian Churches are urging a "return to religion," it is well to examine the Boy Scout training from this point of view, and to note how far religion plays any part in our training.

Let me say at once that religion, or, as the Scout Promise expresses it, "Duty to God," forms the fundamental basis of the whole of our training. Nor was it added to the original idea as a "sop" to the churches.

It was there from the beginning.

When the Chief Scout published *Scouting for Boys*, he stated quite clearly what he expected.

"The old knights," he wrote, "who were the Scouts of the nation, were very religious. They were always careful to attend religious service, especially before going into battle or undertaking any serious difficulty. They considered it the right thing always to be prepared for death.

"In the great Church of Malta you can see to-day drew their swords during the reading of the Creed, as a sign that they were prepared to defend the Gospel with their swords and lives. . . .

"No man is much good unless he believes in God and obeys His laws. So every Scout should have a religion. There are many kinds of religions, such as Roman Catholics, Protestants, Jews, Mahomedans, and so on; but the main point about them is that they all worship God, although in different ways. . . . When you meet a boy of a different religion from your own you should not be hostile to him but recognize that he is still serving the same King as you."

In the early days the following "Religious Policy" was laid down for the movement:—

1. It is expected that every Scout shall belong to some religious denomination and attend its services.
2. Where a group is composed of members of one particular form of religion, it is hoped that the Group Scout-master will arrange such denominational religious observances and instructions as he, in consultation with its Chaplain or other religious authority, may consider best.
3. Where a Group consists of Scouts of various religions they should be encouraged to attend the services of their own denominations and Group Church parades should not be held. In camp any form of daily prayer and of weekly Divine Service should be of the simplest character, attendance being voluntary.
4. Where it is not permissible under the rules of the religion of any Scout to attend religious observances other than those of his own Church, the Scouters of the Group must see that such rules are strictly observed while the Scout is under their control.

After that there is little room for doubt as to the place of religion in the movement. And when we take away from the Boy Scout Movement the incitement it gives, more or less surreptitiously, to militarism, it would look as though the benefits derived from it are more or less accidental. At least, in practice they are likely to be subordinate.

Fifty Years Ago

CHRISTIANS, believing as they do that there is no salvation except through Jesus Christ are precluded from holding other than prejudiced view of other faiths. The eighteenth article of the Church of England solemnly curses those who "presume to say that every man shall be saved by the law or sect which he professeth, so that he be diligent to form his life according to that law and the light of nature. For Holy Scripture doth set out unto us only the name of Jesus Christ whereby men must be saved." The great Catholic Church is equally explicit in declaring that "since none but the true religion can be from God, all other religions must be from the father of lies, and therefore highly displeasing to the God of truth."

The extension of our Eastern empire has opened up a knowledge of Oriental religions surpassing Christianity both in antiquity and in the number of their followers. In the light of comparative religion, Christianity is seen to be one of a number of faiths, each claiming to exercise rule over the minds of men. Its claim to the exclusive possession of truth is negated by facts. Long before Jesus said, "Resist not evil," Gautama taught, "Let a man overcome evil by good." Confucius taught the golden rule five centuries before Christianity was known. Men are coming to suspect that as much can be said for the claims of Buddhism to become a universal religion as for those of Christianity.

THE FREETHINKER

FOUNDED BY G. W. FOOTE

61 Farringdon Street, London, E.C.4

Telephone No.: CENTRAL 2412.

TO CORRESPONDENTS.

- S. PORTER.—“An honest God is the noblest work of Man” belongs to Samuel Butler. So also does the less-known “Jesus with all thy faults I love thee still.” A great deal of Freethinking is to be found in *Erewhon Revisited*, which is the case with most of his writings. It would be very enlightening to many to go through Butler and compile his anti-Christian, and even anti-religious remarks. In this respect, perhaps one of the richest fields for heresy is *Note-Books*, published in 1912. There could not be much religion about a man who wrote, “To put one’s trust in God is only a longer way of saying that one will chance it.”
- G. PRESCOR (Dundee).—Papers have been sent. The *Bible Handbook* is an arrangement by which the reader may get the teaching of the Bible—at least that teaching that is left unexpressed by professional teachers and preachers—quite plain. The Bible is made to speak for itself. It is not a text book in the sense of Bible origins, with anthropological illustrations of its connexion with primitive and savage customs, written either by ourselves or by some other person.
- S.H.—We note your suggestions with regard to this paper. Three out of the four are quite admirable. The only objection we raise is a financial one. The *Freethinker* is, and always has been, conducted at a loss, and we are not desirous of increasing the recurring deficit to a larger amount than it is at present.
- B. MARKLEY.—Glad to know you have derived so much benefit from Freethought writings. Probably Bradlaugh’s *Doubts in Dialogue* might give you what you want. Our own *Theism or Atheism* also covers the ground in a different form.
- K. DAWSON.—You will find a very good discussion of inbreeding between humans and the “Incest Motive.” in Lord Raglan’s *Jocasta’s Crime*. It is an interesting study in anthropology. It is published by Methuens at 6s.
- G. L. DEAN.—Thanks for addresses of likely new readers; paper being sent for four weeks.
- W. FLETCHER.—Next week.

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.”

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One year, 15/-; half year, 7/6; three months, 3/9.

Sugar Plums

There is just time to remind London Freethinkers that the “Social” at the Bishopsgate Institute, Bishops-gate, commences at 6.30 on Saturday, November 13. The tickets, including refreshments are 2s. 6d. each. Those who happen to be without tickets may get them from the General Secretary, who will be in attendance. The function commences at 6.30. Buses and trains run within a few minutes from all parts of London. Some buses pass the door. Part of the entertainment will be provided by Mr. Cecil Johnson, the well known wireless artiste, Miss Somerville, Miss Thelma Tuson and the Somerville Band.

The *Rationalist Annual* for 1938 is, on the whole an excellent number, and even where disagreement is evoked it will mainly be the kind of difference that is healthier than many a full assent. We are glad to see a forceful article by Mr. Archibald Robertson advocating a policy of outspoken Atheism among “Rationalists,” and there is a kindred essay by Sir Peter Chalmers Mitchell, on “The Decay of Belief in God.” Mr. Gerald

Bullett writes an article on “Reason and Religion,” which may mean much or nothing—we lean towards the latter. There is an interesting view of Herbert Spencer by W. Troughton, for some time Spencer’s Private Secretary, and Mr. Thurtle gives a good thumbnail-sketch of Lawrence of Arabia. Articles by Professor Haldane, Llewellyn Powys, Dr. Bridges and others, make up a very good issue.

One of the articles in the *Annual* is by Bertrand Russell, who writes on his “Religious Reminiscences.” We have a great admiration for Russell’s intellectual quality, and we are the more surprised to find his writing that until the age of eighteen he believed in a “deist’s God, because the First-Cause argument seemed irrefutable.” We were surprised at this, and the only explanation we can see for it is that the philosophical power that Russell evinced later must have developed slowly. He says that the belief in this argument was removed by J. S. Mill, showing that it gave no answer to the question “Who Made God?” That is a retort rather than a disposal of the argument, and in any case does not expose the real fallacy it contains. The proper reply is, of course, that the argument from a first cause extends the category of causality to a region in which it has no application. Causation, while not involving a succession of cause and effect, does involve a succession of phenomena. And when a disbeliever in God said he stopped with the universe he knew, the Theist was justified in replying that on his own idea of causation as something that followed an effect he was bound to assume an unknown beyond the known. We are surprised, we repeat, that Russell at eighteen had not outgrown the fallacy of a first cause, and when he gave it up did so for the wrong reason. Perhaps this was one consequence of his having been given a religious education in direct opposition to the instructions of his father. The poison of religion—real religion—is very hard to eradicate once it has entered one’s system.

At Leicester to-day (November 14) Mr. G. Bedborough will lecture in the Secular Hall, Humberstone Gate, at 6.30 p.m., on “Let’s Pretend.” Mr. Bedborough gets his message across in a kindly, humorous, and effective manner, and the opportunity for inviting orthodox friends to attend the lecture should not be missed by the local saints.

One of our helpful American friends has supplied us with the following leaflet circulated by the Free Tract Society, Los Angeles. All tracts are free, we are informed, but we really think this one is worth a dime:—

WHICH ROUTE WILL YOU TAKE?

DAMNATION RAILWAY THE QUICK ROUTE TO HELL

Many Miles and Much Time Saved by This Route

TERRIFIC SCENERY

Through Dismal Swamp, Murderers’ Gap,
Hangman’s Gorge, etc.

Reaching the Valley of the Shadow of Death at midnight, plunging its passengers into Eternal Woe
Main Depot: Corner Unbelief and Disobedience Streets

SPECIALS FROM

Ingersoll Park, Dime Novel Avenue, Theater Street,
Blasphemers’ Hall, Smokers’ Furnace,
Sample Room Square

LIGHTNING TRAIN FROM SUICIDE AVENUE

Extra Trains on Sunday

This Train stops at Worldly Depot, where proud, formal church members take sleeping car for Hell.

FARE: THY SOUL

“He that believeth not shall be damned.”

PRINCE OF DARKNESS, President.

The West Ham Branch of the N.S.S. will hold a Social Gathering at Earlham Hall, Earlham Grove, Forest Gate, E., on Saturday, November 20. There will be the usual programme of dancing, games, and music, and probably a Russian Film will be exhibited. Admission is free. Proceedings commence at 7 o’clock.

Religion in Hospital

IN the present controversy upon the disabilities attaching to the nurse's position in many hospitals, which has moved the Trades Union Congress to sponsor a Nurses' Charter, one of the nurse's servitudes has been overlooked. This is the compulsion upon nurses, Jew, Roman Catholic, Rationalist or Freethinker, for the first month of their training to attend Church of England services in hospital, and the insistence upon Christian orthodoxy and penalization of Freethought and supervision of the nurse's intellectual interests. One expression issues in a fussy care of patients' moral welfare, in the provision of too much religion in hospital. The other expression is in the intellectual regimentation of nurses, more thorough, of course, in Catholic hospitals, and is a charming manifestation not less real because disavowed, of the churches wily way of softening the minds of what it conceives to be important key classes of the community.

The matter is like this. The probationer nurse is compelled to attend church on Sunday for the first month of her training. Although the hospital knows her religion by reason of the detailed declaration she makes before entering hospital, she has the Church of England service provided, and is compelled to attend. This often interferes with her off duty. Often the matron is a woman of strong religious persuasions, who does all she can to get the nurses to attend church: likewise the sisters. In a number of hospitals local clergymen speak and give lantern lectures, to which the nurses are bidden at the end of their nine or ten hours work on the wards. Other hospitals, in an overplus of the Christian zeal for orthodoxy, go to the length of supervising the nurse's reading. A nurses' home's sister, for instance, is empowered to rummage through a nurse's belongings for "Subversive" literature. In this way Left Book Club issues have been confiscated and Freethought literature doubtless would be also.

The treatment of patients I find to be something similar, by comparison of a personal experience with that of many other people. I was admitted to the King George V. Hospital by a porter, who asked me my religion, among necessary questions. If from him one expected the superior remark that "I must have some religion," and his persistence that it was Christian, and decision to put me down as Church of England, what was not so expected was the refusal of the hospital staff to accept my word. I had to endure three services a day every Sunday, and casual visits from well-meaning Christians intent upon converting me. As the others in the ward did not receive this attention, I assumed that they were wise enough not to be honest or were Christians. But is hospital Christianization wise? As a matter of fact, this insistence upon Christianity in hospital has, I believe, a distinctly depressing effect upon patients, however the message is interpreted. For who can deny its essentially morbid tone or the extreme depression likely to be produced upon a sensitive person who has never thought about such things before and in this moment of physical weakness is confronted by this nasty unnecessary tale? From one or two nurses I managed to elicit the admission that the doctors were opposed on medical grounds to the church visitors, who, so they said, quite often left the patients—the women patients often cried—depressed and moody. On the other hand as a voluntary hospital, they were afraid to alienate the churches and possibly lose their financial support.

The point is this. On account of the Inquiry into nurses' conditions which the Government is to set up

and the Trade Unions Congress campaign, it is hoped to improve the nurse's lot, and hospitals are reckoning upon their being able to appeal to the public for extra funds. And if the public is to pay the piper more, should it not call the tune in hospitals for the nurses?

LOUIS BORRILL.

Arrah na Pogue

[Recently in Dundalk, in the Irish Free State, a local boy was fined £2, and a Glasgow girl was sentenced to a month's imprisonment. It was the first case under a new act. The couple had been seen kissing by the local "vigilance committee," and the Civic Guard had been told by them to prosecute. The occurrence took place at Blackrock, and the Judge said the offence was aggravated by being on Church property.]

Arrah na Pogue, freely translated, means "kiss the girl." But not in the chapel grounds. For in the centuries of celibacy, no profane kiss has echoed in the corridors of nunnery or monkery.

There is more in this kiss than meets the eye. For 'twas under the nose of the law. When I was a lad and used to run about Dundalk and Blackrock, one kissed (or two) but never told. But that was in the bad old days of foreign mis-rule, before we had won our freedom.

Curiously, after a lapse of 40 years, I was again in Dundalk this summer. I intended to take my wife to Blackrock on the Sunday, but our landlady persuaded me to leave our visit till the next day.

"For there does be nothin' but drinkin' an' fightin' the whole Blessed Sunday in Blackrock," she said. "It's blue murder, an' 'tis not safe for a decent person."

I have little need to be assured that they are tough, mighty tough, these playboys of the West. Fightin', shootin', high-falutin', sons of guns. The Irish take life easy. But they are moral and "clean living," and, begob, this kissing must not be allowed to corrupt our pure Irish manhood.

Catholic proportion in assessing ethical standards or in judging moral lapses is not properly appreciated by those who have not lived in this Isle of Saints. As one reared in the Faith, I can enlighten the heathen as to the morality of the One True Church. Here is a short play in one scene, which could be staged quite easily. There are no performing rights, and Freethinkers in Catholic Ireland should find it helpful. It is short, but might be cut considerably for the Abbey. It would "go well," but the author is modest, and would not care to take a "call" after a Dublin performance.

TWO SINNERS

Scene:—Dunrock Chapel. Confessional Box in centre of stage. The priest is seated in the middle compartment, and on each side outside a little window kneels a penitent. The man of God turns to each alternately. Father Sinnagin for fifty years has heard all the crimes, sins and villainies of the neighbourhood. He is white-haired and senile, and addicted to snuff. He pays little attention to what he hears, except in the manner of routine. Occasionally, however, he becomes virtuously indignant about some awful sin—say, eating sausages on a Friday. One of the penitents is a very rough looking creature of forbidding countenance, Kaivmann by name, and the other is a youth. Simon is eighteen, pale, handsome, nervous. Father Sinnagin takes a huge pinch of snuff, then with an enormous red handkerchief blows his nose very violently. Both penitents are

thus made aware that their presence is noted. The priest turns to the older man.

Priest: And how long since you were here, me child?

Kaivmann: Sure, Father, don't ye know I haven't missed me monthly duties for forty years?

Priest: And what have you done since your last confession, Michael Joseph?

Kaivmann: I shot me ould landlord—a dacint gintleman, God rest his soul! I cut the tails off Barney Kearney's heifers, an' burnt Mick Maguire's hayrick. I druv 500 head of cattle over the Dundalk border, helped Sean O'Kelly to raid the bank, an' blow up the bridge.

Priest: Have you misremembered anything? Examine your conscience well before I give you absolution.

Kaivmann (after a minute's meditation): I gave me wife a puck in the gob, made potheen, and chased three Orange Bigots out of the town.

Priest (testily): 'Tis your sins, not your hobbies I would be listenin' to, Michael Joseph. For your penance say three Hail Marys, and give sixpence to the Sacred Heart.

Kaivmann mumbles, counts beads, then rises to his feet. The holy water to his forehead as he crosses himself reminds him of the offertory box, and that he is thirsty. He has only sixpence. The Sacred Heart is eternal, but our Blessed Lord knows that a man must have a drink. He genuflects and goes out, as Father Sinnagin turns to his other client.

Simon: Pray Father, give me your blessing for I have sinned.

He recites his iniquities. Told lies four times, spoke back to his parents, and was late for mass one morning. . . He is visibly agitated, and struggling hard to give words to something of greater moment.

Priest (helpfully): And what else have you done, me boy? Come, come, surely it couldn't be—you don't mean—by all the Saints and Apostles. You've sinned agin the Holy Ghost! Can I believe me ears? You what? Kissed a gurl? My God, 'tis destroyed is your immortal sowl, so

Pitifully Simon sobs. The old man snuffs, supplicates the Virgin in Latin, snuffs again, blows his nose, talks directly to God in Irish, then to the Irish lad in English.

Priest: The devil's in you. You're unclean, lascivious and lecherous. Your flesh is wake, but Almighty God knows the gurl tempted you, the hussy, the Jezebel!

For your penance you'll give St. Vincent de Paul three pounds to put second-hand boots and trousers on the backs of the deservin' poor. As for the misbehavin' shameless foreign female. I'll see that her shadow never again darkens the path of youth in the land of saints. Go me child and sin no more. Intercede wid the virgin, and say an act of contrition.

As Simon goes out, dazed, he throws himself with sudden emotion on his knees before a female image, and kisses her feet.

Simon: Holy Mary, Mother of God, pray for us sinners, now, and at the hour of our death. Amen.

J. EFFEL.

HYMN AND EGGS

An Archbishop staying at the house of some friends, was greatly impressed by the fact that each morning, before breakfast, he heard someone in the kitchen singing a hymn.

On congratulating the hostess on having such religious servants he was told: "Oh, that's the cook's hymn for boiling eggs. Three verses soft, five verses hard."

God is Love

THE other day I had occasion to walk over to our village. As it is three miles away over the Moor, and I am not as young as I was, and have no time for slimming, you can understand it is not a case of "just popping over" any or every day. So when I went into the Post Office for some sugar, a card of darning wool (we wear sensible stockings up here on Dartmoor—none of your "sheer silk" affairs for us) and a pair of kippers of a specially nice brand, of which the postmaster sometimes manages to get a box, I naturally asked for any tit-bits of village news the postman might have forgotten to give me with the morning letters, as is the usual custom with us isolated country-folk.

I wish you could see our Mr. Lammercraft—the Moorland postman. He doesn't know how old he is exactly—his parents left the village before he was born, and he had a somewhat stormy orphaned childhood in "Lunnon-town"—so that he can never get the old-age pension. But, bless your heart, that doesn't worry him, he has been "doin' the poast for yeeurrs and yeeurrs," and has a tidy bit stowed away for a rainy day. Still, he must be well over seventy, and thinks nothing of his 12-mile round day after day—and a remarkable sight he is when he reaches my little house on a winter's morning, a khaki woollen helmet (relic of the trenches) under his regulation cap to protect his ears from the biting wind, and (if there is much ice on the lanes) with his boots encased in sacks tied up round his legs to prevent slipping. But I digress; it was Mr. Endacott the postmaster who told me the news which occasioned the subject of this article. Mrs. Joe Brimblecombe has had a baby. Whereupon I repaired to the Brimblecombe cottage (a dream-place of 2-ft. thick white-washed walls, mellow moss-covered thatch, the front smothered in one of those old-fashioned "climbing" roses, whose flowers make up in fragrance what they lack in colour) to offer my felicitations. Would I please to step up—Mrs. Joe would like to show me her new daughter—Elvera Rosina Gwendoline, she was to be called.

So I stepped up, and in that tiny bedroom (these picturesque Moorland cottages do not usually aspire to internal spaciousness) I was confronted by a truly wonderful collection of framed texts and religious pictures—ladies in their nightgowns with beautiful long golden hair, not in the least wet or bedraggled—clinging to stone crosses rising miraculously from a waste of angry surging billows; and a profusion of "Watch and Pray," "God is Love," "Blessed are the meek," "Come unto me," almost *ad infinitum*. And as I strolled home across the Moor, "God is Love"—God is Love—kept coming to my mind, and I thought of the various everyday happenings of the countryside which go to prove so abundantly the truth of that text.

A brilliant June afternoon—warm mellow scent of nectar in the flowers; a hard-working happy little bee alights to collect one last sip of honey before flying back heavy-laden to the hive. "Oh George, look, there's a horrid wasp—do kill it, quick!" Flip-bash, and the little bee, mortally injured, drags itself away to die—the victim of ignorance and thoughtlessness; its sole crime, the possession of a sting which it would only use in self-defence. God is Love!

Had the bee used its little weapon and had it had the luck to sting George, it would have died just the same, as its sting is barbed in such a way that it is impossible to withdraw it immediately, so that it is left behind with the entrails attached, the poor dis-

embowelled bee naturally dying shortly afterwards. What a brilliant achievement on the part of the Creator to provide the most intelligent, industrious and peaceable of insects with a weapon of defence which, if used, is the means of its death in lingering agony! Truly—God is Love!

A calm misty September morning—lush grass and a fine field of turnips—a feast fit for a king in the opinion of the warren, after the scant short turf of the open Moor above. Down skip the rabbits, their little white tails bobbing joyously up and down; and if you keep very still and watch, you will see the little furry family at breakfast. And then, perchance, you will also see stark tragedy—a poor thin old buck hungrily watching the others feasting, but not attempting to join in. He can't—his teeth have decayed away—he has been slowly starving for days—dying of starvation within sight and scent of plenty. To-morrow will be his last day, even now he is almost too weak to come out, but the sight of the luscious food is too tempting, the craving too intense.

If man subjected an animal to such diabolical torture, he would be a fiend, but this is a divine device, and, therefore, it cannot, of course, be anything but beautiful and right: To man's foolish way of thinking, it seems a pity that God didn't take a bit longer than just one day over creating the animals, in order to give Himself time, when making all things bright and beautiful, to see that they were serviceable as well. When, with smug complacency, He decided that everything He had made was "very good," it is obvious that the decayed teeth of the starving rabbits must have conveniently slipped His memory. But to criticize the work of the Creator is blasphemy, and so—"God is Love."

Weeks of frost—the ground hard as steel, the stream water only a degree or two less cold than the icicles on its banks and boulders—all worms and insects snug under the thick carapace of icebound soil; holly and hawthorn berries mostly finished, the few left either being fiercely guarded by the starlings, or taken to decorate the churches for Christmas.

Three hungry little sparrows fly hopefully to the keeper's cottage in the wood, where they have been relying upon the old man to throw them out a few crumbs at breakfast-time. It is precious little else they get the rest of the day, still it is better—ininitely better than nothing, as their Heavenly Father has apparently forgotten that He is supposed to feed them.

But the old man has gone away to spend Christmas with his daughter, and so the little crops remain empty of everything but pain—the dull gnawing pain of hunger—and in their weakness and hopelessness and the long losing fight against the bitter cold, the little birds creep away to die.

We are told in the Holy Bible—the Word of Truth—that not a sparrow falls to the ground without the knowledge of God; not only the few hundreds in these woods, but countless millions of them, winter after winter—dead from starvation because, when making the various sources of their food supply, He provides them with no means of storage for the lean months.

One would imagine that, sitting on His throne in an air-conditioned Heaven, where, we are told, there is plenty to eat and drink always (at any rate, there is no hunger or thirst there) the Heavenly Father would feel some remorse for His thoughtlessness as He looks down from his own warm comfortable home, and watches the death-throes of His sparrows. But this is sheer blasphemy. God is love!

DOROTHY MILLS.

The Revolt of the Lord

THE story I have to tell is a sad one, and yet I cannot be accused of sacrilege, for I have obtained my information from an angel. This angel is my guardian one, and she is altogether exceptional. She is very beautiful and very ethereal, and what is more, she is not at all disinclined to a little gossip now and then, for she finds Heaven a tedious place at times, although, of course, her visits to Heaven are made only once a year in order to report upon my exemplary conduct. But before proceeding I wish to give my reader a small account of myself, for otherwise he will think that I have banded with Atheists, and that the sole purport of this story is to weaken the foundations of religion. Nothing could be further from my mind. I am deeply religious, and I attend church each week, as a matter of fact I go twice on Sunday. In this way I feel that when I die I shall surely go to Heaven. But then my motive for church attendance is not so interested as it may appear from that statement. I believe in God, because my guardian angel has often related to me that there is a God, and that this God is omnipotent and all-good. But, the story I have to tell concerns a wholly human aspect of the divine nature.

It came about this way. St. Peter who, as every righteous man and woman knows, is the keeper of the heavenly portals, has performed his duties for centuries with amazing exactitude. Seldom has he made a mistake in accepting the religious and rejecting the infidel. In his fervour he has even consigned some men to Hell, who should rightfully have spent an Eternity in heaven, but then Peter has not lost all the foibles attached to the human race, and even he can be guilty of error. Seldom, however, has he erred on the generous side, if I may so speak of such a divine and magnanimous nature. Yet . . . and this is the kernel of my story . . . once he did so err, and this mistake cost him dearly. As a matter of fact, my guardian angel was able to divulge to me that there was some talk at the time of substituting Confucius or Buddha or even Jesus Christ himself for St. Peter. But Peter brought forth some very plausible arguments in his own defence, for example, that he had been portal-keeper for centuries, and as a consequence the job was tiring, and he could not help but make a mistake now and again, and so on and so on. Yet . . . it is a matter for controversy. I shall continue my story.

One day, late in the year 18 . . ., three men came before the portals of Heaven. They knocked and their knock was not at first answered, which is testimony to Peter's fatigue. They knocked twice, thrice, and even four times and only silence still greeted their blows. Finally in despair, the men tried one last and intense stroke, which actually shook the axis of heaven and earth together. There was a commotion within, and suddenly the heavenly gates opened, and before them stood St. Peter himself. As the saint said afterward, he was in a sort of a stupor on that day. When he saw these three men, he mechanically asked them for their credentials. One of them said, "I gave hundreds of pounds to charities, and I am a novelist." (St. Peter did not even wince at this, which was further proof of his condition); the second, almost as bold, said that when he was young he had questioned the belief in a God, but toward his death he realized that there was an Almighty power, yet he could not in honesty state that he had lived up to the life as suggested by Christ. He had accumulated money—and so on. The third man, a small creature with a nasty smirk on his face, was still a sceptic. He said that he had no cre-

dentials, and that he was sure this was all a dream and that St. Peter did not at all look like the man portrayed in Sunday School literature. Even this criticism did not affect St. Peter, and surely, dear reader, there need be no further proof as to the poor state of his health. From habit, St. Peter looked the three newcomers over, and then in majestic tones said, "Ye three, men of the accursed Earth, enter into the Home of God," and they, with the will of a single person, stepped inside the gates.

My guardian angel paused here for she was not certain whether she was practising discretion in relating all this. Yet her loquacity won the day, and she continued.

The three walked on and on. The streets of heaven, as you know, are made of gold, and there are statues everywhere. But these statues are of those living on earth. They continued for a very long time until they came to a palace whose roof was of stars, and whose cupola gleamed in the sun, which was hanging directly over it. There were three million steps leading to the front door of this palace, and now that these three gentlemen were ethereal, they ascended with rapidity. Finally, after floating through long corridors they came to an enormous room, and at the end of the room seated on a grim throne belching smoke, fire, and swords was God. As the men said later, God appeared to be very tired on this day and when he saw the newly-arrived he only nodded his head and then looked down toward the floor, where three cherubs were playing a heavenly game of what is equivalent, on earth, to tiddliwinks. Not that God was especially interested in this game. The truth of the matter is that He had become bored. Around his room were seated thousands of women and hundreds of men, and the women were whispering to each other, and the men were shivering with the heavenly cold. One of the women, looking up, saw the three men, and she immediately came forward and enquired of them their Earthly age, their Earthly employment, how many Earthly children they had had, and their Earthly income. Upon hearing all the news she skipped back to her original circle, and the women from other circles crowded around her. She then related all the information of the latest arrivals, and with a wry face told them that one of the men was a novelist. The women made a grimace at this piece of news and turned their backs upon the three men. One of the men whispered hastily to another, "Must we spend an eternity here?" The others nodded solemnly.

God, on the other hand, still continued watching the cherubs at play, but he also noticed that these men were not like the rest who had come before him. As a matter of fact, he even heard that one of the men still considered all that he saw a dream, while the one-time Agnostic was sceptical as to his future happiness in the divine habitation. God also had heard that the third was a novelist, and for a moment was on the verge of running to St. Peter and asking him the reason for his having relaxed his vigilance. But then a divine idea came to the Almighty, an idea which was to be the cause of a *furor* in Heaven. God said (the angel apologized a moment later for presuming to know what God had soliloquised) "I am terribly bored, and these men seem saturated with sin; perhaps they can tell me something which will be interesting." So he called the three men to his side and said to the novelist, "You wrote books while on Earth?" The novelist was trembling at the sound of the heavenly voice, and could not find words to use. The sceptic, or ex-Agnostic, was contracting the courage of the man who still believed all this to be a dream, so he said, "Yes, your honour, this gentleman wrote books on earth." Then God turned to

the sceptic and said, "And what did you do?" The sceptic answered that he had been a travelling salesman in books. God nodded, and then turned to the man who looked on sulkily at this catechism. "And you, my dear sir, what was your business?" "I," answered the man, "I was a member of a Free-thinking Society, and I instructed myself on the phenomena of Nature. I was, and am, an Atheist." God looked on this man for several moments and moved uncomfortably on his uncomfortable throne. "You still are an Atheist; then your eyes are not sufficient witness?" The Atheist said "No."

ROBERT S. BLUM.

(To be concluded)

Correspondence

FREETHOUGHT AND FICTION

TO THE EDITOR OF THE "FREETHINKER"

SIR,—If Mr. Fraser had confined himself to stating that a large percentage of fiction-writers were purveyors of "mental dope," Freethinkers, and, one presumes, other reasonable persons, would be in agreement with him. But he has condemned "fiction" *sans phrase*, and one is fain to ask what is the scope of the literature he intends to cover by that word. "Fiction" cannot comprise only novel writing. Homer and the Greek tragedians, Dante's *Divina Comedia*, the dramas of Shakespeare, Ibsen and Bernard Shaw, no less describe persons and situations that never existed than Cervantes' *Don Quixote*, Fielding's *Tom Jones*, Dickens' *David Copperfield*, and Anatole France's *The Gods are Athirst*. If Mr. Fraser is consistent he will rule out all these wonderful efflorescences of genius as "mental dope," and debar the young people he is able to control from access to them. As he is not the æsthetic dictator Adolf Hitler is aspiring to be, we can afford to smile and continue our "dope" with a good conscience.

But does Mr. Fraser avoid fiction? He cannot read a work of history which is wholly devoid of it, nor a work of science. I suppose he will admit that Thucydides' account of the Peloponnesian War is history. Does Mr. Fraser then desire to expunge from the pages of that historian the utterly fictitious speeches he puts into the mouths of Pericles and other worthies? If he turns to science and reads, let us say, Rutherford on the atom, he will be reading what is partly fiction, for Rutherford's conception of the atom has now been seriously modified by Heisenberg's Uncertainty Principle and the Quantum Theory.

A good dramatist or a good novel-writer is a producer of fiction *in form*, but of fact *in substance*. History is concerned with processes of which persons are but linked events. In the play or the novel the individual is the centre of the picture; it is probable that fiction has done much towards creating the individual. The mirror that is held up to nature modifies that nature. What matters it whether Antony Jenkinson of Belgrave Square wooed and won Susan Brown of Seven Dials? Truth is found in the interplay of human emotions and conduct in a given social setting. If the fiction-writer provides us with a correct reading of the characters of men and women, he must be classed as an anti-dopist, and may stimulate thought and socially useful action better than some of the dealers in "fact" Mr. Fraser so much admires.

A. D. HOWELL SMITH.

The Creeds of the Churches are as worthless as withered weeds.—*Emily Brontë*.

We find many who lay so great stress on faith that they neglect morality.—*Addison*.

SATAN ON MAN

I know your race. It is made up of sheep. It is governed by minorities, seldom or never by majorities. It suppresses its feelings and its beliefs; and follows the handful that makes the most noise. Sometimes the noisy handful is right, sometimes wrong, but no matter, the crowd follows it. The vast majority of the race, whether savage or civilized, are secretly kind-hearted and shrink from inflicting pain, but in the presence of the aggressive and pitiless minority they don't dare to assert themselves. Think of it! One kind-hearted creature spies upon another, and sees to it that he loyally helps in iniquities which revolt both of them. Speaking as an expert, I know that ninety-nine out of a hundred of your race were strongly against the killing of witches when that foolishness was first agitated by a handful of pious lunatics in the long ago. . . . Monarchies, aristocracies and religions are all based upon the individual's distrust of his neighbour, and his desire, for safety's or comfort's sake to stand well in his neighbour's eye. These institutions will always remain and always flourish, and oppress you, and affront you, and degrade you because you will always be and remain slaves of minorities. . . .

There has never been a just (war), never an honourable one—on the part of the instigator of the war. I can see a million years ahead, and this rule will never change in so many as half-a-dozen instances. The loud little handful—as usual—will shout for the war. The pulpit will—warily and cautiously—object—at first. The great big, dull bulk of the nation will rub its sleepy eyes and try to make out why there should be a war, and will say, earnestly and indignantly, "It is unjust and there is no necessity for it." Then the handful will shout louder. A few fair men on the other side will argue against the war with speech and pen, and at first will have hearing and be applauded; but it will not last long; those others will outshout them, and presently the anti-war audiences will thin out and lose popularity. Before long you will see this curious thing; the speakers stoned from the platform, and free speech strangled by hordes of furious men who, in their secret hearts, are still at one with those stoned speakers. And now the whole nation—pulpit and all—will take up the war-cry, and shout itself hoarse, and mob any honest man who ventures to open his mouth. . . . Next the statesman will invent cheap lies, putting the blame upon the nation that is attacked, and every man will be glad of those conscience-soothing fallacies, and will diligently study them, and refuse to examine any refutation of them, and bye and bye will convince himself that the war is just. . . .

Cain did his murder with a club; the Hebrews did their murders with javelins and swords; the Greeks and Romans added protective armour, and the fine arts of generalship and military organization; the Christian has added guns and gunpowder; a few centuries from now . . . all men will confess that without Christian civilization war must have remained a poor and trifling thing to the end of time. . . . It is a remarkable progress. In five or six thousand years five or six high civilizations have risen, flourished, commanded the wonder of the world, then faded out and disappeared; and not one of them except the latest ever invented any sweeping and adequate way to kill people. They all did their best—to kill being the chief stern ambition of the human race, and the earliest incident in its history—but only the Christian civilization has scored a triumph to be proud of. . . . And what does it amount to? Nothing at all. You gain nothing; you always come out where you went in. . . . Who gets a profit out of it? Nobody but a parcel of usurping little monarchs and nobilities who despise, would feel defiled if you touched them, would shut the door in your face if you proposed to call; whom you slave for, fight for, die for, and are not ashamed but proud; whose existence is a perpetual insult to you, and you are afraid to resent it; who are mendicants supported by your alms, yet assume toward you the air of benefactor toward beggar; who address you in the language of master to slave, and are answered in the language of slave to master; who are

worshipped by you with your mouth, while in your heart—if you have one—you despise yourself for it.
From "The Mysterious Stranger," by Mark Twain.

SUNDAY LECTURE NOTICES, Etc.

LONDON

OUTDOOR

KINGSTON-ON-THAMES BRANCH (Market Place): 7.30, Saturday, November 13, Mr. J. W. Barker will speak.

NORTH LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (Highbury Corner): 8.0, Saturday, Mr. L. Ebury. White Stone Pond, Hampstead, 11.0, Sunday, L. Ebury. Parliament Hill Fields, 3.30, L. Ebury.

WEST LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (Hyde Park): 3.30, Sunday, Messrs. Bryant, Barnes, Tuson and Miss E. Millard, M.A.

INDOOR

KINGSTON-ON-THAMES BRANCH N.S.S. (Clarence Club Hall, next to Fighting Cocks, London Road, Kingston): 7.30, Mr. J. W. Barker—"God and His Works."

MODERN CULTURE INSTITUTE (Caxton Hall): 8.15, Friday, November 19, Dr. Har Dayal, M.A., Ph.D.—"Psychology and War." Admission free.

SOUTH LONDON BRANCH (Alexandra Hotel, South Side, Clapham Common, S.W.4): 7.30, Mr. Wilmott (Socialist Party of Great Britain)—"Socialism and Religion."

SOUTH PLACE ETHICAL SOCIETY (Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, W.C.1): 11.0, Professor B. Malinowski, Ph.D.—"The Place of Superstition in Culture."

WEST LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (The Laurie Arms, Crawford Place, Edgware Road, W.): 7.30, C. Bradlaugh Bonnet, M.A.—"European Freethought."

COUNTRY

OUTDOOR

NEWCASTLE (Bigg Market): 8.0, Friday, November 12, Mr. J. T. Brighton.

NORTH SHIELDS BRANCH N.S.S.: 7.0, Tuesday, November 16, Mr. J. T. Brighton.

SOUTH SHIELDS BRANCH N.S.S.: 7.30, Thursday, November 18, Mr. J. T. Brighton—"Religion and Politics."

INDOOR.

BIRKENHEAD (Wirral) BRANCH N.S.S. (Beechcroft Settlement, Whetstone Lane): 7.0, T. Wood (Chester)—"Some Aspects of Freethought."

BIRMINGHAM BRANCH N.S.S. (Bristol Street Schools): 7.0, Mr. H. W. Cottingham—"Psychic Phenomena."

BLACKBURN BRANCH N.S.S. (Assembly Rooms, Market Hall, Blackburn): 7.30, Thursday, November 18, Mr. J. V. Shortt (Liverpool)—"Does Man Survive Death?" Literature for sale.

BRADFORD BRANCH N.S.S. (Laycock's Forum, Albion Court, Kirkgate): 7.15, Mr. F. Duce—"Review of Health Services."

EAST LANCASHIRE RATIONALIST ASSOCIATION (28 Bridge Street, Burnley): 2.30, Mr. J. Clayton—"Shall We Get Peace?"

GLASGOW SECULAR SOCIETY (East Hall, McLellan Galleries, Sauchiehall Street, Glasgow): 7.0, Mr. Albert J. Billson—"What the Eye Does Not See."

LEICESTER SECULAR SOCIETY (Secular Hall, Humberstone Gate): 6.30, Mr. George Bedborough—"Let's Pretend."

LIVERPOOL BRANCH N.S.S. (Transport Hall, Islington Liverpool, entrance in Christian Street): 7.0, E. Egerton Stafford (Bootle)—"The World To-day."

MANCHESTER BRANCH N.S.S. ("King's Café," Oxford Road): 7.0, Mr. W. A. Atkinson (Manchester)—"Christian Persecution."

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

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