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• EDITED *by* CHAPMAN COHEN •

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

Views and Opinions

The Godless Conference

If we were not as familiar as we are with the capacity of the professional Christian advocate for keeping to a crooked course we might have believed that our plain and straightforward exposure of the lies about the Congress of the World Union of Freethinkers, would have cleared the air once for all. That exposure was clear, and, up to a point, decisive. "The Great Lying Church" knew the truth from the outset, but it relied upon the disinclination of the general press to refrain from publicly exposing an influential group of Christians as deliberate liars, and upon the slavish credulity of its own supporters. Up to a point that confidence was justified. No one can stop a certain type of Christian lying about his opponents, although in the case of the Congress, the deliberately manufactured lie that Russia had ordered, and was controlling and financing, the Congress was too gross for it to withstand the exposure which appeared in these columns. But it is worth noting that in spite of this being clear enough to stop the lie in its original form, the general press took no notice of the refutation, and the religious press remained dumb. For our own part, we would have liked the lie to have remained uncontradicted for a longer period—say until about the end of June. Unwillingly these religious blackguards were giving the Congress a magnificent advertisement. Hundreds of thousands heard of the Congress who would have been unconscious of its existence, but for the lying of religious leaders. As to the Members of Parliament, who asked questions about the Congress, begging the Home Secretary to prohibit it, they must have been either frightfully ignorant, or were trying a game of sheer bluff. They must have known that the Home Secretary had no power whatever to prohibit the Congress, and his remark that any steps necessary to prevent a breach of the peace would be taken, was a piece of added bunkum. It is always the duties of the authorities to do this, and while a meeting held in the

street may be prohibited on that ground, where an ordinary lawful meeting is held in a hall, it is the duty of the authorities to provide protection against any body of people who may gather for the purpose of inciting to riot. The Home Secretary knows this perfectly well, and as to his prohibiting visitors from abroad, when one looks at the distinguished men and women who are likely to be present at the Congress, refusing them permission to enter the country on the ground that they are "undesirable aliens" is too laughable for comment. Neither Hitler nor Mussolini nor Franco is expected to be present at the Congress.

* * *

True to Type

But one cannot, as we have said, stop a certain type of Christian liar returning to his favourite occupation, and on May 5, speaking in the Westminster Cathedral Hall, Cardinal Hinsley again dealt with the International Congress. He retold his former lie in another form. He does not now say that Russia has ordered and is financing the Congress, he says that in April, 1936, the Congress of Prague became officially united with another union. That is simply not true. The organization is the "World Union of Freethinkers." It is an Association of Freethinkers and groups of Freethinkers coming, as its name indicates, from all parts of the world. It has its own constitution, and it takes no notice of the political or sociological opinions of its members or groups. Their union is for Freethought. Their private or individual aim is their own business. The Union is concerned with its own business and its own declaration of principles.

Lacking the manliness to say "We were wrong," or "We were mistaken with regard to the Godless Congress," Cardinal Hinsley now discovers that

in order not to alarm the people of this country the militant Atheists have entrusted the propaganda to bourgeois publications, but the people will not be misled by this camouflaging of anti-God aims under seemingly moderate forms.

This is the old lie in a modified form. Cardinal Hinsley knows as well as we do that there is no camouflaging; there is no disguising the opinions of those organizing the Congress. Cardinal Hinsley knows them all and knows for what they stand. He stands in his pulpit, secure from correction; he writes in Roman Catholic papers, protected from rebuttal. It is the most cowardly form of lying possible, first cousin to the lies of Hitler and his lieutenants. Cardinal Hinsley says "The Anti-God League would like us to add fuel to the fire by too serious opposition." Lies and slanders do not, in the Cardinal's vocabulary, come under the head of "too serious opposition." In this we agree with him. It is really part and parcel of the set historic policy of the Roman Church, and to some

extent of every other Christian Church. Students of sociology would do well to note this fact—probably they have noted it, but the power of organized religion in this country is still great, and generally they find it safer to ignore it or deal with it very lightly. The sociologist of the future may well note that not the least suggestive feature of our stage of development is that few really expect the clergy to be quite truthful where their religion or their religious interests are concerned, and are not surprised when they lie. Certainly I know of no case where the preachers of any Christian sect have been reprimanded officially, when it is proved they have lied about his opponents.

* * *

Inciting to Disorder

This worthy representative of the Roman Church says:—

We shall meet their violence by calm spiritual methods which cannot fail. *At the same time it is clear that in this country there are very great numbers whose religious convictions are outraged by a suggestion of such a Congress in London. Once you make this clear the religious leaders cannot be held responsible if the opposition to the Congress should lead to an active form leading to social disorder.*

The italics are mine. The Church will trust to "calm spiritual methods," in other words, reliance will be placed in God's hands to do something to stop the Congress. But in case he does not, or cannot, if he is as powerless to stop the Congress as is the Home Secretary, then the Cardinal suggests to his religious followers that they might themselves take a hand and do something in the shape of creating social disorder. Why? Because there are large numbers whose convictions are outraged by a "Godless Congress meeting in London!" But a godless conference has been held in this country every year for more than a century; but God has done nothing and there have been no social disorders. Is God likely to be more active on this occasion than on others? Or are things getting so serious it is believed that, as even the policy of lying and slandering has not been completely effective, something of a more drastic nature is required? What Cardinal Hinsley thinks is a justification for Christians creating disorder and disturbing peaceable public meetings, is really, and should be in the eyes of all decent men and women, an indictment of religious leaders and their followers. No man is justified in considering that his feelings have been outraged because a number of his fellow-citizens decide that his opinions are wrong, and says so. I admit the Cardinal's attitude is a Christian one. It is the historic attitude of the Christian Church, and from theology it has worked its way into political and social life. In England the legal right of all men and women is to express their opinion on any subject they please, and to do it either individually or collectively. It is in virtue of this right that Cardinal Hinsley is free to indulge his religious blackguardism, and to prey and fatten upon the ignorance and credulity of large numbers of his fellow citizens in the way that the Roman Church has always done. Our opinions do not lacerate the feelings of Roman Catholics more than his opinions lacerate the feelings of large numbers of other Christians, and who, if they had their will would suppress him as he is anxious to suppress us. It is because of the liberalizing influence of Freethought that Dr. Hinsley can stand in safety where he does and try to prevent others enjoying the freedom that he uses so badly. No clearer indictment of religion has ever been drawn than the statement that expressions of opinion with which Christians do not agree is good ground for suppression, or an occasion for the exercise of mob-law. I can imagine many saying—with that mistaken

terminology which is the offspring of muddled thinking, that Cardinal Hinsley is a disgrace to a Christian pulpit. I do not say so. I believe he is an ornament to it, an expression of Christianity in its truest and least unadulterated form.

* * *

The Real Danger

But there are, after all, larger issues here than the personality of Cardinal Hinsley. He is a mere priest, and not one of the most brilliant at that. The Roman Church has better men both as regards character and intellect. But he is a true representative of that Christianity which for many centuries has steadily degraded human nature, domiciled intolerance, and moralized so many forms of ill-conduct. He is a reminder to Freethinkers that our work is not done even with regard to old forms of religious belief, and that it will never be done with regard to the possibility of a recrudescence of atavist intolerance. We are living in a period of retrogression, when people think more of immediate ends than of first principles, and when there are those in position in this country who would like to see much of our present liberty seriously restricted. Only the other day Sir James Frazer again reminded us that the savage was in many parts of the world—in every part of the world—breaking through the veneer of civilization and carrying the world backward so far as he could. This is the serious threat that faces us. Of that spirit organized Christianity is an obvious fact. But beyond that there lies the mass of public indolence, of public ignorance, of ingrained superstition, that is so common among the general public from the throne to the gutter. It is this upon which all Churches live to a greater or smaller degree. But to the Roman Church it is its very life-blood.

CHAPMAN COHEN.

Gloom and Godism

Le rire c'est le propre de l'homme."—Rabelais.

"Life is sweet, brother. There's night and day, brother, both sweet things; sun, moon, stars, brother, all sweet things; there's likewise the wind on the heath. Life is very sweet, brother, who would wish to die?"

Borrow.

MANY clergymen are as sad as mortuary attendants, and for the same reason. For Christianity is the gloomiest of all the great religions, and the clergy are always dragging in the skeleton at every feast. In private, these priests may be Merry Andrews, but in public they are as cheerful as undertakers, but not more so. It is a purely professional pose. Indeed, they can be classified by the observant onlooker: from the slight droop of the lip to the High Churchman to the resemblance to a tired cart-horse of a Methodist minister.

Gloom, even horror, is everywhere in the Christian Religion. Its most sacred symbol is the figure of a dying man, nailed to two pieces of wood. Its most characteristic dogma is that of a horrible hell of literal fire. The most powerful of all Christian Churches herds men and women into monasteries and nunneries, where they linger out the years, living mutilated and unlovely lives. Over a great part of Europe large figures of the dying Christ confront one in public places; whilst the Anglo-Saxon world is enveloped in the dense fog of Puritanism. Sabbatarianism there runs mad. In Britain all theatres and music-halls are banned on Sundays, sports are frowned at, and, unless a man is a teetotaler, he can only quench his thirst at stated hours. In Canada, it is an offence for a man to dig his own garden on a

Sunday. Trams, trains and buses are not allowed to run, and conditions are worse even than in England. Generally speaking, the Protestant clergy frown at all kinds of pleasure and relaxation, especially on Sunday. As business men, they resent every sixpence spent outside their own show-places. Pious propaganda, too, is full of horrors, for the clergy make great use of the lever of fear. There is far too much of the skull and crossbones in religious tracts, which are circulated by the hundred thousand. "Heaven or Hell," "Prepare to meet thy God," "Where will you spend eternity?" are suggestive titles calculated to fill the readers with fright, and the offertories with silver.

Whence comes all this gloom and depression? It is derived from the Christian Bible. As Dean Inge has pointed out (*Evening Standard*, London, April 28), "there is not a hearty laugh anywhere in the Bible. I can only recall three verses in the Old Testament where laughter is mentioned, except where someone is to be "laughed to scorn. No artist has ever dared to depict Christ with a merry twinkle in his eye, or a broad smile on his lips." Victor Hugo, in his own characteristic way, put the matter far more tersely: "Jesus wept, Voltaire smiled." Indeed, this omission, not only of humour, but even of good humour, is fatal to all the grandiloquent pretensions made on behalf of this alleged sacred book of the East. As literature, how can this Bible be superior to Shakespeare, to Cervantes, to Molière, when it lacks all sense of humour, and is saturated with cruelty and barbarism from cover to cover?

The literature of Israel is not only intensely national, but actually local. There are passages where the perfumes of Sharon and Lebanon, the very atmosphere of the hills about Jerusalem, the beauty of the fair daughters of Judæa, are so caught and rendered that in a distant age, an alien speech, a remote land, they affect the reader. But these people were cruelly oppressed, and their undying hatred of their oppressors is shown in page after page of fiery invective. They were fanatical, and their fanaticism is expressed in passionate tones of Oriental exaggeration. They were barbarous, and they conceived their deity in terms of pure savagery. Writing so often at a white heat of indignation and bigotry, they overlooked the saving grace of humour. "I will make my arrows drunk with blood," is an expression of sheer blood-lust, but it was thought good enough to be put into the mouth of their deity by the alleged inspired writers of this particular Bible. How different are the wise precepts of Confucius:—

"Jewels, few words long
That on the stretched forefinger of all time
Sparkle for ever."

Is there anywhere else in the world a similar position accorded to one who was a mere man. Confucius never claimed to having any revelation from any god, never performed miracles, nor dabbled with any alleged "super"-nature. Christ is declared to have been a son of a god. Mohammed believed himself inspired. Buddha, or his followers, profess to give a spiritual interpretation of the universe. But Confucius was only a man, and a modest one, for he never claimed to be other than a teacher, not unlike Plato or Socrates. Yet he has swayed the minds of countless millions for twenty-five centuries. The father of a whole people, and, though only a man, he was greater and far saner than the central figures of the great religions of the world.

All antiquity was cruel, but the British race is the kindest and most human of all. Our multitudinous charities prove it beyond all cavil and dispute. A mere recital of some of the interminable Mansion House funds shows that, under a chilly exterior, the

Britisher has a warm heart for all forms of human suffering. Yet, in professing Christianity, the Britisher has taken on a load of mischief and mystification. Strange, horrible, and cruel as this religion often is, one day the conscience of our race will rise above its gloom, savageries, and crudities, and it will be relegated to the limbo of half-forgotten things. The Christian Religion cannot escape the fate of its predecessors. The Egyptian, Phœnician, Assyrian, Babylonian, Medo-Persian, Greek and Roman religions have passed and scarce "left a wreck behind." They have gone as completely as those religions that existed in Mexico and Peru before the coming of Cortez and Pizarro, and before a European landed on their shores.

Remember, we have never yet had an educated people. Before the passing of the great Education Act (1870) the people were almost wholly illiterate, despite fifteen centuries of Christian, and priestly instruction. Now, the people, as a whole, are only half-educated, owing entirely to the machinations of a reactionary Priestcraft. The day is not far distant when these people will be educated, and acquainted with other bibles than the one forced on them in this country, by its educational pastors and masters. When they know the Vedas, the Tripitaka, the Shoo King, and the Koran, they will begin to realize that the Christian Scriptures cannot be exempted from the rules that are applied to all the other so-called sacred books of the East. A camel's-hair tent set in the dusty desert was the modest progenitor of the Christian cathedral, and the early congregations were indistinguishable from Bedouins. Under such primitive conditions was the Christian god conceived, for man fashions his deities according to his intelligence. The later priests and prophets were gloomy, fanatical, implacable, cruel. With the growth of real education it is impossible that a cultured people will be encumbered for any length of time with such a religion, founded by Oriental nomads, and encrusted with savagery drawn from barbarian nations. When that day of intellectual emancipation arrives, the figure of the priest will be one at which people will raise their eyebrows, politely smile, and pass on. For, to the really cultured mind:—

"Vain are the thousand creeds
That move men's hearts: unutterably vain;
Worthless as withered weeds,
Or idlest froth amid the boundless main."

MIMNERMUS.

Rationalism and Psycho-Analysis

RATIONALISM and Psycho-Analysis would appear at first sight to have so much in common that the most instructive way I can find to introduce what I have to say is to begin by remarking on the curious fact that in practice they prove—to put it mildly—to be distinctly unsympathetic to each other.

Freedom of thought is a necessary prerequisite of psycho-analytic work, as indeed of all scientific work. Knowing, however, that this prerequisite is not always to be reckoned with, psycho-analysts aim at furthering freedom of thought by countering in certain ways various emotional obstacles, which we call "resistances," some of which are very familiar to you under such terms as prejudices, superstitions and the like. The Rationalist cause, in its turn, is closely akin to what may be called the Freethought movement. No one would quarrel much with the Oxford Dictionary definition of Rationalism as "the principle of regarding reason as the chief or only guide in matters of religion." We note at once two

differences. Rationalism and Psycho-Analysis have different ways of achieving freedom of thought and Rationalism also differs in concentrating on one sphere, on what is commonly called the spiritual side of man, namely religion and ethics. Nevertheless the conception of Freedom of Thought in general is fundamental to both. With aims apparently so similar, therefore, it may seem strange how little co-operation there has ever been between the two movements.

One might not unfairly describe the attitude of most psycho-analysts to Rationalism as one of cold criticism, any benevolent approval they may feel on general grounds being tempered by considerable scepticism. The attitude of Rationalists to Psycho-Analysis, on the other side, appears to be often cooler and, so far as it has come to public expression, to be definitely antagonistic. We have thus a very interesting, and in a sense paradoxical, problem before us, and I intend to make it the main theme of this article in the hope of throwing some light on it and perhaps clearing up some misunderstandings.

It will be safer if I begin by not assuming any knowledge of psycho-analysis, but by explaining shortly what it is. Psycho-Analysis consists primarily in a method of investigation, a particular technique devised by Freud for exploring the deeper and more hidden layers of the mind, layers otherwise inaccessible, whose existence was only in small part previously suspected. It is concerned especially with studying the influence of the Unconscious, as these deeper layers are nowadays called, on the conscious mind and on behaviour. In a large sense psycho-analysis also means the findings that have been made by the use of this method, and whatever theory of the mind that seems to yield itself in the endeavour to codify these findings. It is in short a branch of science, using the principles, methods and premises of science and none other whatsoever. It is our contention that the conclusions we have reached concerning the nature of the mind, however strange they may appear, emerge from scientific investigation alone and have not been imported from elsewhere—least of all from any a priori assumptions. So far, therefore, we have merely intensified the puzzle of our problem, since Rationalism has always been an ardent supporter of scientific research.

Let me select a couple of the conclusions arrived at in the course of psycho-analytic work, on the subject of Free Will and Evolution respectively. There is a very formidable case to be made out from a philosophical point of view in favour of the existence of Free Will, but I am concerned here only with certain psychological aspects of the problem. There is also the important observation that almost all people have an intense personal conviction that they as individuals possess Free Will. This belief has played an essential part in most religions, especially those where the ethical aspects are predominant. The apparent contradiction between it and the belief in Divine omniscience has never been satisfactorily resolved, and forms a staple topic of theological discussion. Some varieties of Christianity, e.g., the Calvinistic, have on this ground subordinated the former belief to the latter. However all this may be, I take it that Rationalists tend to discard belief in the existence of Free Will as interfering with their preference for a mechanistic, or even materialistic, view of the Universe. If this is so, it is open to them to acquire support for their attitude in the matter from certain findings of psycho-analysis. Naturally any minute investigation into the problems of cause and effect may be expected to reduce the sphere in which non-specific agencies, such as Free Will, are said to operate: the narrowing down of Vitalism by modern physiology is

a case in point. In the present matter, however, Psycho-Analysis has not only done this: it has added two considerations of fundamental importance. By its exploration of the Unconscious it has constantly been able to show how various mental processes, such as decisions in behaviour, specific interests, ethical attitudes and so on, in which no determining factor may be visible, have nevertheless been powerfully influenced—and perhaps altogether determined—by unconscious factors of which the individual was entirely unaware. These observations, the truth of which is confirmed every day, have inevitably had the effect of narrowing the field of Free Will, and make it easier for those so inclined to deny its existence altogether.

The second consideration I alluded to is that psycho-analysis has been able to throw some light on the meaning of the belief itself, and to make more intelligible why the conviction of Free Will is so strong and so important to the personality. It is part of the general striving of the personality for freedom. Incidentally, I may remark here that the driving force behind the Rationalist movement is pretty evidently, and indeed avowedly, the desire to achieve freedom from constraint. It is at first sight paradoxical that a body of people moved by a passionate desire for freedom should at the same time be eager to renounce such a supreme expression of it as the belief in Free Will, but perhaps we can understand it better if we contrast them with religious believers. The latter retain the belief in question by subordinating their personality to an external power—the Deity—whereas Rationalists in their endeavour to replace the latter by human reason are able to identify Reason with their own personality and thus to dispense with the individual conviction of Free Will.

The connexion between these remarks and the second theme I mentioned, namely Evolution, is probably not very evident. Let me start afresh. As you doubtless know, psycho-analysis took its departure from the study of a curious and widespread class of phenomena, the common feature of which is inefficiency in mental functioning. I refer to neurotic symptoms and what may be called everyday slips—slips of the tongue or pen, forgetting, mislaying, and the like; in a sense dreams might also be included here. For these phenomena science had previously had the "explanation" that they were either completely meaningless, i.e., were effects without causes, or else the result of some hypothetical maladjustment in brain functioning. It was reserved for Freud to demonstrate that they all had a precise psychological meaning, but that this could be ascertained only by disclosing unavowed and unconscious motives connected with the "inefficiency" in question. Further study of these unconscious motives and trends revealed several very disquieting features, in fact just those which have led to the general opposition to psycho-analytic work. In the first place the motives, impulses and trends thus studied proved to be not peculiar to those whose mental functioning was maladjusted, such as neurotics, but to be general characteristics of the human mind which neurotics merely happen to deal with in a particular way. In the next place they are all of such a nature as to be so repellent to the conscious personality that they cannot be tolerated in consciousness, which is just what we mean when we call them "unconscious." As I explained above, these findings added a powerful support to the doctrine of mental determinism, and there was another respect in which they proved disconcerting to the popular conception of the mind. For the unconscious impulses which play such an unexpectedly important part in influencing or determining our conscious mental processes are derived from

the most primitive part of our hereditary endowment, from the instincts that have in early childhood to undergo an extensive repression, frustration and complex manipulation in adapting the growing personality to the demands of civilized standards. Much of this inherited basis of the mind lives on in the adult unconscious, which thus contains attitudes of irrational fear, savage hate and licentious sexuality of a kind that transcends even the level of abandoned criminals. These aggressive and sexual instincts are, of course, similar to those of animals and indeed form the basis of what is called our "animal nature." In tracing the development of this lowly basis into the more civilized and spiritual expressions consonant with our civilized standards Freud made an immensely important contribution to the doctrine of evolution. When I once called him the Darwin of the mind, I meant to indicate that he had filled in the gap in the theory of human evolution which Darwin had perforce to leave. The opponents of the doctrine of evolution have always been able to make a comfortable reservation concerning the mind or soul of man, to claim a privileged status for it in the universe, one well deserving for its creation a special act of interposition on the part of Providence. One result of psycho-analysis is that such reservation will be less easy to make and such interposition less needful to postulate.

ERNEST JONES, M.D.

(To be continued)

The Near-Eastern Dawn of Culture

THE prehistoric Sumerians who settled in the low alluvial plains of the Tigris and Euphrates Rivers established a splendid civilization upon which the later Babylonian and Assyrian monarchies reposed. The culture of Sumer was contemporary with the ancient Egyptian, and it is even contended that it was originally more advanced than that of the Nile valley. In any case, quite recent discoveries among the ruins of Sumer clearly prove that, by the close of the fourth millennium, B.C., Sumer was a highly civilized State. Perhaps at this period civilization in China and the Indus Valley may have been equally advanced, but further excavations are essential before a definite conclusion can be formed.

In his suggestive, if provocative, volume, *Progress and Catastrophe* (Hamish Hamilton, 1936), Stanley Casson confers pre-eminence on Sumer. He claims that: "From the fertile soil of Mesopotamia the gleam of new light slowly spread westwards, across the highlands of Asia Minor to the Greek Islands and the mainland, along the Black Sea coasts to the Danube mouth, and so laboriously along the Danube banks to the heart of the western world."

In Sumer urban communities under rulership arose, and the earlier Neolithic village community was replaced by a real city. The Sumerians seem to have migrated from the Caucasus or the Armenian Highlands to their new abode and, surrounded as they were by envious and turbulent neighbours, they organized military safeguards against aggression on an extensive scale. They were distinctly practical people, and were apparently much less obsessed by religion than the Egyptians, while the dead hand of the past never weighed so heavily upon them.

The light thrown on these ancient people, whose very existence was barely suspected three generations since, is very illuminating. Sir Leonard Wooley, the archaeologist whose researches in the Near East have been so fruitful surmises that the Sumerians carried a

previously acquired culture into Mesopotamia. He informs us that they themselves believed "that they came into the country with their civilization already formed, bringing with them the knowledge of agriculture, of working in metal and the art of writing—'Since then,' said they, 'no new inventions have been made,' and if, as our excavations seem to show, there is a good deal of truth in that tradition, then it was not in the Euphrates that the arts were born."

The genesis of agriculture dates back to an immemorial antiquity, but the Sumerians appear the earliest people who organized farming on an urban basis, while their metallurgical attainments preceded those of Egypt by several centuries. Also, their system of writing was superior to the Egyptian. Moreover, modern evolutionary concepts thrilled dead bosoms, and Stanley Casson cites a Sumerian hymn which avers that: "Mankind, when created did not know of bread for eating or garments for wearing. The people walked with limbs on the ground, they ate herbs with their mouths like sheep, they drank ditch-water."

When the Sumerians invaded Mesopotamia, which now forms part of the Arab kingdom of Iraq, this region was inhabited by tribes still in the New Stone Age. The newcomers, however, rapidly erected their abodes, and decreed their legal code. Nor was the Sumerian State ever permanently overthrown, although, as the centuries passed, it was slowly converted into Babylonia, which in its turn became subservient to Assyria. At a later stage Assyria was absorbed in Persia, a State destined to the nominal sway of Greece until the Sassanian dynasty restored Persia to her former glory as the Roman Empire neared its end. Not until 638 A.D. was this prolonged continuity completely shaken by the Arab conquest of the country and the Sassanian States eclipsed. But even the Kaliphate, and the succeeding Seljuk settlement in 1037 with all their turbulence, produced little dislocation in normal affairs. It is to the merciless ravages of the Mongols, from 1220 to 1287, that the destruction of a splendid civilization is due—a civilization that lasted longer than any that has arisen since. For this culture endured for at least 4,000 years. As Casson observes: "The eight hundred years (or less) of the Hellenes, the nine hundred years (at a generous maximum) of Rome, and the thousand years of Byzantium compare oddly with this long record."

The Nile Valley was man's habitation in Palæolithic Times, and its later culture was largely indigenous. Little subjected to invasion, Egypt remained for extensive periods at peace with the world. Earthquakes, destructive inundations and other natural calamities were there unknown. The periodical rise and fall of her beneficent river could be predicted with certainty. The crops cultivated in the fertile sediment deposited by the overflowing stream when it had subsided to its normal channel made Egypt a bounteous granary. Even in seasons when the Nile remained low the grain was gathered and severe scarcity rarely known. But in Sumer no such dependence could be placed on any seasonal rise and fall of its streams, and life was consequently far more precarious. Also, climatal conditions were much less genial than in Egypt, for while the summer heat and glare may prove intense, the winter seasons in Mesopotamia are apt to be pitilessly cold. Sumer was environed by hosts of predatory tribes, who might at any moment descend from their retreats in the Persian uplands upon the rich territory they were only too anxious to plunder, while from this danger Egypt was practically free.

To this ceaseless conflict with adverse circumstances the pronounced progressiveness or, at least

the stability of the State, may be ascribed. Although Sumerian cities were plundered and destroyed and then restored many times in succession, Sumer persisted as a Power. And it is a fair inference that "the uncertainty of the crops persuaded them to indulge in experiments which culminated in the science of mathematics, land surveying and astronomy, in which the Mesopotamian people were always pre-eminent."

Sumer seems to have been regarded by an envious outside world as a land flowing with milk and honey. It certainly became, with its highly efficient system of irrigation, one of the most fertile regions in Western Asia. Herodotus asserts that it yielded one third of the corn harvested throughout the extensive Persian Empire, while Sayce, the Assyriologist, declared that: "The inscriptions afford ample confirmation of this statement, the tithe receipts of the temples showing an enormous yield of cereals."

Among the crops cultivated were wheat and various other cereals, the vine, melons, many vegetables, and the indispensable date-palm which furnished fruit, wine, wood and other domestic utilities. But beasts of prey abounded, especially panthers and lions, whose depredations among the immense herds of cattle and flocks of goats and sheep called for the care of the Bedouins, who tended the latter in the desert.

In a country almost destitute of stone and metals sun-dried bricks were perforce utilized for building purposes, asphalt supplying the place of mortar. Mesopotamia thus strikingly contrasts with Egypt, whose superb stone monuments still remain one of the marvels of human achievement.

As immigrants of Semitic stock slowly insinuate themselves among the Sumerians, the Babylonians appear. These also resemble the Sumerians in their practical character. Although they had gods many and lords many, the dreamy metaphysics and concern respecting a future existence so pronounced in Egypt are scarcely apparent. Ancestor-worship and animism seem to have been the early cult of Sumer. Sayce concluded that: "Gradually, the vast hosts of spirits became grouped in a hierarchy of the heavens and the earth, and from these came the first gods of the Sumerian pantheon."

As the third millennium B.C. nears its close the earliest lawgiver thus far known appears in Hammurabi. This outstanding monarch ruled Babylonia for over forty years, and his legal code came to light in Elam so late as 1901, where it was found inscribed on a stone tablet by French archæologists. It is apparently incomplete, but 44 columns containing 248 clauses remain of the original memorial. All the provisions which have survived the ravages of time relate to civil and criminal jurisprudence, and plainly indicate the orderly character of the Mesopotamian State. Stanley Casson contends that: "The code represents a system of custom and habit that had evidently grown up in the country in a remote past. Throughout the code one observes how pronounced was the idea of private property. For here in the mud plains were innumerable freeholders, among whom the greatest crime was interference with boundaries and irrigation. For on a proper irrigation depended the life of the community and the individual."

Severe penalties were imposed on delinquents who failed to keep their dykes in proper repair and tenant farmers who neglected their husbandry were compelled to furnish the owner of the soil a quantity of grain equivalent to the season's yield of adjoining acres. Also, the land laws were in some respects far more favourable to the cultivator than in many European countries until quite recent generations, and when "a man's field, through no fault of his own, is

flooded and ruined, he gets a remission of rent and his contract is altered for that year."

Again, no individual landowner was permitted to convert his possessions to unproductive or wasteful purposes, for this was deemed detrimental to social well-being. As a convinced Collectivist, Casson deploras the fact that in England the State is not empowered to compel a landholder to cultivate his estate. And it must be conceded that with all our wonderful progress in so many directions, only the dire necessities of war will induce legislators to adopt a system which operated in Mesopotamia thousands of years ago.

T. F. PALMER.

Darrow's Death Recalls Famous Court Case

FREETHOUGHT in Australia got a great push, following the recent death of Clarence Darrow, the American lawyer, who so ably defended John T. Scopes, the 24-years-old teacher, who was charged in 1925 with teaching "the heresy of evolution, contrary to the statutes of Tennessee." William Jennings Bryan, who nearly became the President of the United States, appeared for the prosecution. One of the surprises of the proceedings was sprung by Darrow in calling Bryan as the first witness for the defence.

Historic, of course, is the grueling to which Darrow subjected Bryan.

It was the death of Darrow that gave the *Telegraph*, a Sydney daily with a circulation of 175,000, the opportunity to recall the Darrow-Bryan examination. This it did to the extent of the better part of a page of the questions and answers—or, more correctly, replies, for Bryan's utterances could not possibly be designated as answers. Such an exposure of religion was most unexpected in a daily paper. Very truly must it rank as historic in Australia. A few extracts from what appeared in the *Telegraph* may here be given. For example:—

Darrow: When you read that the whale swallowed Jonah—do you interpret that literally?

Bryan: When I read that a big fish swallowed Jonah, I believe it. I believe that everything in the Bible should be accepted as it is written.

Darrow: Now the fish swallowed Jonah, and in three days spewed him upon dry land. Are you prepared to say the fish was made especially to swallow Jonah?

Bryan: The Bible doesn't say, so I am not prepared to say. Let me add that one miracle is just as easy to believe as another.

Darrow: Would it be easy for you to believe that Jonah swallowed the whale?

Bryan: If the Bible said so.

After questions had brought forth similar replies regarding Joshua commanding the earth to stand still, the Tower of Babel, the story of the flood, and the age of the earth, the examination continued:—

Darrow: Do you believe Eve was the first woman?

Bryan: Yes.

Darrow: Do you literally believe that she was made out of Adam's ribs?

Bryan: I do.

Darrow: Did you ever discover where Cain got his wife?

Bryan: No; I'll leave you agnostics to hunt for her.

Darrow: Adam and his family were the only people on earth. But Cain got a wife. You don't know where she came from?

Bryan: No.

Darrow: Do you believe the story of the temptation of Eve by the serpent?

Bryan: That is what the Bible says, and that is what I believe.

Darrow: And you believe that God punished the serpent by condemning snakes for ever to crawl upon their bellies?

Bryan: I believe that.

Darrow: Well, just how do you suppose snakes got around prior to that time?

Bryan here complained that the purpose of the inquiries was to hold him up to ridicule. "The purpose," retorted Darrow, "is to prevent bigots and ignoramuses from controlling education in the United States. That is all, and you know it." Four days after the trial, Bryan—a broken man—was dead.

A welcome item worth adding comes from New Zealand, dated March 17, where for the past few years they have had a Labour Government.

This is to the effect that children in schools are to be exempt from compulsory religious instruction. Such instruction, it appears, may be given before or after school hours, where the children themselves so require it. Under these conditions it needs no mathematician to compute the number of children who will want religious instruction!

FRANK HILL.

Sydney, N.S.W., Australia.

Acid Drops

From the *Evening Standard* of May 3:—

I heard from Vienna to-day of two zealous storm troopers who stopped a Jewish-looking woman and ordered her to clean the pavement.

When she protested that she had nothing with which to do it, they told her to use her fox fur cape.

She completed the task to the satisfaction of the storm troopers. Then she demanded their identification numbers, told them that she was an American citizen, and said that she was going to claim £100 for the irreparable damage to her fur and three shillings for her work.

A very common thing in Germany, but this time the galling Fascist, who is ferociously heroic in such situations, caught a tartar. The lady turned out to be a subject of the United States, brought her case before the Nazi Commissioner in Austria, who ordered the money to be paid. But we are certain that men who have just canonized the murderers of Dollfus are not likely to let this brave Nazi suffer for his conduct. Something may even happen to the Commissioner.

And here is an example of journalistic ignorance from the same issue of the *Standard*, and from the leading article, too:—

Germany and other countries in Europe produce admirable men and women, but they are not our breed. It is no reflection on them to say that we want to keep the herd clean. The breeds do not mix. Nor, in the same way, can we contemplate with equanimity too great an intermixture of alien blood with ours. For these people differ fundamentally from us in outlook and temperament.

"Keep the herd clean!" "The breeds do not mix." The *Standard* must have gone Nazi mad. There is no more mixed breed in Europe than the English people. There have been successive waves of Celts, and Saxons, inroads of Normans, French, Dutch, German; the reigning monarchy is almost pure German, and what is more to the point, these mixtures of peoples have been wholly to the benefit of the general type that has emerged. The absurdity of the *Standard* leader writer becomes almost classic when he attributes the mixture of "alien blood" as determining a people's cultural outlook. In these days of cheap text-books such gross ignorance is inexcusable. The *Standard* leader writer is worthy of a post in a Nazi university. Perhaps he already holds one.

The "suicides" in Vienna are continuing as manifestations of the "marked enthusiasm" noted by some of our politicians, which has greeted the annexation of Austria by Germany. The *News-Chronicle* for May 7 reports the "suicide" of the editors of the *Neue Frei Presse* and the *Tageblatt*. "Greater love has no man offered" than these people who have given their lives to Hitlerism to show their joy at its arrival. Newspapers are forbidden to publish obituary notices—perhaps it is thought that these manifestations of joy have gone far enough.

But there are still enjoyments in Vienna. It is still a city filled with gaiety—Hitlerite gaiety. Here is evi-

dence furnished by Vernon Bartlett, not hearsay evidence, but actual observation, given in *World Review* for May:—

It was a fine afternoon and I walked cheerfully down the main shopping street. In the Graben I saw a large crowd and edged my way into it. In the centre was a very cultured looking young man with perspiration streaming down his face, and just as I was about to ask what he had done, someone gave him a push and he went down on his hands and knees and began scrubbing at a Schuschnigg cross, which had been painted on the pavement before the annexation of Austria. A crowd of those nice, comfortable, and genial Austrians whom I have so loved, jeered and laughed at this man who had the misfortune to be a Jew.

Lord Londonderry and Lord Redesdale, who eulogized Hitler in the House of Lords, should be pleased that the "spiritual quality" of Hitler (Lord Londonderry's own phrase) is not losing its strength.

Mr. Hore Belisha qualified for the post of Minister of War by attacking the traffic problem, although his activities did not succeed in much save self-advertisement—certainly they had no startling effect on the casualty list. But had he remained in his old office he might have got some help from the Rev. E. P. Orr, Vicar of Littlehampton. This gentleman has announced that on Sunday, May 22, he will scatter with holy water all motor cars that are brought to him, and place on each a badge of St. Christopher—the selected saint of motorists. This may be good news to motorists, but why does not some saint look after the pedestrians? And we wonder whether this action of Mr. Orr will induce insurance companies to lower the rates? They ought to do so in the case of such as carry the badge—that is, if Christopher's interference is of any value whatever.

Mr. Orr's wife has, however, intervened. She explains that her husband's benediction will not be of avail to anyone who does not obey the rules of the road. That gives rise to two reflections. First, if the rules of the road are strictly carried out, the badge of the saint seems a waste of decorations. Second, if the saint in question has as much brains as is contained in a walnut, he should realize that it is not quite "cricket" to permit a pedestrian to be run down because the motorist has not obeyed the rule of the road. But if saints were as sensible as ordinary people they would be little use in heaven. Anyway, we are certain that Mr. and Mrs. Orr are a well-matched couple. And Sir James Frazer again reminded us the other day that we were but very slightly removed from "savages."

A "Parish Priest" complains in the *Universe* of the great "leakages" that are taking place in his parish. He says it is due to "evil companions" and a "pagan atmosphere"—which being translated means acquaintances of an independent mind, who create a more enlightened atmosphere than the Church encourages. There is, of course, a way by which this "leakage" can be stopped for a while. That is the method of the dictatorships which is now in practice, and which consists in creating a relatively moronic population, and by killing off the enlightened and the independent. The dictators took this policy from the Christian Church, and one takes heart on reflecting that as the theological Fascism of the Church broke in the end so will that Fascism which has established itself in different parts of the world, for there must always be leakages from a rule which denies a man freedom of thought and honesty of speech, whether it be religious or non-religious.

The "Parish Priest" falls back upon the need of holding on to the children. Get hold of the child and keep it. We agree that this is the only reliable plan to prevent intelligence developing. But then one is up against the drift of intelligence, and that is a difficult thing to fight.

The Rev. A. Job—a name of quite cheerful promise—and who is Chairman of the Christian Council Committee on Gambling, complains that football pools encourage superstition. Ye gods! Fancy a Christian clergyman

complaining that football pools encourage superstition! Mr. Job says he knew people who said they had won a prize because they bought a black jug. Now if he had said that he believed that change in the weather was brought about as the result of praying to some Mumbo-Jumbo who would be believed to exist in some impossible place, Mr. Job would have hailed him as a very religious man. Hobbes' description of religion as superstition allowed, and superstition as religion not allowed, always fits the situation. If football pools were in the Bible instead of the casting of lots, Mr. Job would regard the weekly coupon as a manifestation of man's inextinguishable longing for religion.

Marlene Dietrich has been threatened by the German Government with a decoration. She indignantly resents the insult offered. But that may leave a vacancy for Lord Redesdale or Lord Londonderry.

The large number of refugee "Jewish Christians" from abroad, and the very little help forthcoming from their completely Christian brothers, have been the subject of a recent meeting arranged by the "Jewish Christian Union." Needless to say, many messages of support were read, particularly from the Archbishop of Canterbury, Cardinal Hinsley, the President of the Free Church Council, and similar heads of Christianity—though it does not seem as if there were many cheques with the messages. However, at the meeting arranged by Dr. Levertoff, who celebrated the Holy Eucharist in Hebrew, Bishop Crotty gave a sermon in which "he analysed the Jewish character in the light of Israel's vocation." He laid upon Christians two duties:—

First to protest against anti-Semitism. Second to encourage and nurture the Jew in his own great traditions, enriching their own Christian witness from the deep springs of Judaism, and showing the Jew, not least by the light of Christ in their own lives, that it was his Jewish tradition and inheritance that were fulfilled in Christ.

We think that this stirring message will bring tremendous comfort to the German and Austrian Jewish Christians who have been robbed of their possessions, imprisoned, and tortured by the Christian and non-Christian Nazis. A copy should be sent forthwith to all who are now enjoying the comforts and graces of Concentration Camps. Had it not been for the religious zeal of Christians, Judaism would have disappeared long since.

Here is a very old story. A man took his boy to the House of Commons to watch the proceedings. When the boy saw the Chaplain offering prayers the youngster asked his father, "Is he praying for the Members?" And the father replied, "No, my boy, he looks at the members and then prays for the people." Here is what Mr. N. D. Pritt, K.C., M.P., told the *Sunday Express*. "I have no religion, but I have the next best thing, a Catholic wife and two Catholic children." Did he really mean that the next best thing to being an Atheist was to have a Catholic for a wife? Did he mean that while religion to him was absurd and untrue, he was glad to have a wife who was not intelligent enough to see what he saw? Did he mean he was glad that his children were not as near what he thought was true as he was himself? Did he mean that he was glad his wife did not know as much about things in general as he did? Did he mean that being without religion was a very bad sign with anyone, and therefore he was pleased his wife and children were not so bad as he is? Which and what the devil *did* he mean? At any rate Mr. Pritt does help to explain the state of the House of Commons to-day.

The Duke of Devonshire, who died the other day, inherited a fortune of nearly two millions. He was also one of the many wealthy patriots who converted themselves into a limited company as one way of avoiding death-duties. The miserable income from the ducal estates amounted to no more than an annual £170,000. There are many of us who would not know how to get along on that income. We are sure that those members of the House of Commons who were anxious to induce the Government to make a grant to the Duke of Windsor,

who has a mere £100,000 on which to live, will extend their sympathy to the new Duke of Devonshire in his poverty.

The Pope left Rome during Hitler's visit, very much distressed that the Swastika flag should have been placed above the flag of the Cross. The *Catholic Times* camouflages the act by remarking that the Pope went to get the pure air of the country. Yet there does not seem to be such a great difference between Fascism in Italy—in spite of Mr. Chamberlain's admiration of it—and Fascism in Germany. It is true that in the case of Hitler the nineteen millions was not in evidence, as it was with Mussolini, but even then the attitude of the Pope towards Austria is a little different from his attitude towards Germany. But it is rumoured in certain circles that we ought not to blame the Pope because he is in a state that approaches senility. It is those behind him who are pulling the strings. God's vicar is a mere figurehead.

Another visitor of note is expected on this planet. The Rev. Rees Howells, of the Bible College of Wales, has discovered, through the medium of what the *Sunday Chronicle* calls an "extraordinary vision," that Jesus Christ will return to this planet in 27 year's time. Mr. Rees Howells heard a voice from heaven which told him all about it. Mr. Howells intends to build 100 colleges, and requires 35 millions to make full preparations for the reception of Jesus. Mussolini's parade for Hitler will be a very cold thing at the side of the reception that will be arranged for Jesus. And all for thirty-five millions. Mr. Howells started his Bible College with 2s., and last year passed £12,000 through his bank. So he is certain that Lord will send him the money—*via* the fools who are taken in by such impudent roguery. That there will be found many who will give money we do not doubt. The "second coming" swindle is one that has worked for a long time, and has brought profit to many of its promoters. And it reminds us that Christianity is not dead.

A notice in the *New York Times* reads: "The Society of American Magicians announces with profound regret that the Supreme Magician has called to His own, our member, the Dean of American Magicians, Frederick Eugene Powell." God is the Great Architect, the Great Mathematician, the Great Pool Bah, supreme in all his offices. Naturally, he is also the Great Magician. There are quite a number of jobs of work in the world to-day to which a Magician could apply himself. The old Limerick is recalled:—

There was a young lady of Sydney
Who had a disease of the kidney
She prayed to the Lord to have it restored
And he could if he would—but he didn't.

Fifty Years Ago

CHARLES LAMB has pointed out that we must not hastily set down as fools all who believed in such absurdities as witchcraft. In matters pertaining to the visible world these persons were rational enough. But they had been trained from childhood to believe there was an invisible world of spirits constantly affecting the sensible world. They had no means of understanding such agency other than by its declared effects, and the belief was confirmed by any amount of testimony. The case of Joseph Glanville (1636-80) is a striking one. Here was a man of acute mind and scientific attainments, one of the founders of the Royal Society, yet a fervent supporter of the truth of witchcraft as an essential part of religion. The author of the *Vanity of Dogmatizing*, in which he shows the advantages of doubt in matters of science, he wrote also *Considerations on the Being of Witches*, wherein he attacks the opponents of the belief in witchcraft as leading directly to Atheism. He saw not only that the belief in witches was founded upon the Bible, and that, as Wesley said, "giving up witchcraft is in effect giving up the Bible," but that the self-same arguments which would discredit Satanic agency would eradicate all belief in the supernatural whatever.

The Freethinker, May 13, 1888.

THE FREETHINKER

FOUNDED BY G. W. FOOTE

61 Farringdon Street, London, E.C.4

Telephone No. : CENTRAL 2412.

TO CORRESPONDENTS.

MR. J. JOHNSON is anxious to get the present address of Mr. Arthur Leadbetter. If this catches his eye, will he send on his address to this office?

FOR Advertising and Distributing the *Freethinker*.—E. Task, 105.

E. BASKETT—Dr. Inge is, as most people know, an incorrigible Tory.

S. R. GAINES (Boston, Mass.).—We are not looking for very much from the quarter you name. Family and social influences are likely to be too powerful for anyone but a powerful man to fight.

J. D. MOEKLER.—Pleased to have your appreciation of what we have said. The explanation of the cause of the decline of church-going is, as you say, not very enlightening.

P. O'DONNELL.—Thanks. See "Acid Drops."

M. HARRIS.—We shall be pleased to see you at Glasgow. Kindly make yourself known.

H. CLARKSON.—The *Freethinker* does not wish to force his particular opinions on children in State schools. We are desirous that children should meet on the ground of a common citizenship, and not be divided by sectarian differences.

J. BROADLEY.—Thanks for address of a likely new reader; paper being sent for four weeks.

F. C. HOLDEN.—Thanks again for cuttings.

E. LARKIN.—We appreciate what you say, but times have changed and different times necessitate some change in methods. Pleased to hear from another of our fifty-year readers. Will be writing on the subject soon.

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

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.

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

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

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

The "*Freethinker*" is supplied to the trade on sale or return. Any difficulty in securing copies should be at once reported to this office.

The "*Freethinker*" will be forwarded direct from the Publishing Office at the following rates (Home and Abroad):—

One year, 15/-; half year, 7/6; three months, 3/0.

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

Sugar Plums

Whit-Sunday is drawing nearer, and with it the Glasgow Conference. There will be, we can safely say, a record number of delegates and members, and for their benefit we again run over the main items of the proceedings. There will be a reception for visitors at the Grand Hotel, Charing Cross Road, at seven on Saturday evening, June 4. On Sunday the Conference sits at 10.30 and 2.30. In the evening there will be a public meeting at 7 o'clock, in the McLellan Galleries, which will be addressed by various speakers. On Monday a motor-charabanc excursion has been arranged round Loch Lomond and Loch Long, with a Luncheon at the Arrochar Hotel. The cost of the excursion, including luncheon, will be six shillings.

We would like those who are attending to pay special attention to the following:—

Application for accommodation should be made at once, stating full requirements. It is not easy to secure accommodation at present.

The London visitors to the Conference will leave London by the 10 o'clock train, arriving in Glasgow just before six.

Those who intend to partake of the luncheon and join in the excursion—either or both—must state their intention without delay. It is impossible to arrange these functions unless this is done.

On Monday evening, at 7.30, a Civic Reception of delegates and friends will be held.

The visitors to the Civic Reception will be the guests of the Corporation. Dancing and Refreshments will be provided, and there will be some brief speeches. Evening Dress is optional, but advisable.

We publish in this issue the first of three articles on "Rationalism and Psycho-analysis," by Dr. Ernest Jones. Dr. Jones is a leading authority on psycho-analysis, and his opinion on that subject deserves the most careful consideration. He is also right in saying that "Rationalism" is allied to the Freethought movement. But we enter a demur if he intends his readers to believe that the Freethought movement is "definitely antagonistic" to psycho-analysis. It is not; nor can I imagine a scientific Freethinker who would not regard it as at least a valuable contribution to psychology, and as we have often said in these pages, for the first time giving psychology a genuinely scientific basis. But, beginning with Freud himself, Dr. Jones will not find it very difficult to discover a very wide measure of support given by Freethinkers to the subject of psycho-analysis. With that proviso in mind, we are sure our readers will welcome Dr. Jones's articles.

Last Sunday was the anniversary of the launching of a famous pamphlet, *The People's Charter*, which led to the inauguration of the Chartist movement. One has to achieve a knowledge of our past history, not so much as presented by orthodox historians, as to become acquainted with the facts that are now available, depicting the poverty and demoralization of masses of the British people a little over a century since. There was little existing in the name of political freedom before 1832. Parliament was filled with representatives of "pocket boroughs" and "rotten boroughs," and political honours and places were almost openly bought and sold. The famous "Charter" was a bid to secure a representation of the people, and although it never succeeded in its complete aims, it was one of those failures that may count as a glorious victory, greater than most that have been won on the field of battle.

Against the Chartists the standing accusation, from both the Church of England and the Nonconformist bodies was that the Chartists were "infidels." This was mainly the truth. The movement had been growing since the days when Carlile and Hone and a few others began their work. And chief among the leaders and writers at the time working for, or in the direction of, Chartism were Hetherington, Watson, Carlile, Holyoake, Cooper, Place, Harney, Oastler and many others, openly disbelievers, to say nothing of those whose professed belief in religion was denounced by the orthodox as being next door to Atheism. A very interesting, and instructive, although a "tendencious" work is that recently published, *The Fight for the Charter*, by Neil Stewart (Chapman & Hall, 6s.) This gives a broad outline of Chartism, and should lead to further study. Mr. Stewart makes the period live. Of a more elaborate character is the now standard work, *The Age of the Chartists*, by J. L. & Barbara Hammond (Longmans, 12s. 6d.) Both books bear out our remark last week, that most of the reform movements of the nineteenth century had their origin with opponents to the established religion.

Mr. G. Whitehead will be in Birkenhead for a week commencing to-day (May 15) and will lecture each evening. The local N.S.S. Branch will co-operate at all meet-

ings, and there are enough Freethinkers in Birkenhead to give very strong support to the platform, which is sure to have a good influence in the conduct of the meetings.

The Kingston-on-Thames Branch N.S.S. is very active and keen in its propaganda, and this evening (May 15), Mr. R. H. Rosetti will be the speaker in the Market Place at 7.30. The presence of an opposition meeting with a clergyman as the speaker has helped the Branch considerably by stimulating local interest in Freethought.

The Christian Faith is not all uncertainty. Some truths stand out sun-clear. The Rev. Howard Partington, in an article in the *People*, choosing his words particularly on the assumption that he had only one sermon to preach, impresses upon us that:—

If Christ were to call at Lambeth Palace to-day, I doubt if his first question would relate to the £15,000 a year of the Archbishop. He would understand that such an office, like that of the Lord Mayor of London, could not be maintained without a large income.

Jesus, we are assured, would be sound on that point. The person who is reported to have tramped the country, slanged the High Priests, and questioned the utility of temples made with hands, would be firm on the maintenance of offices like that of the Lord Bishop of London. In the days of an evaporating faith, let us be thankful that Jesus did and said other things than these, and gave our clerics such an accommodating and variable ethic.

Criticism and Freethought

In his very amiable reply to a "Sugar Plum," which criticized his pamphlet *Up From Christianity*, Dr. W. W. Harvey raises some interesting points. First of all, let me say as emphatically as I can, that we Freethinkers do not tolerate "heresy" hunting. We gladly welcome all into our camp who are proud to be called Freethinkers—using the word, of course, in its generally accepted sense. And our field is a pretty broad one. Thomas Paine was a Freethinker though he was a Deist; and Diderot and d'Holbach were Freethinkers though they were Atheists. Between them there can be many shades of opinion, and it would be against all Freethought philosophy to deny the right of men and women to differ in detail on many points.

At the same time we do hold the right to criticize even our best friends and supporters. I have the greatest admiration for Paine, but I think he was entirely wrong in his Deism. I am quite sure that there must be in the famous *System of Nature* of d'Holbach many things which modern science could not support; and there are old views of the Bible and Christianity, say in Voltaire, which could not be held by modern Freethinkers. It is nothing to the discredit of these great fighters for Freethought that some of us can no longer hold certain of their opinions. The progress of science and discovery during the past hundred years has made them out of date.

All this is, of course, merely commonplace, but it has a bearing on Dr. Harvey's excellent article. He has as much right to disagree with our writers as we have to disagree with him. He is under no compulsion whatever to follow Robertson or Drews in their attack on Jesus as a historical character. He has every right to believe in Paul, not only as a man who really lived, but who actually wrote the Epistles attributed to him. And if he feels like it, he can indulge in the most inordinate praise of Jesus (as indeed he does). On the other hand we claim the right to analyse his work and—if necessary—attempt to show he is wrong. If we do not succeed, that is our affair.

Dr. Harvey tells us that his pamphlet *Up From Christianity* was really written for the "hesitant

Christian who is shocked by the usual frontal attack"—which may excuse a little, his enthusiasm for some of the teaching of Jesus; but as he sent us his pamphlet in the ordinary way for review, we had no idea that it was directed primarily for Christians, and that it was written so that the "hesitant" Christian would not be shocked. Personally I am all for not shocking Christians very much; there is no need to do so by "shocking" them needlessly. As it happens, however, our attacks are almost always written in books and articles as scholarly as their authors can make them. The work of Ingersoll, Foote, Bradlaugh, and Robertson surely can bear comparison with any written by the reverent Rationalist of whom Dr. Harvey is such a worthy example. If Christians are shocked, it is not because of our failure to write with sympathy, but because we put the matter plainly that they are deluded and they do not like to be told so. A Christian might like the way in which Dr. Harvey expresses his profound admiration for the man Jesus, but he is inexpressibly shocked at his irreverent handling of Jesus as a God; and it is just as much a "frontal attack," and just as likely to ward off a genuine Christian, to say that the God idea in connexion with Jesus is a myth. As Dupuis pointed out years ago, the Christian does not want a man Jesus, he wants a God. Praising up the man Jesus is just waste of time for a true Christian, whose only care is to worship a God. And in any case some of us are quite convinced that the man Jesus is just as big a myth as the God Jesus.

Dr. Harvey, and reverent Rationalists like him, calmly pick and choose so much of the Gospel story as suits them, and claim that this proves they are right. One might as well say that the story of Aladdin is true if you take away the obvious myth of the Wonderful Lamp, the Wicked Uncle and the Marvellous Genii. Does Dr. Harvey deny that there may have been an Aladdin?

The vast majority of people are profoundly influenced by things which happened in their childhood, and Dr. Harvey has told us that he has always been fascinated by the story of Jesus. Therefore it, or most of it, must be true! Not, of course, the Christian Christ, but the Jewish Joshua is the pivot of his belief. "The story," he tells us, "is so intensely human in spots, is so clearly an expression of the country, that in spite of all its mythical and theological embellishments, I'm inclined with many eminent Rationalists (even such a critical individual as Mr. Bernard Shaw), to believe in the general plausibility of the main events in the story." And had the "true" Gospels been those known as the Apocryphal Gospels, Dr. Harvey would have written in exactly the same way. He would have justified his belief in exactly the same terms. That is the penalty of having been always fascinated by a story told in our childhood.

In *Up From Christianity*, Dr. Harvey discusses the Resurrection from the narratives in the Gospels just as if those narratives, while mistaken here and there, were substantially accurate. In fact, he is going to write a volume on the question at some future date. But he actually comes to the conclusion that the story "is not the work of a theologian." "There is," he adds, "much more to say, much more in the way of circumstantial evidence to suggest a possible mystery story—the mystery of the ages; but this much must suffice for the present." How does our reverent Rationalist want us to comment on that? There is, of course, a mystery; but it is not connected with the Resurrection. It is, how any modern writer or thinker, knowing under what circumstances all kinds of gospels were produced, knowing the silly credulity of most people living

then, knowing the way in which fear and superstition can work upon the imagination of the credulous and ignorant, can seriously discuss a perfectly silly story like the Resurrection. Is there anything in the *Arabian Nights* very much more impossible?

Dr. Harvey also *seriously* discusses "a very remarkable tradition," found in the South of France, regarding Joseph of Arimathea and the party (which included Mary Magdalene, Mary and Martha, and the resurrected Lazarus) he brought over there from Palestine. But is he not aware that there are in reality dozens of these "remarkable" legends? Does he believe in the quest of the Holy Grail?

He finally tells us that he "is a converted disciple to that doctrine which Jesus tried to put over and failed," the doctrine of non-resistance; and many other doctrines he manages to read into the teaching of Jesus. But he "is no longer a Christian." And with that and his "fellowship with unbelievers, Jews, infidels, heretics", we must leave him. Dr. Harvey does not go all the way with us, but he has gone a long way.

H. CUTNER.

Old Songs

No doubt there are many readers of the *Freethinker* to whom old songs recall pleasant memories of by-gone days, and perhaps of that romantic time when "there was nothing half so sweet in life as love's young dream." This little paper, though it has no theological or polemical interest whatever, may yet serve to amuse these old folks, "at whom we dedicate him particularly." There is a fashion in vocal music as in other things, and the simple ballads and songs which pleased our parents and grand-parents are unknown to the present generation. In remote country inns some of the old favourites may still be heard when on a winter's evening the red curtains are drawn, the settle is moved up to the fire, and some village Orpheus obliges with "Silver Threads among the Gold," or "Just a Song at Twilight"—but not elsewhere. The humorous popular songs of early Victorian times have no analogies to-day "Villikens and his Dinah," "All around my Hat," the "Cork Leg," "Paddle your own Canoe," and

She was beautiful as a butterfly,
As proud as a queen,
Was pretty little Polly Perkins
Of Paddington Green,

are remembered only by a few old folks. A ballad which my mother used to sing to me was a great favourite. It was told of one Bold Billie Taylor who was pressed and sent to sea, and how

His true love followed after
Under the name of Richard Carr,
And her lily-white hands were daubed all over
With the nasty pitch and tar.

The result was tragic. The lady, after boldly fighting in the first engagement, and when her sex was discovered, found her sweetheart in the company of a rival. "Then she called for sword and pistol," and shot the deceiver in the presence of his new love. The denouement was quite unconventional, for:—

When the Captain came for to hear of it
He very much applauded her for what she'd done,
And he made her First Lieutenant
Of the gallant Thunder Bomb.

One of the most prolific and successful composers of songs in early Victorian days was my old friend the veteran Henry Russell, a doyen of entertainers, and

the father of Sir Landon Ronald. Russell had delighted two generations here and in America by the singing of those fine songs; "Cheer Boys Cheer," "A Life on the Ocean Wave," "There's a Good Time Coming," the oft-parodied "Woodman Spare that Tree," and the stirring call:—

To the West, to the West to the Land of the Free,
Where the mighty Missouri runs down to the sea.

The latter was one of the most potent incentives to emigration during the "hungry forties," when thousands embarked for the meadows ripe with golden grain in that new land where wealth awaited honest labour.

My old friend had an endless fund of amusing reminiscences. I recall a story he used to tell of the celebrated tenor John Braham. Braham, né Abraham, was a Jew, and his father, being short and rotund, was always known as "Abey Punch." Braham, in his youthful days, had a small part assigned to him in a Burletta, in which he was associated with Mrs. Crouch, Michael Kelly, Mrs. Bland, and Jack Bannister. He is in search of his father, and arrives at a country inn. To him enters the landlord, who asks what refreshment his visitor requires and, why one so young travels alone. Braham replies: "Oh! for long I have roamed seeking my father, and 'tis strange that your voice, your look, your figure, all remind me of my lost parent. Tell me, are *you* my father?" "Nay," answers the landlord; "not so; I know you not." "Then Heaven protect me," cries Braham; "oh! could I but learn who is my father." An immediate answer was forthcoming. A little Jew arose in the pit and excitedly cried: "I can tell you. I knowed your fader well; his name was Abey Punch." This announcement kept the audience in roars of laughter for the rest of the scene.

Another of Russell's stories related to a somewhat similar experience of his own. After singing "There's a Good Time Coming," Russell was bowing his acknowledgment of the applause which always greeted this song when a Scotchman rose and gravely asked: "Can ye no tell us, Mr. Russell, just *when* the good time is coming?" My parents knew Braham well, and often used to meet him at Strawberry Hill, which was tenanted by George, seventh Earl Waldegrave, who married Braham's daughter. On these occasions the veteran would delight the company by singing his favourite old songs "My Trim Built Wherry," "Wapping Old Stairs" (which Colonel Newcome rendered with trills and roulades in the manner of his master Harry Incedon), and

Have you not heard of a jolly young waterman
Who at Blackfriars Bridge was used for to ply?
He feathered his oars with such skill and dexterity
Enchanting each heart and delighting each eye.

This ballad was from Dibdin's opera "The Waterman," in which Braham had to great applause enacted the part of the hero Tom Tugg. As a humorous finale he would sing the nursery rhyme of "Goosey, Goosey Gander."

Braham was fond of a joke, and on an occasion when he and his son Ward were driving to a party at Strawberry Hill, they were racing my father in Richmond Park, to see which would arrive first at the Star and Garter. My father had secured a good lead when Braham shouted: "Morris, Morris, your tiger has dropped his boot." The absurd improbability of such an accident did not at the moment occur to my father, who pulled up, when his opponent dashed past in high glee.

The itinerant nigger-minstrel troupes which appeared in London, and at seaside resorts, have long since disappeared. "The 'black' is out of fashion,

and people would not care for the old songs now," as an old performer sorrowfully remarked to me.

Two of their most popular songs were:—

Cerulia was beautiful, Cerulia was fair;
She lived with her mother in Bloomsbury Square,

and *The Captain with his Whiskers Took a Sly Glance at Me*.

Some time in the 'eighties an old Scotch friend used to sing us a little poem in Modern Doric, for which he had composed an accompaniment; it was entitled, "*She noddit tae me*."

It was so good that it should be given entire, but the following verses are all that I can recall:—

I'm but an auld body
Livin' up in Deeside
In a twa-roomed bit housie
Wi' a toofa beside;
Wi' my coo and my grumphy
I'm a happy's a bee,
But I'm far prooder noo
Since she noddit tae me.

I'm nae sa far past wi',
I'm gey, trig, and hale,
Can plant taw-three tawties
An look aifter my kale;
And when oor queen passes
I rin oot to see
Gin by luck she nicht notice
An' nod oot tae me!

But I've aye been unlucky,
And the blinds were aye doon
Till last week the time
O' her visit cam roon';
I waved my bit apron
And brisk I could dae,
And the Queen launched fu' kindly
And noddit tae me!

The Scotch are more faithful to their poets than the English to theirs, and the songs of Burns unite them the world over. Their poems and songs are those of the people, weavers, shepherds, ploughmen, and farmers, whose lives were always hard and often sadly chequered by misfortune and poverty.

Among these humble folk we recall Robert Tannahill, second only to Burns, the author of *Jessie the Flower of Dunblaine* and *Clean Pease Strac*; Miller, the "Laureate of the nursery," who wrote *W'ee Willie Winkie*; Robert Nicoll, who has been called the "Keats of Scotland," and poor David Gray, whose struggle with poverty and consumption is a pathetic story. Of these and of David Webster, Nicholson, Bruce, and many others, it may be truly said that their "muse, though hamely attire, may touch the heart."

Some old folks may remember a girl with a sweet voice, who long ago used to sing and accompany herself with a guitar in the West End of London. One summer evening, when the streets were wet with recent rain and the faint warm scent of the moist earth and trees filled the room in the quiet London Square where I was writing, she sung Clement Scott's beautiful *Garden of Sleep*:—

On the grass of the cliff at the edge of the steep
God planted a garden—a garden of sleep!
Neath the blue of the sky, in the green of the corn,
It is there that the regal, red poppies are born.
Brief days of desire and long dreams of delight,
They are mine when my Poppy-land cometh in sight.

The "Garden" is now desolate and its "graves in the grass," and the "tower in ruins" lie beneath the insatiable sea.

Sentimental songs were popular in Victorian days, and echoes of these must still linger in some English homes. Among these were "*What are the Wild Waves Saying?*" "*The Bridge*," "*One Summer's*

Eye with Pensive Thought," and the romantic "*Juanita*":—

Soft o'er the mountain falls the southern moon,
And o'er the fountain breaks the day too soon.
In thy dark eyes splendour,
Where the warm light loves to dwell
Weary looks, yet tender, speak a fond farewell.

Many must be unrecorded here, among them the graceful and melodious ballads of Thomas Haynes Bayley, which in the far-away 'seventies were heard in the drawing-room.

The comic songs of my youth are now heard only as broadcast by the B.B.C., whose vocalists render them as drawing-room ballads. They lack the inimitable esprit of Nellie Power in *Let me Introduce a Fella La-di-da*; the appeal of Chirgwin's *Blind Boy*, always insistently demanded by the gallery; the "go" of

After the Opera is over, and after the Opera is done,
We gems of the very first water commence our frolic and fun;

of Leybourne's *Champagne Charlie*, and the abandon of Lottie Collins' *Ta-ra-ra-boom-de-ay*.

The old halls are all gone now. Many of them were like clubs, where one always found the same social circle gathered round the bar or seated at the Chairman's table; and with them has disappeared a phase of London night-life peculiarly its own.

In the days of pipe and tabor, "When Tom came home from labour and Cis to milking rose," all country folks were vocalists, and we know too that Falstaff wished to be a weaver and sing psalms and all manner of songs; but unfortunately he had "lost his voice hallowing and singing of anthems."

The weavers and cloth-workers were notable performers, and a character in Ben Jonson's *Silent Woman* caught cold by sitting up late singing catches with the latter. To sing was the "occupation" of Autolycus; and Dorcas, Mopsa, and the clown could all take their parts in his merry ballad.

The hurry of modern life is responsible for the disappearance of the minstrels and songs of a more easy-going age—the wares of Autolycus are out of fashion now.

EDGAR SYERS.

The Mysteries of Sleep

MR. COHEN'S *Essays in Freethinking* are, we are assured, not conducive to sleep, yet sleep is a most important factor in our lives. It has a certain advantage over death in that it can be more easily studied. It is only a temporary condition, whereas death is final; once dead you cannot come back to life to record your experiences.

If we look into the daily life of Mr. Everyone, we can see that each day of it forms a complete cycle of actions. He gets up at about seven or half past every morning, has his breakfast, goes off to work. At mid-day he has a meal and a short rest. In the evening, when he comes home, he has another meal. At about ten o'clock (?) he goes to bed. Thus during a period of seven to nine hours in every twenty-four Mr. Everyman is in bed, and if he is in good health, he will be asleep during the greater part of that space of time. We must all sleep; it is a vital factor, and its absence can have serious consequences. A year old baby sleeps 18 out of every 24 hours.

What is sleep? What causes sleep? and why is it so necessary for us to sleep? These are questions which have not been definitely settled even now. Countless theories on the causes of sleep have been put forward. The very diversity in the nature of these theories is a proof of the great complexity of the problem to be solved. Before dealing with these we will glance at some of the recognized facts about sleep.

Firstly, we find that human beings are not the only ones to sleep. The other vertebrate animals also sleep. So do many of the higher insects. Even plants show similar tendencies. Secondly, in order to sleep, we must have two things; (a) We must be tired. (b) There must be no external irritation. That is to say, the bedclothes must not be scratchy, too heavy, or too warm; there should not be any strong source of illumination in the immediate neighbourhood, nor too much noise, etc. Thirdly, there is no clear boundary between sleep and wakefulness. There is a gradual passage from one to the other. During sleep, the muscles of the body are in a state of relaxation, yet the pupils are strongly contracted and the eyes are turned upwards, towards heaven. In a normal person, the deepest and most effective sleep occurs about an hour after retiring; that is, or should be, before midnight. After this the sleep becomes progressively lighter until waking in the morning. In the case of people suffering from "nerves" their best sleep comes in the early hours of the morning. As a result of this, the sufferer goes to bed very late, so as to avoid tossing in his bed for hours on end. He rises late in the morning still feeling tired and sleepy. In extreme cases, the patient only feels at his best during the evening.

While we sleep, we are unconscious of our surroundings; we cannot say what has been happening around us during our sleep. Recently, hypnosis has enabled us to establish the remarkable fact that we do know what is happening around us while we are asleep. While we sleep our sense organs are perfectly wideawake, but somehow or other, they are no longer in connexion with our conscious mind, but only with the subconscious. An excellent example of the function of the sense organs in the subconscious is afforded by the mother and her baby: The mother may sleep perfectly well beside her snoring husband, but if by any chance the baby utters a little gurgle, the mother wakes up at once, even though the sound is as nothing compared to the father's snores. Sometimes the subconscious mind is so active that it leaves an impression in the conscious portion. We then say that we have been dreaming. The chief difference between sleep and unconsciousness produced by drugs or coma, etc., is that a sleeper can be awakened instantaneously, whereas that is not the case for the others. There are certain diseases which produce an intense drowsiness. There are also diseases causing insomnia. Children often exhibit certain peculiarities during their sleep, rhythmic movements of the head or limbs which continue so long as the child sleeps. These symptoms usually disappear as the child grows up, and are not serious even though they may sometimes seriously disturb their parents. The hibernation of certain mammals during the winter months is also a form of sleep, but it differs in its object.

We are now in a position to examine a few of the theories on the causes of sleep. One of the first suggestions was that it was produced by a mechanical interruption of the communications between nerve cell endings. It has also been suggested that sleep was due to the compression of the nerve fibres resulting from a state of anemia, or by an œdema, an accumulation of liquid in the tissues caused by fatigue. These are generally put aside to-day for lack of positive evidence. A more recent hypothesis assumes that toxic substances are produced by the body during wakefulness, which produce drowsiness as they accumulate. The presence and the nature of such substances have now been definitely proved. To-day, sleep is thought to be the resultant cause of many factors. For example, a substance containing a high percentage of bromine, which causes sleep, is produced by that small gland at the base of the skull, the pituitary body. In spite of its small size—it is not much bigger than a pea—its importance is such that it is often referred to as the keystone of the body. An Italian physicist, Economo, claims that sleep is controlled by a specific region of the brain, just as memory, speech and all the body movements have each their controlling area. As proof of this he puts forward the symptoms of Encephalitis Lethargica, commonly called sleepy sickness on account of the intense drowsiness which it produces. The cause of this illness is an inflammation of a certain part of the brain. The sleep which such a person under-

goes is quite normal except for its duration, which may be of several weeks. Inflammation of a neighbouring portion of the brain produces insomnia. Another experimenter has been able to induce sleep in cats by stimulating part of their brain electrically.

These brief comments endeavour to demonstrate the complexity of an apparently simple phenomenon. I do not think that there are many of us who realize what we are undertaking or, rather, undergoing when we try to get to sleep.

EDMOND BRADLAUGH BONNER.

Anti-Semitism

THE Rev. Dr. James Black, Moderator of the Church of Scotland, recently lectured in Glasgow, on "The Enigma of the Jew." He gave serious offence by his utterance of the atrocious "slogan": "There are only two ways to treat the Jews: to fight them or to convert them" (presumably to the religion of Dr. Black).

It is scarcely necessary to point out that this sentiment is only superior to Mr. Hitler's in so far as the Leader wastes no time in the ineffectual task of "converting" Jews. Mr. Hitler's method has one advantage over Dr. Black's. Extermination without the option of conversion does not leave alive the worst type, the lower type, the unconscientious, easily persuaded "convert." No doubt, Dr. Black is incapable of the horrors of Hitlerism. He may have qualified his idea of "fighting" the unconvertible Jew, but his slogan is most unhappily phrased.

Anti-Semitism has a vile history. Most of Jewry's enemies have attributed Jewry's persecutions to Jewry's own faults. Freethinkers are little likely to ignore those faults—the pride of Abraham's seed, the exclusiveness of God's Chosen People, the bitter penalties which the Mosaic law enforced on dissent, criticism, or disobedience to insignificant or abominable commands. But while revolt and disbelief are natural, desirable and inevitable in regard to superstition and injustice, Judaism has more often been persecuted for its virtues than its vices.

Also, of course, the Jews have incurred the enmity of nations they overcame by force of arms. The dispossessed tribes of the "Promised Land," for instance, hated the Hebrew Invader (and the Deity, whose blood-lust inspired all the atrocities recorded in the Old Testament). But this ancient anti-semitism bears little relation to later hatreds.

The Jews suffered terribly in Spain and Portugal in the middle ages. The Inquisition enforced with vilest vindictiveness a persecution begun much earlier, and inspired by Christian resentment against a people who were said to have rejected and persecuted the Saviour of Mankind. Besides Jews executed or burnt, Mr. F. D. Mocatta (in *The Jews and the Inquisition*) calculates that 800,000 Jews were exiled from Spain by the Church. Mr. J. M. Robertson puts the figure much lower, but confirms the magnitude of the banishments. Hitlerite Germany never had more than 500,000 Jews (in a population of 65 millions), and Hitler allows no Jews to leave the country; they must remain and suffer.

Christian churches to-day are not guilty of the active anti-semitism referred to. Many Christians have protested against its abominations. Unhappily it is the barest truth to say that Christianity as a whole has by the stigma of its evil example and teaching in earlier years both justified and encouraged those who to-day are doing what the Churches once proudly and openly did to the Jews.

That absolute imposture, the book called *The Protocols of the Learned Elders of Zion*, survives and is popular wherever freedom of press and of speech is denied. Notwithstanding the complete exposure of its fraudulent origin and history, it still circulates by the hundred thousand in Germany to-day. It is the basis of a myriad crimes against harmless Jews of all ages.

The *Protocols* book purports to be an official, if secret publication—a record and a plan—of an international Jewish plot to overthrow all existing governments "with

such appalling terror that the very stoutest hearts quail." Of course, the revolt against Tsarist Russia is said to be the first-fruits of this Jewish plot.

It was the *Times* (August 16-18, 1921) which proved up to the hilt that this book was part of a satirical romance, published in France in 1864. The author was himself a keen anti-semite, a monarchist, a strict Catholic, and a French government official.

The fraud, however, did not originate in Hitler's day nor in Germany. The original fraudulent "adaptation," in the form which has been so valuable a weapon in Nazi hands, was made by a Russian—one of the Tsar's officials, early in 1905. A copy of this first issue is in the British Museum: it bears the imprint of the Tsar's printing-press at Tsarskoie Selo. Its first printing was followed by one of the worst Pogroms Russia records.

To-day, says Hugo Valentin (*Anti-Semitism*, Gollancz, London, 1936), "this book is looked upon by millions of people as a Bible." Walter Rathenau, one of Germany's greatest patriots, owed his assassination solely to the accursed influence of this book, and he was only one of many Jews who owe their death to the same influence.

GEORGE BEDBOROUGH.

Notes from Abroad

RECENTLY the "Vlaamsche Philharmonie" arranged a concert in Belgium, in which the great German pianist, Wilhelm Backhaus, was to play under Loewenstein, the Israelite conductor. Certain Flemings drew the attention of the German legation to the fact that an Aryan was going to play under a non-Aryan conductor. Backhaus was summoned to the legation; and, in the presence of his denouncers, the "Reichskammer für Musik" was rung up. It formally forbade Backhaus to play under Loewenstein. Backhaus submitted. But the absence of Backhaus would have upset the concert. So Loewenstein was requested to stand down, and he consented, so as not to spoil the concert. Backhaus will thus be able to have a hundred-per-cent Aryan conductor (M. Désiré Defauw), the concert will not be a fiasco, and the dictates of the "Reichskammer für Musik" will be respected. Such interference is hardly to be encouraged.

Blasphemy laws still exist in Holland. A traveller has been accused of voicing doubts on Religion. He has been acquitted of the crime of blasphemy by two courts on the ground that the fact was not proved. But the public prosecutor is trying to get the sentence of acquittal quashed by the court of appeal.

The latest census figures show that there are more than a million people in Holland who profess no religion.

In Switzerland the Catholics obey the orders of Rome to prevent Freethought meetings, and to accuse them of being the "work of Moscow."

When the "Freigeistige Vereinigung" decided on a general assembly at Lucerne, recently, attempts were made to try and prevent the Assembly using a certain hall (for which, incidentally, they had never applied). The fact that this society does not support the World Union of Freethinkers did not spare it the accusation of being under the orders of the Atheists of Moscow.

How little good and bad conduct were associated in thought with the intrinsic nature of right and wrong, and how completely they were associated in thought with obedience and disobedience to Jahweh, we see in the facts that prosperity and increase of population were promised as rewards of allegiance; while there was punishment for such non-ethical disobediences as omitting circumcision or numbering the people.—*Spencer*

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Beloved child

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SUNDAY LECTURE NOTICES, Etc.

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

LONDON

INDOOR

SOUTH PLACE ETHICAL SOCIETY (Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, W.C. 1) : 11.0, Gilbert McAllister, M.A.—"Ethics of Town Planning."

OUTDOOR

BETHNAL GREEN AND HACKNEY BRANCH N.S.S. (Victoria Park, near the Bandstand) : 6.30, Mrs. E. Grout—A Lecture.

KINGSTON-ON-THAMES BRANCH N.S.S. (Market Place) : 7.30, Mr. R. H. Rosetti—A Lecture.

NORTH LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (Highbury Corner) 8.0, Friday, Mr. L. Ebury. White Stone Pond, Hampstead, 11.30, Sunday, Mr. L. Ebury. Parliament Hill Fields, 3.30, Sunday, Mr. L. Ebury. South Hill Park, Hampstead, 8.0, Monday, Mr. L. Ebury.

WEST HAM BRANCH (Corner of Deanery Road, Water Lane, Stratford, E.) : 7.30, Mr. A. Leacey—A Lecture.

WEST LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (Hyde Park) : 3.30, Sunday, Miss E. Millard, M.A., Mr. E. Bryant and Mr. G. Barnes. 6.30, Messrs. Bryant, Barnes and Tuson. Thursdays, 7.30, Mr. E. C. Saphin.

COUNTRY

OUTDOOR

ACCINGTON (Market) : 7.45, Wednesday, Mr. J. Clayton. BIRKENHEAD BRANCH N.S.S. Mr. G. Whitehead will speak at the following places : Saturday, May 14, Haymarket, 7.30, Sunday, May 15, Park entrance, 7.30, Monday to Friday, May 16 to 20, Park Entrance, 8.0.

BLYTH (The Fountain) : 7.0, Monday, Mr. J. T. Brighton.

BRIERFIELD (Market), 3.15, Sunday, Mr. J. Clayton.

BURNLEY (Market) : 7.0, Sunday, Mr. J. Clayton.

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

EDINBURGH BRANCH N.S.S. (Mound) : 7.0, Mr. F. Smithies—"God Takes a Red Face."

GLASGOW SECULAR SOCIETY (Jordans Court, Shotts) : 8.0—"Plea for Atheism." Shotts, 8.0, Thursday—A Lecture. Greenock, Grey Place, 8.0, Tuesday—"The Need for Freethought." Dumbarton, High Street, 8.0, Wednesday—"Morals of Religion." Mrs. Whitefield will speak at each of these meetings. Glasgow, Albion Street, 8.0, Friday—A Lecture.

HAPTON : 7.30, Monday, Mr. J. Clayton.

MANCHESTER BRANCH N.S.S. (Alexander Park Gates) : 8.0, Saturday, Mr. W. A. Atkinson. Platt Fields, 3.0, Sunday, Mr. F. Spencer. Stevenson Square, 3.30, Sunday, Mr. W. A. Atkinson. And at 7.30, Mr. F. Spencer will speak.

MUSSELBURGH : 8.0, Thursday, Mr. F. Smithies—A Lecture.

NORTH SHIELDS (Harbour View) : 7.0, Tuesday, Mr. J. T. Brighton.

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PRINCIPLES AND OBJECTS.

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