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Views and Opinions

This Odd World

THERE is nothing original in saying this world is a very odd one, and when the saying is so unmistakably true there is little wisdom in camouflaging it with a new verbal formula. We have inherited a nervous structure that is always a few jumps ahead of the intelligence that tries to control it. It was developed in one set of circumstances, and we have to adapt it to another and a different set. Wisdom tells us to do one thing, and blind impulse forces us to do another, and often the wisdom we possess is expended in exercising or justifying unwise actions. We grow more food than we can eat, and take care that many go hungry. We make more clothes than we can wear, but millions are badly clad. We develop an elaborate system of instruction and use it as a substitute for education. We spend as a Government, according to Professor Bernal, £3,000,000 on research for war, and £200,000 on research in fighting disease. We have acquired mountains of knowledge with but molehills of understanding. If I agreed with that muddle-headed section of the community which says, "There must be a god!", I should say he was either stupid, powerless, or wantonly brutal, and that the only apology for him is to deny his existence. As it is, it is best to say it is an odd world.

* * *

War and Peace

In the *Sunday Chronicle* for August 27, there is a lengthy article on the use of the aeroplane in war. That might impress one very much, if one can manage to suppress one or two reflections that rise in one's mind. One cannot help reflecting that there was a stage before the assassination of the League of Nations, when that body would have declared the outlawing of bombing-planes. One also remembers that it was Lord Londonderry himself who told the House of Lords that he had the greatest trouble in preserving the use of bombing-planes, and also that Sir John

Simon explained that in border warfare it was cheaper in both lives and money to have them. So Lord Londonderry has but to thank his own efforts for the legal use of bombing-planes in war. They are cheaper and more effective than ordinary war, and one must, in a Christian country, study cost.

We must be fair to Lord Londonderry. He has not seceded from his position that we must have bombing-planes—probably he agrees with Sir John Simon, that they must be preserved for at least uncivilized and semi-civilized. Between bombing the hut of a native and the house of a Mayfair resident there is a real difference—in cost. What Lord Londonderry says is:—

For the sake of humanity the great Powers must come to some agreement over the bombing of open towns.

On which one may reflect that the distinction between civilians and soldiers in times of war was always, to a considerable degree, artificial. The soldier in the field had always to be maintained by the man at home, and there was no other source from which to draw more soldiers than the ranks of the civilians. Nor does there seem any great distinction between starving old people and children, or preventing medicines reaching the civilian enemy, and blowing them to pieces with a bomb. When the allied troops entered Germany and saw the thousands of children reduced to skeletons, the sight could hardly have been more cheerful than seeing the bodies of children killed by bombs. Nor should it be forgotten that when an attempt was made to bring Spanish children away from the war-area the opposition came from the Roman Church, from that "Christian Gentleman," Franco, whose ships threatened to sink the vessels carrying the children, and that a grudging permission to land a limited number was given by Sir John Simon—provided there was no demand on *public* funds.

Finally, it must be remembered that our Government has repeatedly declared that in modern war the *whole* of the population is engaged. The truth is obvious. In the face of facts the expression of horror because an "open-town" is bombed becomes a little more than a sarcasm. Etiquette demands that civilians shall be killed in an orthodox way.

All my life--long before the bombing-plane arrived—I have protested against this hypocritical pretence that the civilians stood upon a ground different from soldiers. Soldiers—whether officer or private—do not make wars. It is civilians that make war, soldiers merely fight them. The present outcry arises more from fear than hatred. One need exercise but little thought to realize how much of the present outcry against war is motivated by fear. Before the era of the 'plane, as I said last week, we exported war. We fought out our quarrels in France, in Spain, in Holland, in Germany, in Russia. We saw our soldiers off to war with bands and cheers and waving of hands, and then returned to our ordinary occupations. But now—

adays war, when it comes, will come home to all of us. And that is a very different state of affairs. So the world wants peace—peace based on submarines, and bombing-planes, and huge armies, with the leader of Italy preaching the beauty and “entertainment” of war, the leader of Germany boasting of the greatness of war, and our own ministers putting into the mouth of the King the teaching that men “achieve manhood through the gateway of war.” Peace will hardly come along such lines. To outlaw war we must morally and intellectually ostracize the teachers of war, the preachers of war, and those who hold up war for our admiration. You may make men cowards from fear, but by that road you will never make them peaceful—even in so odd a world as this one.

* * *

The Godless Conference

We are getting very near the Congress of the World Union, but, if my temporary indisposition is some kind of notice paid me by the Lord, so that Hinsley, Ramsay, Hoare & Co., may know their petitions and protests have not been ignored, it is rather ill-judged. Everything connected with the Conference is now arranged, and should go forward with smoothness and, I am sure, success. The chief trouble over the Conference is the size of the Scala Theatre. The application for reserved seats has been great. By the time this issue of the *Freethinker* is in the hands of its readers, I expect the applications will be three times as great as the seating accommodation. There are a large number of unreserved seats, and these are certain to be more than filled. The Conference should mark a stage in the history of British Freethought.

So far as Freethinkers are concerned, the Conference would have been a success in any case. But as far as the general public are concerned I feel that we owe much to the “enemy.” Cardinal Hinsley—who is an obvious disgrace to the tactical ability of Roman Catholic leaders—has exhausted his unenviable ability for slander misrepresentation and downright lying. He probably felt he had to do something to justify his promotion. The *Universe* and the *Catholic Times* excelled themselves in circumstantial lying and misrepresentation. Sir Samuel Hoare was too cautious to make statements that could be easily disproved, but the confession to his “Dear Ramsay” showed that the religious bigot was one side—a not unusual one—of the political trickster. Parliament—thanks to the last-named two—also helped to advertise the Congress.

In any case the Congress would have been a success. But, thanks to those named, and others unnamed, it bids fair to be a gigantic success.

CHAPMAN COHEN.

On the Benefits of Not Wanting the Moon

LOOK out, fond heart, and hope not much at all;
Thy peace, guard well, world ills will break thee soon,
If spend thou wilt on every sorrow's call,
And taking others' woes for thine own boon.

Look in, stout heart, leave providence to do
Tasks that the puny cannot undertake,
Help where thou canst't, and pity not a few—
Love not too well the world thou didst not make.

By gentle ways, by thought, find then thy own—
Thy world is there, and be thou not afraid;
Guard well the shrine, where reason, on the throne,
Sees joy and woe and sees them undismayed.

NICHOLAS MERE.

Scientific Symbolism

“Public opinion is, far too often, publicans' opinion.”
T. H. Huxley.

“Without freedom and boldness the most splendid literature is altogether worthless.”—H. T. Buckle.

ONE of the greatest drawbacks of our educational system is that science is largely unintelligible to the vast majority of people. Scientists have their own language, and it is Greek to the multitude. Whether these specialists feel that, having gained their knowledge by years of very hard work, it is sheer prodigality to give it away easily, or whether the old priest-like spirit has found a new lodgment in scientific circles, may be an open question. Nothing appears to irritate some of these authors of ponderous monographs so much as having their life-work made intelligible to the masses of mankind.

This is a regrettable state of affairs. Science is, in the last analysis, simply ordered knowledge, and the diffusion of learning should be a common and constant aim. Yet it almost appears that the matter is tabooed. The newspaper press pays little or no attention to science, but devotes a third of its space to so-called sport and much of the rest to sheer silliness. Whether a particular film-star has three lumps of sugar in her tea is not of such importance as a knowledge of the human machine. Concealed in the difficult terminology of scientific language, such information remains comparatively unknown.

Yet real knowledge has been within easy reach, if we but realized. For very many years scientists have revealed their secrets at the annual meetings of the British Association. The newspapers reported in snippety fashion, sometimes humourously, often too sparingly. Nobody profited by such an absurd procedure. It was as if knowledge was deliberately hidden, of set purpose and design.

The matter rests largely with the scientists themselves. Some of them have spoken and written plainly enough in the past. Tyndall's outspoken Belfast address, and Huxley's retort to Bishop Wilberforce were not only understood but appreciated by huge numbers of earnest people who had not otherwise realized the nature of the conflict between the scientists and their hereditary opponents. Huxley, indeed, had a splendid and attractive gift for interpreting science. “The Saint Paul of Darwinism,” someone dubbed him, and most certainly his power of popularizing the teaching of evolution was not only very remarkable, but beyond praise. Huxley had a large share in the world-wide success of Darwinism, and, thanks to him, a very large number of ordinary readers had a clear idea of the intellectual issues that were at stake, and it may be, saw more clearly the tendency of that movement than some of those who, with technical knowledge, dissected the old faiths whilst still bowing the knee to the Goddess Grundy. If professors frowned and undergraduates sneered, it was a noble achievement to have helped the people to grasp the teachings of science.

Some of the present-day scientists are beginning to see that Huxley and his colleagues were right. The British Association itself has, at length, actually decided to concern itself with the practical applications of science, with special regard for social and economic problems. This is a step in the right direction, for scientists have not only helped the world, but can continue to do so. Specialists have only themselves to blame if they lack public appreciation. So long as they use language which darkens knowledge, so long will they be misrepresented, misunderstood, and treated with indifference.

The old Freethinkers saw the value of science quite Fathers of the Church, written at the beginning of the

clearly. It was not for nothing that the former Freethought headquarters in Old Street, London was named: "The Hall of Science," nor that so many scientific addresses were given from our platforms. Edward B. Aveling, once a temporary editor of this journal, was himself a "Doctor of Science," and both his books, *Darwin Made Easy*, and *The Student's Marx*, deserve reprinting. It is to the credit of these old "Intellectuals" that they saw the necessity of popularizing science, and did their best to ensure it.

It took them many years to do their work, and one's only fear is that some of the results of that work should be lost. To-day in the world of Orthodoxy no one worth mentioning is so cocksure as they all used to be. Scarcely anyone is as convinced as the old cave-men of the last century. Yet Orthodoxy still hangs together after a fashion, like a damaged gate on a fence. Does anyone believe for a moment that this preponderance of power left to Orthodoxy is the result of a national conviction that the preferred party is right? All knowledge has been put to the question, and an out-and-out believer of the old school is stared at as a survival from an earlier and more ignorant age. The only really logical position for Orthodoxy is "Believe this or you are damned." Yet this sentiment would find few sympathizers in England of to-day.

As in theology, so in ethics. The very conception of an absolute right and wrong is perishing slowly from modern thinking. Our crimes are traced to our forefathers, and our vices are pitied as diseases. Hedonism is pointed out as the real motive of what has hitherto been regarded as duty. In this maelstrom of conflicting views, the popularization of the principles of science would be of inestimable value. Clear judgment and resolute action are impossible without knowledge. Otherwise, we are conscious of the

"Blank misgivings of a creature
Moving about in worlds not realized."

Every popularizer of science has deserved well of his generation. Who could say an ungrateful word of Richard Proctor with his delightful explanations of astronomy, or of Grant Allen and Ray Lankester with their racy and informative scientific articles? Our thanks are also due to H. G. Wells, Julian Huxley, Joseph McCabe, and others, for the searchlights they have turned on what would otherwise be scientific mysteries, "caviare to the general." These men have opened up a new universe to hundreds of thousands, and ordinary readers are beginning to have a clearer idea of the labours of the great thinkers of our time.

In order that the mass of citizens should have an opportunity of understanding and profiting by science, knowledge must not be hidden under an unfamiliar jargon. They must speak and write English like Huxley and Herbert Spencer. And they must break the reserve of the newspaper editors, and see to it that science is treated with the respect it deserves. The English people, as a whole, know nothing of science. Old Doctor Johnson spoke scornfully of the dull man who, when the doctor said there was no fruit in the orchard, replied that there were two apples and a pear. "I say, pooh! sir. There is no fruit in that orchard!" So, if anyone should say that he knows, a few young men who dabble in science, I should not dispute the statement, but should maintain that it did not conflict with the general truth that the English people, as a people, are not half educated. A further diffusion of scientific knowledge must have consequences of vast importance. For Montaigne, wisdom was summarized in the sentence: "The greatest thing of the world is for a man to know how to be his own." How can this happen when the man is both ignorant and a slave. To read the unbalanced works of the so-called Christian Christian Era, and to read the sermons of the clergy

of all denominations, uttered a day or so ago, is to be filled with doubt as to whether these priests ever attempted to increase man's knowledge. Is it not plain that they were only seeking to make converts to their Oriental faith; and that the best corrective to their old-world ignorance is the popularization of science?

MIMNERMUS.

The International Congress

COMING events, it is said, cast their shadows before them. If the shadows cast before it by the 1938 International Congress of Freethinkers are a measure of its importance, it must rank as one of the most outstanding events in the history of Secularism in this century. There is no sign that these shadows have in the least degree terrorized English rationalists as the shadow of the Black Crow frightened Tweedledee and Tweedledum. No doubt the publicity agents of the Vatican fancy themselves in the rôle of the great Black Crow, but they have miscalculated if they imagine that that the Tweedle Twins are to be found in Freethought ranks. The mares' nests of the scare-monger Catholic press, echoed by such purveyors of truth as the *Patriot* and Mosley's *Action*, have put only the henroosts of Conservative parishes into a twitter. It has been a poor victory to have wasted some hours of Parliament (and now, that members are paid, we can calculate their hourly value to their constituents) when an honest investigation would have discovered the absurdity and falsity of the information provided them by Belgian priests and Anti-comintern agencies.

This September Congress will be the twenty-fifth held under the organization which was set up at Brussels in 1880. This 1880 Conference was not the first International meeting of Freethinkers.

There was an International Conference at Amsterdam, in 1859, and another, if I am not mistaken, in 1864 in Paris, at which Garibaldi spoke. In 1869 and 1870, an œcumenical council was held which is known as the Vatican Council. At this Council the infallibility of the Pope, and the supremacy of the Church over the State were both proclaimed. As no such Council has been convoked for 350 years the excitement it aroused was considerable. Contemporary Freethinkers therefore summoned an Anti-Council to meet at Naples in December, 1869. Among other projects to be discussed by this Conference was the establishment of a Universal Federation of Freethinkers. Unhappily its life was brief. At the first sitting a French delegate expressed disapproval of the occupation of Rome by the French troops; whereon a police superintendent present rose and dissolved the Conference, which was dispersed at the second meeting by a company of soldiers.

In 1878 César de Paepe, the Belgian Freethinker, revived the proposal of an International Federation, and this was adopted by the National Secular Society with the result that in 1880, the Belgian Rationalist Federation and other Belgian Freethought Societies sent out an invitation to Freethought Societies in all parts of the world to join in an International Congress with the purpose of establishing a permanent International Federation. The English delegates included Mrs. Besant, Hypatia Bradlaugh (Bonner) and J. Schwaagman, of these the last-named is still alive. Nine countries were represented, and a General Council was appointed which for the next three years had its headquarters in London under the chairmanship of Charles Bradlaugh; Mr. Schwaagman was the secretary.

The First Congress under this new organization was to have been held at Paris. It fell through; an Anti-clerical Congress was held at Paris and a Freethought

Congress at London, both in 1881. Nevertheless progress was made and more countries were brought into the fold. In 1883 a Congress was held at Amsterdam, which was attended not only by all the nations heretofore represented, but also by delegates from Switzerland, Greece, Denmark, Canada and India. A great obstacle was that in few countries were the Freethought Societies sufficiently organized or united among themselves. This naturally made International Union no easy matter. The Antwerp Congress of 1885, and the London Congress of 1887 marked further steps forward. The United States was represented all these years by the National Liberal League, with 220 branches and the delegate was Mr. D. M. Bennett, the editor of *The Truth Seeker*. One of the principal aims of this League was the separation of Church and State; it was later known as the National Secular Society, but is now defunct. In France there was much Freethought, but no National Federation of Freethought Societies till 1907, though there was an Anti-Clerical League. Nevertheless an International Congress took place in Paris, September 15-22, 1889, and it was the most numerously attended till then, of the International Freethought gatherings. The country which came to the fore at that Congress, other than France, was Spain. Nicolas Salmeron, President of the short-lived Republic of 1873, was a Freethinker, and there had been a strong Freethought Society in Barcelona for many years. In view of the developments in that country it was decided to hold the next Congress in Madrid; and there the delegates from the Old World and the New met to the number of 4,000. The Grand Orient Freemasons supported the Congress; there were also present delegates from Mexico and South America. One of the subjects discussed was "The Incompatibility of Catholicism with Modern Life, and the most efficacious means of cleansing society of the Catholic virus." It is not surprising therefore that on the third morning speakers and officers were summoned to appear before the magistrate to answer a charge of attacking religion, and that on the fourth morning the delegates were met by a police inspector accompanied by a troop of civil guards, and furnished with an order suspending the Congress. The delegates adjourned to the office of the newspaper *Las Dominicales*, and attracted a considerable crowd. The suppression of the Congress was reported in the daily press of both hemispheres, and the International movement gained considerably thereby, for it paved the way for the astonishingly successful Congresses of 1904 in Rome, and 1905 in Paris. These gatherings mark the peak of organized Latin Freethought.

In 1904 the Italian Freethought Societies convened an International meeting in Rome. Preliminary Congresses were held at Königsberg (celebrating the centenary of Kant's death), Barcelona and Milan. Over 3,000 Italian delegates attended the Rome Congress; among them were many old Garibaldian red-shirts, and a number of municipalities sent their mayors to attend officially. A thousand delegates came from France, and over 400 from Spain. There were some forty English-speaking delegates, including Dr. Moncure Conway, Charles Watts, G. W. Foote, John M. Robertson, as well as Dr. Stanton Coit, Mr. Chapin Cohen and Mr. Joseph McCabe. From Germany came Ernst Haeckel and a strong representation of Monists. For brilliance and enthusiasm nothing like the gathering had been seen in the annals of Freethought. A great procession made its way through Rome to that breach in the Vatican walls which the French troops had left, and which had never been repaired. The prestige of the Papacy was challenged in the most striking manner.

C. BRADLAUGH BONNER.

(To be concluded)

Crime

HAVING humbled Old King Coffee, annexed his famous umbrella, and rendered him amenable to the demands of Britain, General Wolseley, that highly-trained and eminent Christian warrior, received the thanks of Parliament, with a grant of £25,000 for the "courage, energy, and perseverance" he had displayed in subduing a few ignorant West African savages. The soldiers, under his command, in this Ashanti War of 1878, were not even thanked. "But what else could the Government do, ma' laddie? It wanted to treat us all alike, baith the living and the dead."

The last canny observation was that of a unit of this Ashanti expeditionary force—a highland soldier—who, while convalescing in our district, told us many wonderful stories.

Reading in this morning's paper (June 14) about the increase of crime in the country, recalled to memory one of those stories:—

The natives on the Gold Coast (he said), were wicked creatures, and expert thieves, particularly the male portion of them. Up country, in the hinterland, marching toward Coomassie, we found them quite different—kind, honest, gentle, manly, in fact fine fellows. The only reason we could find that could account for this difference was that whereas the natives on the Gold Coast had come in contact with missionaries, their brothers in the hinterland had never seen one. Similar experiences he told us of having when trying to civilize other native races! "How We Civilized the Matabele," a ditty by Tom McGuire, corroborates these stories:—

"They were niggers, and they occupied far Matabeleland,
And for years we gave 'em gospel, but they would'nt understand;

For thirty years the mission tried to bring 'em to contrition,
They were going to perdition in far Matabeleland.

And we only saved six sinners in far Matabeleland,
For their heads were thick and woolly, and their souls were black and tanned,

And you can't convert a nigger till you perforate his figger
With the gospel from a trigger, in far Matabeleland.

So our pious game was played out in far Matabeleland,
And we failed to swop the Bible for their scurvy patch of sand;

Then we tried explosive bullets, that brought 'em down like pullets

With pellets in their gullets in far Matabeleland.

Had they taken to salvation in far Matabeleland
We'd have had this consolation, which we cannot now command—

As the rifle told its story on each body dark, and gory
We'd have sent to glory from far Matabeleland.

There may be slight errors in form and matter in this poem. I quote from memory. But the drift of it is fairly correct.

The newspaper of June 14, referred to above, and several more that came under my observation, all make pretty general remarks.

One paragraph in the *Daily Telegraph* seemed noteworthy:—

There seems to be some justification for the conclusion that the acquisitive instinct is becoming stronger than the urge to honesty. Statistics of juvenile crime appear to support this conclusion, as the percentage of arrests of persons up to 20 years of age shows a progressive increase.

The "urge to honesty" is absent in Kleptomania, and Kleptomania, though used only as a legal safeguard for the rich, is not an aristocratic complaint only. The acquisitive faculty grows with what it

feeds on. The papers, generally, are at one in saying what Shakespeare told us, over three hundred years ago:—

"O opportunity thy guilt is great."

and

"How oft the means to do ill-deeds
Make ill deeds done."

But a very good paragraph is worth quoting from the *Police Review* of June 17:—

As regards crimes committed by adults the position in 1937 was better than it has been for years, the figures for juveniles do not reflect this improvement. They almost reach the high level of 1936. The number of young persons dealt with during 1937 for indictable offences was 1,821, of whom 499 were for "breaking-in." These figures are for persons dealt with. The actual number of offences is much greater. One juvenile had 83 cases of breaking-in and 22 cases of larceny taken into consideration. Whilst 8 boys had 20 or more cases of breaking-in, as well as many cases of larceny, proved against them. It is of interest to note that the average age of young offenders is lower than in the previous year, juveniles of 12 years and under numbering 853 out of a total of 1,821. Those who attribute the prevalence of juvenile delinquency to lack of suitable employment for boys leaving school will be hard put to it to fit these facts into their theory, as these children are far from reaching the age at which the compulsory attendance at school ceases. This is not a problem for the police, but primarily for the home, the school, and the religious organizations.

The last sentence is a very questionable one. I think the problem is one for the police. The police are there to watch over offenders, and their duty will remain until the criminal classes are exterminated. Their extermination may lie elsewhere. I question whether either school or religious organizations can do much along these lines. Policemen should know that the criminal classes are bred, like all the other pests, and that until their breeding grounds are destroyed they will continue to multiply. Take for instance Liverpool. We have numerous chapels and churches, of all denominations; a new Protestant Cathedral, costing over £5,000,000, and a new Roman Catholic Cathedral being built, which is to cost somewhere about £6,000,000. These two cathedrals mean an expenditure of over £10,000,000. This sum would have abolished the criminal breeding dens of Liverpool—25,000 houses, value £400 each, could have been built with it. And all these institutions believe that inoculation with some sort of religion is necessary to prevent criminality, despite the facts given by the police and others that criminality, especially in young children, is on the increase. Until these religious institutions are able to settle their own differences, and to become useful in the march of progress, and not stumbling blocks as they are at present, people cannot be expected to give them serious consideration.

Schools must become national institutions, and cease cramming; mental digestion, like physical, is not possible if it is persisted in. The natural abilities of each child must meet with more respect. Children must be taught to think, and not to believe without evidence.

Homes, worthy the name, must be provided for all—they cost less than bombing-planes. And all that is requisite and necessary for our bodies must be provided—placed to our credit to be liquidated by work when it can be found, and by thanks when it can't be found.

Society, as we know it at present, creates most of its crimes, and should be held responsible for them.

GEORGE WALLACE.

Temples Made With Hands

JESUS, when on Earth, is reported to have made many remarks. Some appear good; some, bad; some, indifferent. They appear, as well, frequently to contradict one another—which is plainly impossible. The Gods are *incapable* of that in spite of their omnipotence. God made Holy Mother Church in order to explain what Jesus really meant when he appeared to contradict himself, or when he said something which appeared to lack reverence toward the priesthood. Holy Mother Church *knows* what Jesus meant; that is, they say they know, which is much the same thing. When Horatio Bottomley or Lord Northcliffe said they *knew* (and yelled it to the accompaniment of a full orchestra) millions inclined their ears obligingly. There are a few people who are not impressed by big drums and bunting, except in unforeseen ways. Ernest Renan was one of them. He made an effort to find out what Jesus was driving at. He was an honest man, a scholar, and a fine writer, but we are afraid when he reconstructed Jesus, the influence of his early seminary training at St. Sulpice had not left him, so he went, to some extent, along familiar theological paths, picking the words of Jesus he liked best, and rejecting those he did not care for.

Renan was enthusiastic over that saying of Jesus, which prophesied that the time would come when men would worship God, not in temples made with hands, but in spirit and in truth. In fact, he rhapsodized over it. This was, to him, the most illuminating of the sayings of Jesus. "Upon this will repose the edifice of eternal religion. . . . This sentence of Jesus has been a brilliant light amid gross darkness; it has required eighteen hundred years for the eyes of mankind (what do I say! for an infinitely small portion of mankind) to become accustomed to it."

Of course Renan, when he wrote that, had left the Church and, having no Mother to guide him, thought there might be a chance of putting together a congruous Jesus. He certainly produced a handsome effort of reconstruction. "Bah!" says Holy Mother. "If he left the Church, it simply means he couldn't have been honest, and anyway it is just another instance of the folly of private judgment. The only ones who know what Jesus meant when he appeared to voice his dislike for temples made with hands are those who were responsible for their erection. When Jesus was disrespectful to those who loved to be called 'Rabbi, Rabbi,' and reserved the 'greater damnation' for those whom he criticized so harshly, it is those who are qualified to tell us that he meant precisely the opposite. Jesus, obviously, *liked* priests and tried to *encourage* the temple made with hands. This is plain common-sense." This is the message, we are assured, that Jesus tried to put over when he tramped the country-side practising oratory on an egg-box.

Renan listened to this apologia and was not impressed. We think a modernist theologian would be very well advised to take a hint from Renan. He will not be called upon if he preaches a Jesus "agin" the erection of Churches to perform more ingenious balancing tricks than the profession is used too. He can even reinforce the "internal" evidences, i.e., the *logia* of Jesus, with "external" evidence.

Well, the Church erected Cathedrals, in spite of Jesus, and built them well. They dangled the wealthy believer on the point of death over Hell Fire, and induced in him a genuine repentance and a disposition to "part" (by way of insurance) and the wealth was used, often, to put up tabernacles to the Glory of God. To God, we must give the very, very best, they said. For the Church which speaks with authority knows what God likes best, and they tell us he prefers

to have the resources of earth displayed in his honour and glory rather than for the clothing and feeding of naked and hungry bodies. God, they said, was like Queen Victoria. He liked Praise; he liked Flattery. You had to lay it on with a trowel and you couldn't spread it too thickly. The immortal soul is the thing that matters. So God set the immortal soul cross-word puzzles, and he wants the correct guessers to augment the celestial choir which chants eternally his praises.

When God saw the churches going up, he called Demiurgus and gave him a few private instructions, after which Demiurgus retired to his lab and put his brains in steep. He knew that some special effort was needed as, in these days, the Old Gentleman was inclined to be testy and hypercritical. Then the inspiration came. He remembered when he had taken samples of food that he suggested for mans' consumption—pears, apples, plum, peas, beans, etc.—he had shown God that he had for each fruit or vegetable made a special weevil, which could only live on the food that man required. That had been a great day. God, when he heard of his plan, had laughed like little Audrey. "A beetle!" he decided. So he put on his hat one evening, walked in upon the old man, and said, laconically, "Got it!"

"Good for you," said God. And then Demiurgus explained that he had made a wee insect, which would in time bring the temples to naught. Its name was the *Anobium Domesticum*. (Please talk English! interjected God). "Well then, the Death Watch Beetle. I have given it an appetite and an apparatus for boring into old timber. It will attack, slowly but surely, the roof timbers in the Churches, and nothing they will be able to do will prevail against it." "Anything else?" said God. "Well, it is the quaintest creature. The way Anobius clicks his head against the wood when he would like to see Anobia, is one of the smartest things I have done." God's laughter at this point became clearly immoderate. "Father," said Jesus reproachfully, "please do not splutter." "Understand me, Joshua, I shall splutter where and when and as often as I please. But you are concerned in this matter. Tell me when you were on earth, did you or did you not, discourage the building of Tabernacles? "That was my endeavour, Father." "Yes, I dare say you endeavoured. But did you get my meaning over? Or is this only another case when you succeeded in conveying a dozen different impressions?" "Well, father, I did my best, and if you refer to Acts vii. 48, you will see, I think, that Paul got my idea all right." God opened the huge volume (One with specially large type had just recently been prepared) and read:—

The Most High dwelleth not in temples made with hands.

"I apologize, Joshua. I am sorry I spoke with temper. All I can now say is that these priests by raising tabernacles are asking for trouble." And then, turning to Demiurgus he clapped his hand in his and said, "Demmie, Old Boy, you've excelled yourself."

It was just last week that Demiurgus popped in to see the Old Man, and insisted on reading him the report of the Forest Products Research Board. The findings were that experiments had not confirmed the belief that the use of incense protects Churches from the ravages of the Death Watch Beetle. "Demiurgus," said God, when he had finished. "What's the good of offering you further compliments? You've never let me down yet. I expect now they'll be rejecting timber and taking to ferro-concrete for their roof-trusses, but you'll be equal to that when the time comes. It will be just one more spot of work for you. God is not mocked, Demiurgus. Atta, boy, little beetle! You will do God's bidding. Feed, little

beetle, feed. Let the priests scatter their incense, but my little beetle will prevail. I will get even with you, you hypocrites, you whited sepulchres, you generation of vipers —"

"Father, dear," said Jesus, softly, "Remember your asthma. And it's after dusk and you know how particular the Dove is about his rest. He's had the cover round his cage for half an hour now."

"What!" shouted God. You, Joshua, reproach me. You! What did you say to them yourself, when—" Then came a pause. The old man's hand stole rather shamefacedly to his son's shoulder. "Joshua, my boy, it was one of your little ways I loved the most."

"Tick, Tick, Tick," went the Death Watch Beetle.

T. H. ELSTON.

The Poster Pulpit

It is now becoming a practice with the parsons to augment their ordinary services by enlisting those of the paste-brush and can. On the walls of many churches, or on boards erected in some prominent position within their sacred precincts, are to be seen bills and posters containing a variety of "good things" addressed to the wayfaring sinner. The subjects chosen have a fairly wide range from scraps of scripture to worldly wise cracks and pious puns.

While pursuing my ordinary vocation which, like that of the Arch-theomachist involves a good deal of "going to and fro in the earth, and walking up and down in it," I have noted quite a few of these gems of the paste-brush. They are not confined to any particular brand or sect of Christian Dissention, but may be found outside every kind of edifice devoted to the glory of God—and the pockets of the preacher. The only exception, so far as I have noticed, is that of the Roman Catholic. The policy of that Church would, of course, view any such practice as a plain supplanting of the priest by the poster. A large Presbyterian Church in one of the main thoroughfares of this city (Liverpool), displays on its "wayside pulpit," the following:—

PRACTICAL LIVING.

"Love your enemies.

Bless them that curse you.

Do good to them that hate you."

The really remarkable thing about this specimen is not the text but the title. If there is anything more remarkable, it can only be the stupidity of the person who chose it. To anyone who has considered the ethical implications and logical consequences of these "divine exhortations," it is evident that anything in the way of precept more *unpractical* or more inconsistent with commonsense and morality was never uttered. If we are to love our enemies, how are we to regard our friends? Is the enmity of the one and the goodwill of the other to be equally recompensed? If these precepts were universally practised how would we mark our sense of the difference between actions good and bad? If I regard the man that knocks me down with the same feeling as I regard the man that picks me up, what moral distinction do I make between the brutality of the one and the kindness of the other? In constraining myself to rate both alike, do I not violate my sense of justice which urges me to render to everyone his due according to my notions of truth and right? Human society could not exist on such a moral basis. But the strongest proof of the absurd and impracticable character of this doctrine is

the psychological one. By reason of its constitution the human mind cannot react in the same manner to such opposite stimuli as kindness and wilful injury, and any attempt, such as is enjoined in these precepts, to repress or reconcile their effects can only result in hypocrisy or self-delusion.

The following is taken from a well-known Congregational Church, very prolific in its poster output of great spiritual truths couched in homely phrase.

"Christianity fits the aching needs of the modern world as the key fits the lock for which it was made."

Truth is a wonderful thing. Such is its power that it will often make itself known even under false pretences. Christianity and "the aching needs of the modern world" are, indeed, a perfect "fit." They are so well adapted to each other that, like the Siamese Twins, neither could exist apart. If there were no Christianity there would be no aching needs, and if there were no aching needs there would be no Christianity. *Magna est veritas et praevalibit.* Here is another instance, from the same source, of the sudden emergence of truth, where least to be expected—

"God often says 'wait,' but He never says 'worry.'" To be sure, to those who persist in expecting what will never happen, what else can be said but "wait"? And if God never says "worry," it is because in view of His own plainly expressed intention hereafter, it should be quite superfluous to most Christians. The next two examples are taken from a church belonging to the Establishment, and run thus: "Every day is a May day. We may serve God or we may not," and "It is only ch—ch without u r in it."

I have often wondered what was the genesis of some of these productions, whether they were "fire-new" from the parson's own mental mint, or owed their origin to some inspired wit among his congregation. The present two suggest nothing so much as the effort of some member of his Sunday school. In this case, however, it is not the source but the selection that matters. Confined to their proper place in the children's class or the nursery they would not call for remark. It is the fact that such puerility could be given such publicity that I consider worthy of note as another proof, if any were needed, of the low level of taste and intelligence that is compatible with a "cure of souls."

A. YATES.

Acid Drops

There is war in China and Spain and threatened war all over the world, except in those isolated places that are outside the sphere of Christian influence. Hundreds of doctors are trying to grapple with an outbreak of infantile paralysis. There is a report of a possible cure for cancer, and there are many other trivial items floating around. But the *Daily Express*, with that capacity for getting to the root of things, characteristic of the modern newspaper, gives a front page headline to "The stroke that thrilled the world." In case there is here and there a benighted individual who was not "thrilled," we must explain, for his or her benefit, that it was when a cricketer in a Test Match made a new record. That is why it was not merely lovers of cricket that were thrilled, or the man who takes a burning interest in anything that is uppermost to-day and promptly forgets it to-morrow. It was the whole world of some 2,000,000,000 that was "thrilled." Not interested, but "thrilled"—and my dictionary defines "thrill" as "intense emotional stirring." How easy it is for rogues to manage fools!

A Professor of Education in the University of Hong-Kong, who has been paying a visit to England, says he was impressed by the Sunday religious service of the

B.B.C. He says, "it is obvious that such services respond to the needs of the community." How does he know? All he can mean is that as the bulk of the people do not bother themselves about the religious services, certain other people decide that they ought to. That they do not want them is plain, because there are plenty of opportunities for them to gratify their want if they felt that way. So the parsonic need for followers is translated into "ought," "ought" gets translated into a "need" of the people, and the next stage is to change the assumed "need" into a "want," and that justifies the parsony coming forward as so many saviours of the people. Of all the examples of muddle-headed humbug connected with religion in this country, this is the most striking.

As we are not one of those who write a weekly column of gossip about well-known people, and meet them in all sorts of places—particularly if the said people have a title—and who do all this without moving out of their own "den," we may confess we know nothing whatever about Lady Cynthia Colville. But we are intrigued by a remark of hers that "Religion is most attractive and most vital when it is made hard and uncompromising and even discouraging." Which sets one wondering how many hardships Lady Colville experiences as a product of her religious beliefs. At any rate, her remark helps to prove that Christianity is a religion that will accommodate anyone. On the one side we have a large body of religious preachers and writers proving what a jolly, happy thing is religion. And on the other side, there is as large a body trying to prove that it is the exact reverse. We rather fancy the first statement is worked when the job is to explain why so many are leaving the Church. The latter comes in when trying to induce some to come to Church and embodies the text, "we will take you in." But all the same we are reminded of Lord Palmerston's—"Gentlemen, it doesn't matter a damn what kind of a lie we tell, so long as we all tell the same lie." But religious audiences are not so critical.

Lady Colville also says that the modern girl should model herself on "Our Lady," not as the "Queen of Heaven, remote and majestic," but as a shy peasant girl "responding to a divine call." Really! Really? Lady Colville has probably overlooked one of the consequences of "Our Lady" responding to her divine call. And we live in 1938.

What a stirring up this International Congress has given the religious world. For a long time the Christian Churches have been playing the game that Freethought was played out. It was old-fashioned, and the new science has knocked the bottom out of Materialism. It was only a question of framing a satisfactory re-statement of Christian doctrine and all might yet be well. But the announcement that an International Congress was to be held in London, and that quite a number of well-known men and women were taking part in it, or at least were lending their names to it, brought about a different situation. Those who have been responsible for Freethought propaganda in this country for many years know that so many well-known people would not have come forward but for the work done by avowed Freethinkers during the past two or three generations, but that does not alter the fact. The work of these brave, and many of them unknown, men and women was not in vain. They have made it safe for those who have the courage to dare only a little to come forward. And all is for the best.

Now Bishop Walter Carey has come forward with a final suggestion. This is that the only way to defeat the International Congress is to better its arguments. We agree. But who is to do it? Bishop Carey suggests that a few pamphlets written by the Dean of St. Paul's and "distributed outside the meetings of these people" might do good. Now, as a mere sporting offer, we are agreeable to taking a hand in this. We will undertake to distribute 1,000 copies of any pamphlet written by the Dean of St. Paul's for every 500 copies of say, *Pamphlets for the People*, which he distributes among religious attendants at St. Paul's. We do not insist on these pamphlets

of ours being given in the Cathedral. They can be sent to the attendants through the post. If we know the Dean, he will not agree to the proposal. He is a capital controversialist, provided the "other fellow" cannot meet him on equal conditions.

The Roman Catholic Bishop of Rothenburg who is the only citizen in the district who failed to vote in the plebiscite on the annexation of Austria has been found guilty of "violating his political duties in an insolent manner." So runs what is called "law" in Germany. It should be understood, a law in Germany means a decree which aims at punishing anyone who has spoken disrespectfully of any of the Gangsters who are in control, and is made retrospective for any number of months or years. Anyone in Germany who can recall that as a boy he punched Hitler on the nose may, in this way, easily be found guilty of treason.

Discussing the characters of "great men," in a recent article, ex-Dean Inge writes of Talleyrand:—

Nothing is more characteristic of him than his death-bed conversion. "In truth," he said, "there is nothing less aristocratic than unbelief." So he made his reconciliation with the Church by repenting—not of his fifty years of profligacy or his insatiable avarice—that was not required of him, but of accepting the civil constitution of the clergy, and of marrying his mistress.

He had moved with the times; in his young days unbelief was not at all unaristocratic. But then he had not been "absolutely corrupted by absolute power," which he never possessed; intellectually he had no illusions.

A typical "conversion," truly! No "mortal sin" in keeping a mistress, apparently, so long as one doesn't marry her. And no harm in profligacy, avarice, and thousands of other vices, so long as one bows to ecclesiastical authority. This appears first cousin to the morality exhibited by those in power concerning Edward VIII. and Mrs. Simpson.

Catholic Austria is faction-torn over the breach between the Vatican and Mussolini and between the Vatican and Nazi Germany. Dissension is increasing, reports the Vienna correspondent of the *Daily Telegraph*, upon the Pope's announcement that the human race is one family, and the prompt retort of Fascists and Nazis alike that it is not. Nazi journals publish pictures contrasting Aryans and Jews, and the white and coloured races:—

The Roman Catholic Church in Austria is already half-paralysed, proceeds the correspondent. It is thought that soon the well-known garb of monks and nuns will not be tolerated at all.

Priests must submit to Nazi domination in their parishes on all occasions. The vast properties of the religious foundations in Austria are being gradually confiscated like those of the Jews.

The story "is true, and it is bad form to criticize a confession of faith," writes Pastor Percy Rush, in a Sunday newspaper, after relating the conversion from being a drunkard, a wife-beater and potential murderer, a companion of prostitutes in whom he "took a wild delight," a drug-taker, and a newly-certified lunatic. We hold most strongly that the very worst of "bad form" is displayed by that type of "evangelist" who seeks others' conversions by reciting horrible, degrading, and utterly vile cases which have found "salvation" in a "God" who rejects the purest right-living and right-thinking mortals who have not been "washed in the blood." The *People* states that it has published no more "telling" sermon than this pastor's. We wish the pastor well; we are pleased at his release "from the depths"; but we lament the taste of the paper mentioned, and trust such "experiences" may be in future reserved for the benefit of equally abnormal characters as the pastor of Foxley Road Mission, Brixton (London), describes himself to have been.

Catholic Missions in Utah, it is reported, have not made a single convert in twenty years. The report comes from Bishop Hunt, of Salt Lake City. And yet the Bible and Mormonism are both agreed upon polygamy. And the New Testament raises no objection to it. One would have thought this would have given the Roman Catholics a jumping-off point.

Thefts from the Church of the Holy Spirit, Clapham Common, London, have led the Rev. J. H. Humphries, the vicar, to ask worshippers to look out for suspicious characters. Instead of "the Holy Spirit" protecting its own, it merely acts like "Brer Rabbit"—lies low and sez nuffin. And God who sees and knows all things seems to be no help either. Curious how the human element has to be called upon whenever there is anything practical to be done in religious circles.

Mystery is made of the source from whence "Father Divine," the American negro god, obtains his wealth. He is said to have proved that he has returned large cheques sent to him from both white and black supporters, and his followers proclaim that "God provides," chanting their slogan "Peace, Lord, it's wonderful!" David Walker, in the *Daily Mirror* of August 17, demurs to any condemnation of the new god, and adds another "mystery" of his own in the statement that "Europe, anyway, should be the last place to laugh at him: for in Europe there are three men, at least, who have, without actually calling themselves God, worked on the same lines." We quite agree with the first eleven words there, but are puzzled as to who our new divinities may be. The Prime Minister, the Bishop of London, and Lord Rothermere have risen to our mind, not forgetting the Archbishop of Canterbury with his god-like power in State, B.B.C., and other affairs. Will Mr. Walker please enlighten us on the matter?

Gilgal Baptist Church, and the Federation of Christian Churches are joined in a protest against the inclusion of a "Lady Godiva" in the Porthcawl (Glamorgan) Carnival. The name of a young woman who has offered to take the part, is being kept secret lest religious people pester her. The Carnival "queen" first elected, had to resign because members of her faith, the Plymouth Brethren, judged her character might be tarnished by meeting men of the world. Her age is 24! The new "Queen" is only 16, and is fond of theatres, cinemas and dances—but evidently pure-minded enough to be unafraid of being "tarnished" or of meeting "men of the world." We certainly think the "Godiva" business rather overworked, but have no sympathy with the opponents' arguments. For one thing, we believe any girl to be as safe with "men of the world" as with "godly" men, and, from the many exposures of the morality of the latter type—far safer.

In the course of re-naming London streets, the I.C.C. has chosen to give Woolwich a Rudd Street to commemorate a soldier of the garrison whose action led "King's Regulations" to provide a Bible and a prayer-book for every soldier at the public expense. Rudd had a card hung behind the guard-room door, offering the loan of a Bible to any soldier who wanted it, and for this he was reprimanded by the commandant. . . . So now "Tommy Atkins" knows the name of the blighter responsible for wasting precious hours of service life! The *Ruddy* blankety-blank!

Fifty Years Ago

M. RENAN is spending his summer holiday, as usual, in his native Brittany. Speaking at his mother's natal village, he recently declared that "the love of tolerance is the best lesson in life."

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THE FREETHINKER

FOUNDED BY G. W. FOOTE

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TO CORRESPONDENTS.

F. HOEY, T. LEWIS, AND OTHERS.—Thanks for cuttings.
H. REEVE.—Thanks for suggestion, which we are afraid is received rather late to act upon. Anyway it is being considered.

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

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

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, 3/9.
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.

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

Will those who hold reserved seat tickets for the public meeting at the Scala Theatre, on Sunday, September 11, oblige by taking their places as early as possible? Doors will be open at 6.30 p.m., and no seats can be reserved later than 6.50 p.m. We again offer our regrets to the large number who have applied for tickets and have had to be refused. There are, of course, a large number of free seats, but the pressure upon these is likely to be even greater than is the demand for tickets.

The Bishop of Ely, the Rev. B. O. F. Heywood, refers, in his *Diocesan Gazette*, to the forthcoming Congress of the Union of Freethinkers, and explains that he refused to sign the petition to the Home Secretary to prohibit the Congress. So far, so good; we are afraid, however, we cannot commend one of the reasons he gives to explain his refusal:—

The suppression of the Congress would have been a form of persecution. Persecution is apt to provoke sympathy with the persecuted and so defeat its object.

Persecution would then be justified if it were not for the unfortunate fact that it defeats its object. To the Bishop it is *bad policy* and any question of justice or the elementary rights of the citizen do not enter into it. Can one, however, expect more from one who professes to found his social ethics on so barren a volume as the New Testament?

In the *Middlesex County Times* there appears, on the other hand, an article entitled "The Freethinkers' Congress," under the pseudonym of "Philonous." The attitude of "Philonous" is not that of the ecclesiastic. He asks Milton's question, "Who ever knew Truth put to the worse in a free and open encounter?" and continues:—

Even if we assume, for the sake of argument, that you yourself have the full and final truth—a notable assumption indeed—still you should desire that contest, in order that Truth may be seen to be victorious.

SPECIAL

I AM writing this from what should be the most comfortable place in the house—bed. But I am there by doctor's orders, and that puts a different complexion on the situation. I have been working harder than I ought to have done, and must pay the penalty of an enforced rest. But I hope to be well enough to play some part in the proceedings of the International Conference. In any case my first job is to get well again, and the second to spend my energy less extravagantly. This may not mean doing less work, only working more methodically. My correspondence must, for the present, be dealt with as circumstances determine.

CHAPMAN COHEN.

This was one of the points elaborated by John Stuart Mill in his classic, *On Liberty*. Truth, he showed, gained by conflict—emerging from the interchange of opinion, strengthened, more easily comprehended, and more dynamic. The editor of the *Middlesex County Times* is to be congratulated in these cowardly days for putting forward a simple ground for toleration that even now the Episcopacy is afraid to take its stand upon.

Birkenhead (Wirral) Branch N.S.S., are holding another of their enjoyable outings to Thurston Common this Sunday (September 4). Members of the Liverpool Branch, and all other Freethinkers in the district, are heartily welcome, and those who accompanied the Birkenhead members on a similar expedition on August Bank Holiday, will know they can have a thoroughly happy and healthy day. Wives and children are not only invited, but expected. Arrangements: Hiking members meet Branch Secretary, Mr. Walter Fletcher, at Arrowe Park Gates, at 11.30 a.m.; others meet party opposite Cottage Loaf Cafe, at 1.15 p.m.; members bring own food.

Lieut.-Col. Sir Archibald Weigall told this story to the boys of Emanuel School, Wandsworth Common. It is good enough for a wider audience:—

An old lady went to Church. She so much enjoyed the Bishop's sermon that she went home and wrote him telling him how it had gripped her.

Unfortunately, she spelt the word gripped with one "p."

Mr. G. Whitehead pays a return visit to Liverpool, and with the local N.S.S. Branch will hold meetings each evening during the week commencing to-day (September 4). The Liverpool Branch is an active one, and good audiences, with the disposal of much Freethought literature, should result from the visit.

An Irish Catholic prelate once told me that to his certain knowledge two millions of men, women, and children had died in the great famine of 1846. I asked him if he was not including those who had emigrated. He repeated that over and above the emigration two millions had actually died; and added, "we might assert that every one of these deaths lay at the door of the English Government." I mentioned this to a distinguished lawyer in Dublin, a Protestant. His grey eyes lighted up. He replied: "Did he say two millions now—did he? Why there were not a thousand died—there were not five hundred." The true number, so far as can be gathered from a comparison of the census of 1841, with the census of 1851, from the emigration returns, which were carefully made, and from an allowance for the natural rate of increase, was about two hundred thousand.

Froudes's "Short Studies on Great Subjects."

The Stars and You

A YEAR or so back I gave an account of the famous literary hoax perpetrated by Swift on the almanac maker and astrologer Partridge. In an age when superstition and credulity were certainly far more rife than at the present day, when people believed far more in the stars, in fortune-telling of all kinds, and in good and bad omens, it was rather a remarkable thing that Swift, who was certainly a Christian, if by no means as fully-believing as his fellow Christians, should have gone not a little out of his way to deal the balderdash of astrology a heavy blow. It was not possible for him to be as independent in his thinking as he would have liked; but if one reads between the lines and with discernment many of Swift's writings, only one conclusion can be reached, and that is, the essential religious scepticism of the man. Swift was certainly suspect in the Church's higher quarters.

I was just a wee bit gratified that a week or so after my article appeared, Mr. Shane Leslie broadcasted the story of Swift and Partridge, though he did not actually attack astrology. But to show, I suppose, how very fair and impartial they are, the B.B.C. staged a sort of debate between a couple of whole-hearted believers in the "science," two unbelievers, and they also provided a neutral chairman. Those who heard this debate will perhaps remember the extremely poor showing of the astrologers. They produced no evidence whatever that the stars affected human beings, or had anything to do with political or social events. They utterly failed to show why the conjunction of certain planets in a sign of the Zodiac meant fires or storms, railway accidents or shipwrecks. About the lucky numbers which some astrologers associate with human beings, or lucky stones, or lucky anything, they maintained a dignified silence. It was their job to produce evidence that their predictions, according to the stars, really did take place, and they did nothing but produce excuses. However, there is a chance now to show why some predictions which I am about to retail did not come off, and I hope one of the numerous band of well-paid astrologers on our national papers so implicitly believed in by the majority of the public, will take up the challenge.

In the *Sunday Dispatch* of April 12, 1936, appeared an article by Mr. Maurice Privat, the most famous astrologer of France. At least that is what he is according to the Editor of the paper, but no doubt there are many others equally "foremost." In introducing Mr. Privat, we are informed that he foretold a large number of "sensational" events—the death of King Albert of Belgium, the assassination of President Doumer, and of M. Barthou, and so on, and so great was his success that he was specially engaged to give us what the stars told him about the then King Edward VIII., now the Duke of Windsor, but who at the time was at the height of his popularity.

First we get one of these weird hieroglyphics supposed to represent the sky at his birth. It is probably quite right, and may be a correct representation—so what, as Americans say? Well, "with Saggiarius in mid-heaven at the time of his birth, King Edward's reign will remain surely bound up with prosperity and a national era of magnificence." This is quite a good beginning, and with his readers now in a happy state of mind at the great prosperity which was coming, Mr. Privat dilates on some of King Edward's personal characteristics. The Ascendant was in Aquarius with the Sun in Cancer, so His Majesty had a slim figure. Aquarius would have given him greater height, "but for a quadrant from Pluto in the Ascendant and a slight quadrant of Uranus in the degree which was rising from the horizon." I hope His Majesty did not

curse Pluto, or the Ascendant or even the quadrant, for this mishap as much as Byron cursed the stars—if ever he did—for giving him a club foot.

Needless to say, the Moon—the Moon, bless her, had to come in somehow somewhere—being in the Ascendant, and "almost in reception with Venus," gave the King "an invincible and sublime love of the people." The Moon managed something else for Edward, and that was "a splendid heredity and even greater riches in latter years as well as limitless renown and incomparable power." Of course a lot depends on the meaning of the "latter years" so that at present it is impossible to say whether he will have this "incomparable power," or the "greater riches." So far the success of this particular prediction is in the air, so to speak, or in the stars.

Needless to say, with Venus in the Third House is shown "perfectly harmonious relationship with his brothers and sister." We shudder to think what might have happened to this fraternal love had Venus sailed into the twentieth House. And then Mr. Privat sounds a note of alarm, because, had the King not been royal, something awful might have happened through "the sesquiquadrate of Mars and Uranus and the quincunx of Neptune to Uranus." Happily the stars refused to be responsible for any peril to royalty.

"Will King Edward marry?" asks Mr. Privat, and proceeds to give the answer of the stars:—

The heavens show that he will, and before very long a Queen worthy of him will be crowned, and the royal union will be blessed by several beautiful children. Edward the Eighth's Queen will share his tasks and his glory.

Could anything be more beautifully precise? If ever the stars had a chance it was here. A marriage with a beautiful queen, resulting in several beautiful children was infallibly predicted by the stars—and possibly by many people who knew no more about astrology than they did about relativity. Surely the stars were not just hoping, just putting forward a sort of "wish-fulfilment" so beloved of the psychoanalysts?

Mr. Privat gives a list of the other qualities predicted by the stars and possessed by the King, making him a sort of mixture of the Admirable Crichton, Leonardo de Vinci, Julius Cæsar, Napoleon, Queen Victoria, Thomas Paine, Einstein, and Old Parr; but it is only fair to add that he does not always give us the exceptional combination of the lucky stars responsible for this brilliant result. He does give one reason, however, which I pass on in the hope that some reader may also, perhaps, be as lucky as the King. It appears that Edward was exceptionally fortunate in having Pluto, Neptune and Jupiter in Gemini in the fourth House "which occurs only at very rare intervals."

Nobody need expect any exposure of astrological drivel will have the slightest effect on astrologers. They are reaping a good harvest from the national papers, and are not likely to give up the golden shower just because one horoscope has gone awry. No exposure of fake mediums ever shook the faith of an all-believing spiritualist once he had been bitten by the spirit bug; and what is going to happen to us in the future is so very important, that any clue, no matter how ridiculous or stupid, is better than none at all. The world is full of mystery, so how can our puny minds hope to fathom it, or understand why the stars say what they say? The Gospel of Superstition is a very hard nut to crack; but perhaps a little attack there, a small exposure here—no matter how they hurt—may bring in the Gospel of Reason. And even a small success is worth the trouble.

H. CUTNER.

Freethought Policy and the New "Ideologies"

In an editorial of the Freethinker (August 21, 1938) Mr. Chapman Cohen makes out a strong case urging the justification of identifying the principles of Fascism with those of Christianity, and I look forward to it being followed up by another doing the same for Bolshevism and Catholicism.

The article states: "Fascism stands for the absolute supremacy of the State." So does Sovietism. "Fascism claims control of the child." So does the Russian Soviet. Fascism, the article continues, contends that within the State there shall be no difference of opinion, and that art, literature and science shall be bent to serve the prevailing political dogmas. These are *precisely* the Soviet contentions. Freedom of thought and expression is the life-blood of science; yet according to Ernest Jones, no psycho-analytical literature is allowed entry into Russia, and I am informed that Herbert Spencer also is barred. Even to teach that the "atom has lost its substantiality and become a mere series of events," is, says Bertrand Russell to qualify for a concentration camp. (*Religion and Science*, p. 247.)

"Fascism labels all who differ from the Government as traitors." The U.S.S.R. similarly labels its political heretics as traitors, Fascists and Trotskyists; and at the last mass trial the prisoners were openly denounced in "Izvestia" and "Pravda," and their guilt taken for granted *before the trial opened!* The Soviet Commissar of Justice, Krilenko, recently stated emphatically: "We will never allow the State property to be used against the Socialist system. Those who want to restore the capitalist system will get from our Constitution neither freedom of the Press nor freedom of speech." Could anything be more explicit?

Mr. Cohen proceeds: "Fascism has its secret police, its concentration camps, and its torture of those with whom it disagrees." Bolshevism, likewise, has its O.G.P.U., its Siberia, and its forced "voluntary" confessions—not to mention its busy firing squad. "Fascism," we are told, "rules that non-Fascists shall hold no office in the State." In Russia the same intolerant principles are faithfully adhered to: only one political party is permitted—the Communist Party; members of which edit all the Soviet newspapers, and membership of which appears to be a prerequisite to the holding of any important political office.

Mr. Cohen says, quite rightly: "I do not see any conflict of fundamental principles between Fascism and Christianity." I say I do not see any conflict of fundamental principles between Bolshevism and Catholicism. With him "I see only a question of different environment and opportunities;" but I make the full logical application to the Russian form of Fascism as well as to that of Germany and Italy. It is said that Fascism has its own theory of a superior race. So Communism has its dogma of a superior class—the workers, as against the capitalists or bourgeoisie. Just as their adherents claim there can be no salvation outside Fascism or Catholicism, so do the Communists make the same dogmatic claims for their "ideology." To be consistent another article should be written to demonstrate the close affinities between Moscow and the Vatican—especially as the policy of the Freethinker claims to support no one political creed as against another.

I would ask, Is there any evil under Fascist régimes—from mass executions to farcical elections—which could not be paralleled under that of the Soviet? Both governmental philosophies are based on the most ruthless regimentation of the individual. Both claim, in all seriousness, that persecution is necessary in the interest of liberty and the State. Democracy implies freedom of speech, publication, assembly and election; freedom from arbitrary arrest, and safeguards against punishment except after a fair and open trial; protection of trade unions from official coercion, and freedom of religious worship and profession. Can it be said that any of these fundamental democratic principles is respected under the dictatorships of Germany or Russia?

Concerning religious freedom in Russia, Mr. Ernest Thurtle has pointed out (*Literary Guide*, August, 1932) that "ministers of religion in Russia have definite legal disabilities . . . they have no right to hold a food card, they are not entitled to the benefits of Soviet social legislation, and their children are excluded from the higher schools and universities." In addition, while churches are open, priests are not permitted to give instruction outside them, and according to the new Constitution religion must not be taught to anyone under the age of eighteen, but Atheism is to be taught in the schools!

Many Communists claim to be Freethinkers, and to respect the historic principles for which the Freethought movement stands. Others are more honest. The definite repudiation of the Freethought attitude by the Russian controlled International of Proletarian Freethinkers is of interest. The I.P.F. some time ago proclaimed: "We are opposed to freedom of thought, because attacking religion on grounds of class, we can tolerate no opinion which was used by the bourgeoisie as a political reform during the historic period of Capitalism. Freedom of conscience corresponds to a revolutionary victory by bourgeois ideology. Let us then do away with the term 'Freethinker,' which is out of date." (*La Lutte*, February, 1932.) The I.P.F. also denounces the World Union of Freethinkers, which meets in London in September, as guilty of mere "bourgeois reforming," tolerance and stagnation, as against the I.P.F., which claims to be the "only world-wide organization which guides the masses of the workers in the fight against the Church." (*La Correspondence Internationale*, May 26, 1934, p. 859.)

The enemy of Freethought has always been, is, and always will be Authoritarianism. Freethought is the mental attitude of one who, aware of his limitations, makes a conscious effort to form his opinions on the basis of evidence, and not from the standpoint of some assumed authority. The antithesis of Freethought is Authoritarianism, or the mental attitude of those who, consciously or unconsciously, assume infallibility for their own opinions, or for the opinions of the authority which they unreservedly accept.

Authoritarianism has hitherto found its most complete expression in Roman Catholicism. In the light of modern knowledge the dogmas of the Catholic Church can no longer, except in the case of the more illiterate, be accepted. But while the dogmas of the Church are being gradually discarded, the attitude of mind which it represents is being transferred to the State, and now finds its chief expression in the political religions of Fascism, Nazism, and Communism. Acting on the assumption of their infallibility, the Governments of Germany and Russia contend that they alone know what is good for the community, and, quite logically, they invoke persecution to impose their will upon the individual. Like the Christians of old they justify such measures as the only means of "saving" some poor souls from damnation, or at least of preventing the "damned" from contaminating others. Fascism and Communism, says Bertrand Russell, are "at one in upholding the doctrine of the Inquisition, that the way to promote truth is to state, once for all, what is true, and then to punish those who disagree." (*Religion and Science*, p. 249.)

The issue is Freethought versus Authoritarianism in all its forms. There can be no compromise.

W. FLETCHER.

[I have printed Mr. Fletcher's article as it is a criticism of myself, and one who has the right of exclusion must be careful in its use. Otherwise, I fancy, I might have returned the manuscript as lacking cogency, urgency and relevancy. So while quite appreciating the quality of Mr. Fletcher's desire to keep me true to the straight, if not narrow, path of Freethought principles, I would point out:—

(1) The article criticized was written in reply to a specific statement of the *Church Times*, that Fascism was the deadly enemy of Christianity, and I am too old a debater to weaken my case by dragging in non-essential issues. Relevancy, as longer experience will teach Mr. Fletcher, is of first-rate importance in controversy, and, in fact, in all reasoning. Pre-

sumably Mr. Fletcher does not feel that the Freethought cause is safe in my hands, unless after any criticism of Fascism that I may make, I intone that portion of an unofficial liturgy which runs: "I am also opposed to Bolshevism and all its works." To be complete the liturgy should include the Turkish, the Greek, and all other dictatorships by name. But I imagine that with most of my readers I can take certain things for granted.

(2) In his desire to see that Fascism is not treated too harshly, Mr. Fletcher is not quite just to the U.S.S.R. He misses a very important distinction between the two things he is anxious to place in the same category, and which have at least one distinguishing feature. Under German and Italian Fascism the abolition of freedom of speech and publication is eternal. It is to endure as long as Fascism is in power. Freedom of thought and speech is abolished for ever. In the case of Communism the dictatorship is, theoretically, for an indefinite period only, in order to create a "classless society," (please don't ask me to explain exactly what a classless society is, it is not my phrase), and then the dictatorship will be removed. There will be a new earth, if not a new heaven, and freedom will endure for ever. Mr. Fletcher should study the distinction, and I hope realize that there is a very important difference on the theoretical level. One should strive to be just—even to those we dislike.

(3) I hope that Mr. Fletcher will not consider it is any reply to what has been said to moralize that dictatorship is as likely to be permanent with Bolshevism as with Fascism. If he does think that way, I would remind him that I have said, from both the platform and from the press, and for many years, that dictators are not likely to surrender their dictatorship voluntarily. Such a thing has occurred in history, but it is unusual. And I have written so often against all dictatorships, whether German or Italian or other, and have even protested many, many times against the petty dictatorships that have grown up in this country, that I am quite sure few of my readers desire that whenever I oppose a particular form of dictatorship, I should follow it up with a solemn affirmation, "I sincerely and solemnly declare that when I speak against German or Italian dictatorships I am also opposed to the dictatorship that exists in the U.S.S.R." I must give my readers credit for enough elementary common-sense to apply generally very simple principles. If they have not that degree of discernment they are really not worth writing for, and my half-century of work must be treated as a wasted effort.

(4) Because Mr. Fletcher is so anxious to deal with dictatorships with complete, if with reiterative fairness, I would gently remind him that the Russian dictatorship has not been accompanied with the obscene and calculated brutalities that have accompanied the German dictatorship (one of the comparisons that Mr. Fletcher omitted to note), and which, while only hinted at in our own press, appears in much greater detail in the American press, and are told with sickening particularity by those who have escaped the German terror, and are known to all who are able to get information as to what is going on in Germany. There is something more serious here than even the denial of freedom of speech. I refer readers to an excerpt written by a United States Ambassador, which appears on this page. There are other differentiating features between "Bolshevism" and Fascism that Mr. Fletcher has omitted to note. The initial problems set in Russia and Germany were not identical, for example. The Germans were an educated people, the Russians were not. The state of Russia was such that any change had to be for the better. The changes in Germany were for the worse. The "Freethought" that does not note such things appears much like bigotry under a new name. And there is actually more freedom under the Russian dictatorship than there is under the German one.

Mr. Fletcher's probably well-meant warning to me, "There can be no compromise" where Freethought is concerned, I find rather amusing. I have a reputation where the question of compromise is concerned, and I do not think my readiness to compromise is one of them.

There should be no compromise with truth. That there can be compromise with both truth and principle is an unfortunate and common fact.—C.C.]

Hitherto it has been considered that religion alone, with its supernatural sanctions, was strong enough to ensure the submission of the mass of the population to law and order; now philosophers and politicians are bent on satisfying this problem without the aid of Christianity.

Cardinal Newman.

The German Terror

By Dr. WILLIAM E. DODD, U.S.A. Ambassador to Germany, 1933-37.

UNLESS one has been an eyewitness, it is almost impossible to realize the horrors of this persecution. Never in modern times has a sovereign power bent itself so savagely upon the extinction of its own inhabitants, or so deliberately transgressed every tradition of culture and humanity.

I cannot undertake to explain these transgressions; I merely wish to set down some of the shocking incidents which took place in Germany during my ambassadorship. Many of them came to my personal attention; some have documentary support, while others were gathered from unimpeachable sources.

The keynote to the whirlwind of persecution which now thunders over Mittel-Europa is struck by Julius Streicher's newspaper *Der Stuermer*. Across the front page of this journal snarls a fixed headline: THE JEWS ARE OUR DESTRUCTION. Beneath this sensational streamer the news columns reek with stories of atrocious Jew-baiting, ranging from the castration of a Jewish clerk who sought to "defile" the Aryan race* by marrying a Christian girl, to the latest arrests of prominent Jewish scientists and scholars in Vienna and Bucharest. The whole journal fairly spits *judenhass* (Jew-hatred).

Anyone who dissents from the Nazi programme—every class or creed that nurses a dream of liberty—is labelled a "tool of International Jewry." Streicher sneers at our Western Democracy as "Jewish decadence." According to him, the Dawes plan was a Jewish plot; Dawes' real name is Davidsohn. Because J. P. Morgan helped finance Germany's enemies his name is "proved to be Morgens-tern." Streicher has even demonstrated that the Pope is a Jew, and that his real name is Finklestein.

In every German city to-day large signs hang in café and shop windows: "Only traitors talk or deal with Jews"; "Jews visit this place at the risk of their lives." Last year during the height of anti-Semitic fury, Storm Troopers marched into cafés, seized Jews on no pretext and dragged them to jail. Aged men were beaten by mobs; one Jewish lady of high social position was dragged from her limousine and forced to scrub the streets, "in order to demonstrate to the world that no Jew is beyond the power of the German Government." Jews are thrown from moving trains, are whipped or shot down in front of their children; they are molested with taunts and physical violence when they appear in the streets.

Jewish men and women of all ages are frequently summoned to police headquarters for questioning and search. The "questioning" is accompanied by brutal beatings; the "search" is a pretext for stripping the Jews of whatever valuables they have on their persons. While awaiting their ordeal they must stand facing a blank wall for hours at a time, often until they collapse. For the slightest "offence"—such as speaking to Aryans, or for "touching food that an Aryan afterwards ate"—they are heavily fined or imprisoned.

The courts offer little or no redress; one merchant, whose store was looted by Storm Troopers of goods worth 1,600 marks, was given a verdict of 12 pfennigs. In Magdeburg a Jewish youth was sentenced to four weeks' imprisonment for inviting an Aryan girl to a motion picture show. A Jewish lawyer, seeking refuge in a police station from attackers, was forced to walk barefooted and trouserless through the streets of Breslau bearing a placard, "I will never ask for police protection any more." It was in protest against this type of atrocity that Stefan Lux, exiled Jewish writer, shot himself before the League of Nations Assembly in 1936.

The persecutions are not confined to powerful leaders of Jewry, or to persons who might be dangerous to the Hitler regime. No child, no aged or infirm person is spared. On April 22, 1937, the Gestapo (Nazi secret police) evicted hundreds of inmates from 33 Jewish orphanages, sanitoriums, and homes for the aged. Several hundred children were turned into the streets utterly homeless. Two hundred aged Jews, who had contracted with a fraternal order for support

* An Aryan is defined as a person who has had no Jewish ancestor later than January 1, 1800.

during the rest of their lives, were reduced to wandering beggary. At the same time, 250 Jewish working girls were ousted from the Krugerheim Home, taken over as sleeping quarters for Storm Troopers; no provision was made for the evicted young women.

Refugee Jews who have expressed opposition to the Hitler regime are not safe even in another country. Professor Theodore Lessing of Hanover, one of the outstanding philosophers of Germany, was forced to take refuge in Czechoslovakia. There he was hunted down and murdered by Nazis. In 1935, one Rudolf Formys, a radio official, fled to Prague; the Nazis attempted five times to abduct him, and finally shot him dead.

When Hitler came to power there were only 500,000 Jews in Germany; less than one per cent of the population. Of this number nearly 100,000 had fought in the World War; 35,000 had been decorated for bravery. In the face of Junker military tradition, 2,000 Jews had won commissions as officers. Baron Manfred von Richthofen, Germany's famed aerial ace, had Jewish blood in his veins.

I mention these facts to prove that there can be no basis for the Nazi claim that Jews are a race of unpatriotic traitors. Nor are they "overwhelming" the Aryan element. To-day, there are less than 400,000 Jews in Germany, a very small part of the population. Further, the German Jews are not foreigners; they have lived in Germany for hundreds of years.

From article in the *Nation*, August, 1938.

The French National Freethought Congress

For three days (August 12-14) Boulogne, formerly looked on as a reactionary Catholic stronghold, has been a stirring centre of Freethought. The Secretariat of the Congress was close to the Central Station, and great notices in red and black directed delegates to the Town Hall in the old town, where the meetings of the Congress took place. The local papers such as *Le Républicain* and *Le Réveil du Nord*, gave full reports of the sittings. Thirty-nine regional societies were represented from places as far apart as Alsace and Algeria, as Savoy and Brittany. The Boulogne Society was responsible for all the local organization, and did it very efficiently, so all went smoothly. As both the present mayor and his deputy are ardent Freethinkers, it is not surprising that the Congress was given a civic reception. Proceedings began each day at 10 a.m., and went on with brief breaks to midnight. Among the subjects discussed, apart from matters of organization and finance (it may be noted that there was an increase in membership in the past year of over 2,000), were the Secularization of hospitals, many of which remain in the hands of religious bodies with unsatisfactory results; a protest against the official participation of the State in the reopening of the Cathedral at Rheims; the spread of cremation; the freedom of the radio; the development of mysticism among intellectuals, etc., etc. A tragic event cast gloom over the proceedings; the young President of one of the Societies of the Seine was found dead at his bedside on the Saturday morning, victim of the bursting of an aneurism.

On Sunday a procession of several hundred carried wreaths to the monuments of the War Dead and of Emile Lemaitre, both just without the fortifications of the Haute Ville. Lemaitre, who died in 1933, had been a tireless worker in Boulogne during some fifty years in all progressive causes, including Freethought.

The Congress terminated in a banquet, in which grave and gay were mingled, and speeches were followed by poems, songs, recitations and dialect—one of the jolliest dinners, as well as positively pantagruelic in its abundance and excellence, that I have ever attended.

The French Federation is to be congratulated on possessing, not only a remarkable and widely-experienced orator such as their President, M. André Lorulot, and somewhat

younger men to support him of the high calibre of MM. Cottereau and Perceau, but also a wealth of young and enthusiastic workers, some of whom, such as M. Priou promise to develop into speakers of first rank.

C. BRADLAUGH BONNER.

Correspondence

DAVID HARE

TO THE EDITOR OF THE "FREETHINKER"

SIR,—Writing on education in her book, *Mother India*, Katherine Mayo describing the difficulties encountered in India relates that "It remained for a private citizen, one David Hare, an English Merchant, domiciled in India, to start the wheels . . . David Hare, no missionary, but an Agnostic, was a man with a conviction. Under its impulse he gave himself and his all to the education and moral improvement of the natives of Bengal."

The authoress mentions that Hare joined forces with a famous Hindu, and created a Secular Hindu College. This was in 1817.

I shall be interested to know of any record concerning this pioneer, and if he was as described by the authoress, as she devotes but two short paragraphs to his work in India.

S. GORDON HOGG.

HEIL HITLER!

SIR,—I have read with complete agreement the denunciations of the Hitler regime in regard to its treatment of the Jews in Germany. Nevertheless, with nations as with individuals, there is always a credit as well as a debit side. I hope, therefore, in accordance with the tradition of the *Freethinker*, you will allow me to give a few items on the credit side, the more so as they have a special interest and significance for all Freethinkers. They are taken from the *Times* of last Tuesday, as given by their Vienna correspondent as follows:—

The next move becomes effective in September . . . after which no privately owned school will be permitted to accept new pupils. . . . Each year it is expected there will be one less class than previously. . . . In this way the Roman Catholic schools will presumably die a natural death, even if no new measures are taken against them. Another measure taken against Catholic influence is the replacement by Nazi nurses of Catholic nuns in hospitals in Vienna. Catholic kindergartens were taken out of the hands of nuns and turned over to lay supervisors.

I love Hitler and his type about as much as you do, but nevertheless, let us be fair. He is at present the only ruler who dares to defy the Roman Catholic Church, and to tell it where it gets off! Hence, though I myself am a Socialist, yet, even so, as between the choice of two evils, as an Atheist I say "Heil Hitler!"

ARTHUR HANSON.

[We cannot share Mr. Hanson's rejoicing. It is one thing to keep religion out of the State schools. It is quite another thing to applaud a policy which says that everything but State-sanctioned opinion shall be taught to anyone, anywhere, and to apply this to adults as well as to children.—ED.]

National Secular Society

REPORT OF EXECUTIVE MEETING HELD AUGUST 25, 1938.

THE President, Mr. Chapman Cohen, in the chair.

Also present: Messrs. Clifton, Elstob, Seibert, Ebury, Bedborough, Horowitz, Griffiths, Mrs. Quinton, and the Secretary.

Minutes of previous meeting read and accepted. Monthly Financial Statement presented.

New members were admitted to Preston, Kingston, Birkenhead, Sunderland, Edinburgh, North London, West London, West Ham Branches, and the Parent Society.

Lecture reports from Messrs. Whitehead, Clayton, Brighton, Shortt, Atkinson, and Mrs. Whitefield were presented, and instructions given on correspondence from Birkenhead and India.

Arising from Motion 16 passed at the last Annual Conference, the President reported that premises recommended had been inspected. After discussion the matter was adjourned to allow for further enquiries.

The next meeting of the Executive was fixed for Thursday, September 29, and the proceedings closed.

R. H. ROSETTI,

General Secretary.

Obituary

HENRY WOOD

ONE of the Old Guard in the days of Bradlaugh struggles and a veteran member of the West Ham Branch N.S.S. Henry Wood, was interred in the Cemetery of East Ham Old Church, East Ham, on August 29, in the grave which contained the remains of his wife. An outstanding feature of his long association with the N.S.S. was his keen active enthusiasm, and strict adherence to principles. He was a familiar figure at all Branch activities until nature warned him of his age. Although 86 at the time of death he followed the interests of Freethought until the end. Before an assembly of relatives, friends and members of the West Ham Branch a Secular Service was conducted at the graveside by Mr. R. H. Rosetti.

THE MISUSE OF SCIENCE

The aeroplane is now hovering over the future of the world like an evil vulture waiting to destroy all that the patient ingenuity of man has built up. But while we look to the skies in apprehension, other inventions are being turned to our destruction without our detecting it. The invention of writing and its subsidiary printing, has now been turned to the deliberate production of untruth in a way which makes earlier attempts at its perversion pale. The discovery of "Propaganda" during the war laid bare possibilities which have at last been fully exploited. The most recent invention of all, the Wireless, has now fallen into the same net. Broadcasting with the printed news-sheet might well have proved the most beneficent of all the subsidiary inventions derived from writing; it can now make millions of people believe what is known to its authors to be untrue. No doubt the cure is latent in the invention, and counter propaganda can be made effective. But the effect of two totally different versions being issued of a single event merely results in the emphasis of a division. One group of people will decide that one version is correct, another will become the advocate of the opposite. And so here again appears disunity and *stasis*, actually created at high pressure and with fantastic ease by the promotion of truth. Here is an instrument of destruction far more potent and far more deadly than aeroplanes or guns or shells. One broadcasting station in an hour of crisis, controlled by an evil genius, can create more chaos in an organized community than a hundred air-raids. It is always the imponderables that count. The wireless is an engine potential for the propagation of fear, rich with possibilities for the division of human communities and for their destruction by internal conflict. It has already been so used by Italy and Germany and Russia. No more rapid perversion of an invention has hitherto been recorded in human history. Man has achieved a triumph of evil in realizing that so beneficent an instrument could become so potent a weapon.

From "Progress and Catastrophe," by Stanley Casson.

SUNDAY LECTURE NOTICES, Etc.

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

LONDON

OUTDOOR

BETHNAL GREEN AND HACKNEY BRANCH N.S.S. (Victoria Park, near the Bandstand) : 3.15 A Lecture.

KINGSTON-ON-THAMES BRANCH N.S.S. (Market Place) : 7.30, Mr. Evans, 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.

SOUTH LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (Brockwell Park) : 7.0, Sunday, Mr. L. Ebury. Rushcroft Road, Brixton, 8.0, Tuesday, Mr. F. A. Ridley. Cock Pond, Clapham Old Town, 8.0, Friday, Mr. F. A. Ridley.

WEST LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (Hyde Park) : 3.30, Sunday, Miss E. Millard, M.A., Messrs. E. Bryant and G. Barnes. 6.30, Messrs. Bryant, Barnes and Tuson. Wednesday, 7.30, Mr. W. B. Collins. Thursday, 7.30, Mrs. N. Buxton. Friday, 7.30, Mr. G. Barnes.

COUNTRY

OUTDOOR

BIRKENHEAD BRANCH N.S.S. (Haymarket) : 8.0, Saturday, Mr. D. Robinson—A Lecture.

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

BLACKBURN (Market) : 8.0, Monday, Mr. J. V. Shortt.

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

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

COLNE (Vivary Bridge) : 7.30, Wednesday, Mr. J. Clayton.

EDINBURGH BRANCH N.S.S. (Mound) : 8.0, Friday and Saturday, Mr. G. Whitehead. Sunday, Mr. F. Smithies.

GLASGOW SECULAR SOCIETY (Albion Street) : 8.0, Sunday, T. I. Smith. Albert Road, 8.0, Tuesday. Minard Road, 8.0, Thursday. Albion Street, 8.0, Friday. M. I. Whitefield will speak at these meetings.

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

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

LIVERPOOL BRANCH N.S.S. (Corner of High Park Street and Park Road) : 8.0, Thursday, Mr. J. V. Shortt. Queen's Drive, opposite Walton Baths, 8.0, Sunday, Monday and Tuesday, Mr. G. Whitehead. Garston Terminus, 8.0, Wednesday. High Park Street, 8.0, Thursday. Garston Terminus, 8.0, Friday, Mr. G. Whitehead.

MANCHESTER BRANCH N.S.S. (Eccles Cross) : 8.0, Friday, Mr. J. V. Shortt. Bury Market, 8.0, Saturday. Ashton Market, 7.30, Sunday. Wigan Market, 8.0, Monday. Chorley Market, 8.0, Tuesday. Speaker at these meetings, W. A. Atkinson. Alexander Park Gates, 7.30, Saturday, A Lecture. Stevenson Square, 7.30, A Lecture.

NEWBIGGIN : 7.0, Sunday, Mr. J. T. Brighton.

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

PRESTON (Market) : 8.0, Wednesday, Mr. J. V. Shortt.

SOUTH SHIELDS (Market Place) : 7.30, Thursday, Mr. J. T. Brighton.

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WORLD UNION OF FREETHINKERS INTERNATIONAL CONGRESS

LONDON—FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 9, TO TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 13, 1938

ALL sessions will be held at Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, W.C.1, except that on Sunday evening. This Congress is convened for the promotion of Freethought, and tickets will be issued admitting to its sessions on the distinct understanding that the holders are members of the Rationalist Press Association, the National Secular Society, the South Place Ethical Society, or the Ethical Union, or are sponsored by a member of one of these societies and are in sympathy with the aims of the Congress.

FRIDAY, SEPT. 9	... 7 p.m.	... ..	Reception and Social Evening.
SATURDAY, SEPT. 10	... 10.30 a.m.	... ..	Opening of the Congress by Dr. M. TERWAGNE (Belgium), President of the World Union of Freethinkers.
	Morning Session	... ..	<i>Subject</i> : "The Present Religious Reaction and the Menace of the Vatican." <i>Speakers</i> : JOSEPH McCABE, PAUL BRAUN (Belgium), A. LORULOT (France), A. FLANDERS, J. P. GILMOUR (Chair).
	Afternoon Session : 2.30	... ..	<i>Subject</i> : "Youth, the Schools, and Freethought." <i>Speakers</i> : Dr. F. H. HAYWARD (Chair), W. B. CURRY, M.A., B.Sc., R. STRIVAY (Belgium).
	Evening Session : 7	... ..	<i>Subject</i> : "Science and the Churches." <i>Speakers</i> : Dr. DAVID FORSYTH (Chair), Prof. J. B. S. HALDANE, F.R.S., Prof. H. LEVY, Dr. B. ZAVADOSKY (U.S.S.R.).
SUNDAY, SEPT. 11	... Morning Session : 10.30	... ..	<i>Subject</i> : "The Reality of a Secular Ethic." <i>Speakers</i> : J. P. GILMOUR, CHAPMAN COHEN, Dr. NOVAK (Czechoslovakia), J. COTEREAU (France), Dr. H. J. BRIDGES (U.S.A.) (Chair).
	Afternoon Session : 2.30	... ..	Regional Reports; South Africa, West Africa, India, China and Hong Kong, United States, New Zealand, France, etc.
	Evening : 7	... ..	Demonstration at the Scala Theatre, Charlotte Street, London, W.1. <i>Subject</i> : "Freethought and the Struggle for Peace and Liberty." <i>Speakers</i> : CHAPMAN COHEN (Chair), G. D. H. COLE, Prof. LANCELOT HOGBEN, F.R.S., JOHN LANGDON-DAVIES, and others. Separate tickets for reserved seats are issued for this meeting.
MONDAY, SEPT. 12	... Morning Session : 10.30	... ..	Conclusion of Reports, Resolutions.
	Afternoon : 2.30	... ..	Tour of London with W. KENT (editor of <i>Encyclopaedia of London</i> , author of <i>London for Heretics</i> , etc.). Cost, 3s. including coach and tea.
	Evening : 6.30	... ..	Reception and Dinner at the Trocadero. <i>Speakers</i> : CHAPMAN COHEN (Chair), Dr. C. E. M. JOAD, and others.
TUESDAY, SEPT. 13	... ..	... ..	Visit to the Bradlaugh Tomb at Brookwood, leaving the Necropolis Station at Lambeth at 11.40 a.m.

The names of other speakers will be announced later.

The following have promised to speak, to send messages or reports, or otherwise to support the Congress:—
President of Honour, Edouard Herriot, Président de la Chambre des Députés, France. Prof. Bouglé, Marjorie Bowen, H. N. Brailsford, Gerald Bullett, Prof. G. E. G. Catlin, Prof. V. Gordon Childe, Chapman Cohen, Dr. Stanton Colt, G. D. H. Cole, J. Cottereau, Dr. P. I. Couchoud, Prof. F. A. E. Crew, W. B. Curry, Dr. E. J. Dingwall, Prof. Sargent Florence, Prof. J. C. Flugel, Dr. David Forsyth, J. P. Gilmour, S. A. Gimson, Prof. M. Ginsberg, Prof. C. Gulgnbert, Dr. A. C. Haddon, Prof. J. B. S. Haldane, Dr. F. H. Hayward, J. A. Hobson, Prof. Lancelot Hogben, Laurence Housman, Sir W. van Hulsteijn, Dr. C. E. M. Joad, M. and Mme. Jollot-Curie, Sir Arthur Keith, Prof. H. J. Laski, Prof. J. H. Leuba, Prof. H. Levy, Prof. L. Lévy-Bruhl, G. Macdonald, Prof. Malinowski, Miles Malleson, Joseph McCabe, F. S. Marvin, Somerset Maugham, Prof. Molengraaff, Prof. G. E. Moore, H. W. Nevinson, Prof. C. J. Patten, Vivian Phelps, Eden Phillpotts, Llewelyn Powys, Dr. H. Roger, Bertrand Russell, Prof. F. C. Sharp, George Bernard Shaw, H. G. Wells, Mrs. Winifred Whale, Prof. John Dewey.

There will be no charge for admission to the Sessions or to the Demonstration. The Dinner will be 10s. 6d. and the fare (3rd class) to Brookwood 2s. return. Early application for all tickets will help the Organizing Committee.

All inquiries and applications for tickets should be addressed to the Organizing Committee, World Union of Freethinkers International Congress, 4, 5, and 6 Johnson's Court, Fleet Street, London, E.C.4. On account of the great demand for tickets, these can be issued to members only.