

THE

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EDITED by CHAPMAN COHEN

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

Views and Opinions

A Fascist-Christian Outrage

I DID not accompany the Conference Party in its pilgrimage to the grave of Charles Bradlaugh at Brookwood. First, because I was keeping, so far as circumstances permitted, within the limits of the doctor's orders, and, second, because Tuesday is the day on which the *Freethinker* is prepared for the press, and it was necessary for me to be at the office to see that everything was in order. I left the office between four and five o'clock in the afternoon, and so did not learn of the beastly outrage committed at Bradlaugh's grave until the following morning. In order to save myself the exertion of travelling to and from my home I had been staying at a London hotel over the Conference period, and attempts to get into touch with me on the Tuesday failed. I cannot say I was "shocked" at what occurred. I was just disgusted. Something of the beast lies embedded in most human beings, and there is nothing like religious fervour for bringing it to the surface.

Notice had been given to the Cemetery Authorities of the visit to be paid and preparations had been made for its reception. Everything was in order when the cemetery closed. The first indication of anything wrong came from the outside. An anonymous telephonic message to the *Evening News* informed it of the outrage, and by way of verification the *News* phoned to Brookwood as to its authenticity. Then it was found that the bronze bust of Bradlaugh had been removed from the granite pedestal on which it stood and its place was taken by a chamber utensil. A search was made for the bust, but it is considered certain that it is not in the grounds. As it weighed only 56 pounds, it is evident that it would not have been difficult for it to be carried by one or two men out of the grounds while others kept watch. The whole thing was carefully planned, although not much intelligence was required for the task. There are

depths of beastliness one is not ready to associate with treatment of the dead and this is one of them. The following inscription, written on stiff paper, was placed in front of the column:—

P  J

JUDAH—

BEWARE !

CHRISTIAN ENGLAND

IS RISING

AGAINST YOU !

G.Y.

“ Beneath this sod—

lieth another ”

Fascism and Christianity

Mr. C. B. Bonner, grandson of Charles Bradlaugh, and who has worked well to make the "Godless Conference" a success, informed a *News-Chronicle* representative that he did not believe that "Fascists would lower themselves to such a cowardly desecration." I do not agree with him, although I quite recognize the generosity displayed by Mr. Bonner in such circumstances. Brutality has, of course, accompanied religious persecutions through the ages, and the Church has provided many a public holiday at which the burning and torturing of heretics has been the dish over which a Christian audience has smacked their lips, and which has received the unequivocal blessing of God's representatives on earth. But while Fascism, whether of the Italian or the Germany variety—and particularly the latter—has gone further than the Church in its brutality, it has added to it an indecency, an open obscenity, which the Church has avoided. The indecency of the object exhibited, the obscenity of the language employed, is characteristic of German Nazism, and the anti-semitism is, again, evidence of German Nazism, from which the English body receives instruction and orders. The most uncivilized of peoples respect the dead—even though that respect has its foundations in fear. The most brutal amongst civilized people show respect to a grave—or to the feelings of those to whom the grave belongs. Fascism alone—particularly in its German form—has managed to raise brutality, indecency and obscenity, in its

treatment of the living, the destruction of memorials erected to the dead, and the violation of graves, to the level of a first principle. Fascism has all the vileness of the worst aspects of religious intolerance, and it has added a cultivation of indecent brutality that belongs to itself. It is not lower than savagery, it is a form of indecent savagery to which classified savages are strangers.

* * *

As Ye Sow—

The combination of Fascist indecency and brutality and Christian intolerance appears to me unmistakable. Let us remember that for a full year the Conference of the World Union of Freethinkers has served as an occasion for an outburst of the most bare-faced Christian lying that has occurred for some years. The lead was taken by Cardinal Hinsley, under orders, I assume, from Rome, to ginger up the Catholic Action Movement, and this was done under cover of manufactured information from Brussels. Lie after lie concerning the Conference was deliberately circulated. This was taken up by men of the type of Captain Ramsay (the "dear Ramsay" of the correspondence with the Pecksniffian Sir Samuel Hoare who as Home Secretary expressed full sympathy with Ramsay's desire that a perfectly logical gathering should be suppressed to gratify religious bigots) and a number of bigots up and down the country. It must not be forgotten that over 150 of the Members of Parliament actually voted in favour of a new Act to suppress the Conference. The Conference was denounced as having been arranged and financed by Russia, it was intended to wreck the British constitution, politically, and undermine the lofty morality of which Sir Samuel Hoare, Sir Oswald Mosley, and Cardinal Hinsley were outstanding specimens. The latter actually hinted—on the lines of the famous advice "don't put him under the pump"—that the indignation of the Christian public was such that there might be physical violence used if the Conference were not suppressed. The cry was taken up by different religious organizations all over the country, and Captain Ramsay received letters of praise and resolutions from religious moronic gatherings of both sexes praises him for his conduct. And in this the Fascists, acting as Germany wished, joined in with prophecies as to what would happen to the nation if this terrible Conference were permitted.

How is it possible, then, for these people to evade at least the moral responsibility for the Brookwood outrage? Naturally Cardinal Hinsley, and Captain Ramsay, and others of their standing and character, did not take any direct hand in the outrage. To do so would be to give them credit for greater moral and intellectual courage than they actually possess. But the responsibility for the action of the Fascist-Christian ruffians at Brookwood lies at the door of those who set the avalanche of lies and slanders concerning the Congress in action.

I am not blind to the fact that many leading Christians, and many Christian papers simply refused to take part in this campaign of lies, and that many publicly protested against it. That is all to the good. But while making all due acknowledgment for the attitude of these men and these papers, they must not expect us to place the credit for their liberality to their professed religious creed. I believe it is more scientifically justifiable to ascribe their liberality, when compared with their fellow Christians, to the influence of forces that lie outside their creed. Not for the first time was there set up a conflict between religious impulse and social incentive. The real lesson of the event is that so long as Christianity exists, so long as any strong religious belief exists that is not kept in check by a sense of social justice and intellectual rectitude such occurrences as those of Brookwood are

to be expected. They are bred of religious feeling, and will end only when religious feelings have ceased to count in actual life.

* * *

A Lesson for Freethinkers

Consider other events in connexion with the "Godless Conference." At the time that the Conference was holding its first sitting, a meeting protesting against it being permitted was held at Caxton Hall. Lord Glasgow was in the chair, and this brilliant specimen of British intelligence relieved himself of the judgment that he had no objection to British Atheists meeting in this country, but he did object to them when they came from abroad. One may feel a little of something like admiration for straightforward bigotry that has the courage to express itself boldly. But what is one to make of the man whose objection to what he thinks is a bad thing is that it comes from abroad? I wonder whether Lord Glasgow ever remembers that the religion in which he believes was brought here by a lot of foreigners, who were opposed by the Lord Glasgows of their day. That Lord Glasgow was a bigot is something with which his friends are probably acquainted, that he is a foolish bigot and a coward to boot he makes quite plain by what he has said. One may hold some kind of respect for a man who is bold enough to argue that certain opinions ought to be suppressed. But what kind of an opinion can we have of one who explains that he wishes to suppress certain opinions only when they are voiced by foreigners? Marxian naval strategy and Nazi science appears quite reasonable phrases at the side of the stupidity of Lord Glasgow.

One final example. Very few of the ordinary daily or weekly press said much concerning the demands that the "Godless Conference" should be suppressed. The policy was dictated by uncertainty as to what amount of support the proposal received, for with the general press the desire is always to be able to say, "we told you so," and so gain a few more subscribers. Last week we mentioned this policy in connexion with the *Star*, which acted very modestly while the cry for suppression was at its highest but, when the Conference was actually in being, treated it as front page news by publishing a special article championing its right to be heard. At such a time the publication was more amusing than anything else, and it was quite safe, particularly as it was accompanied by the notice that the writer was not a Freethinker. After the Brookwood outrage a nine line "leaderette" ran as follows:—

The culprits, no doubt, thus seek to express their detestation of what the World Union of Freethinkers stand for. It is unfortunate for them that this outrage merely discredits their own cause, advertises the body to which they are opposed, and draws sympathy in the wrong direction.

The last four words is very significant of the courage manifested by the *Star*. Was there any need, in noting such an indecent outrage, to make it quite clear to its Christian readers that the *Star* writers have no sympathy with Freethought? Or are there so many Freethinkers of the "save myself" type that they must always be on their guard lest their Freethinking be found out? Why I can think of many Christians who would have denounced the outrage without stopping to warn people that they must not think that they sympathize (openly) with Freethought.

I think the moral here is that Freethinkers will get just about the amount of liberty they are able to demand. If Brookwood serves to convince Freethinkers that the only safe religion is a dead one, that and the "Godless Conference" will have done good

work. We must *fight*, and attack is the best form of defence.

I do not think that the last has been heard of these human beasts who select graves for the gratification of their worse than beastly appetites.

CHAPMAN COHEN.

The Torch-bearers of Freedom

"When to the sessions of sweet silent thought
I summon up remembrance of things past."
Shakespeare.

"Liberty, a word without which all other words are
vain."—Ingersoll.

THE honour of publishing the first definitely Free-thought paper belongs to the courageous Charles Southwell, who led the Freethought Party in the days prior to the founding of the National Secular Society. It was in 1841 that the *Oracle of Reason* first saw the light. The clergy were at once alarmed at this bold challenge, and threatened Southwell with all the terrors of the law. Faced with imprisonment for publishing mild literary and philosophical articles in the early issues, he replied by meeting force with force, and "went over the top," with outspoken Biblical criticism. Southwell was then arrested and sentenced to a year's imprisonment, with a fine of £100. During Southwell's imprisonment G. J. Holyoake edited the paper, and when he, in turn, was sentenced to six months' imprisonment, Thomas Paterson took his place. "Bull-dog Paterson," as he was called, was also sent to gaol, and George Adams and his wife, Harriet, stepped bravely into the breach, each to be sent to prison. William Chilton succeeded them and kept the flag flying to the end, which was hastened by the very heavy debts incurred in the continuous law cases, and the fines imposed by bigoted judges.

The *Oracle of Reason* lasted just over two years of fighting all the way, and the courage of its editors and staff created such a profound impression that, in due time, it led to the formation of a properly-organized national Freethought Movement. After his release from prison, Southwell carried on a Freethought mission in many places, and ultimately settled in New Zealand, where he edited the *Auckland Examiner*. He died in 1860, prematurely worn out at an early age of forty-six. A brilliant soldier in the Army of Human Liberation, he, during his short life, wrote his name indelibly in the records of human emancipation.

Not the least of the services of Charles Bradlaugh was his production of the *National Reformer*, a weekly periodical, which, started in the "sixties" of the last century survived the death of its first editor in 1891. Every issue stated that the journal was Atheistic, Maltheusian, and Republican, a very bold thing to do in those far-off days. It had a large circulation, which was not surprising when one recalls that its contributors included such writers as John M. Robertson, G. W. Foote, Annie Besant, Charles Watts and James Thomson, the author of *The City of Dreadful Night*, many of whose poems first appeared in the paper. After Bradlaugh's death, Robertson edited the paper very brilliantly, but, despite heroic efforts, its circulation declined and it died. Actually, it had been Bradlaugh's dominating personality which had sustained the paper, and many of his political admirers purchased it without sharing the views on theology.

Robertson tried again to win acceptance for his *Free Review*, a monthly periodical which was superior to all its rivals. Here, again, fine scholar though he was, he overlooked the business side. Lacking the

support of the advertisers, he could not make the *Review* pay, and the greater his circulation, the greater became his indebtedness. It changed hands, and became the *University Magazine*, and, after a year or two, disappeared.

G. W. Foote was the greatest writer ever associated with the Freethought movement, and he was an excellent journalist. Before he edited the *Freethinker*, he had tried his prentice hand with *The Secularist*, and, *The Liberal*. Afterwards, he issued *Progress*, a monthly magazine, which was enlivened by the pens of William Archer, J. M. Wheeler, Dr. Aveling, and others. After Bradlaugh, Foote edited the National Secular Society's *Almanac*, to which he contributed many striking articles. He also wrote for outside publications articles of considerable length. How he managed to do all this literary work in addition to his onerous duties in connexion with the Freethought Movement is truly surprising. In his capacity as a Freethought publisher he issued over two hundred separate publications, every one of which he had to see through the press, beside editing the *Freethinker* each week, and travelling Britain as a lecturer. Like his illustrious predecessor, Bradlaugh, Foote was killed by overwork. Both men had superb constitutions, but no one can do the work of four men and escape the penalty of outraged nature.

For many years Foote issued a weekly poster with the *Freethinker*, and his journalistic ability was often shown in this way. He got a large extra sale one week with the announcement: "A Bishop in the Workhouse," although the right-reverend Father-in-God had but visited the institution to preach to the inmates. J. M. Wheeler, who assisted Foote on the paper, was a lovable man, and a ripe scholar, who was for ever browsing around the bookshops and book-stalls. "Joe is so kind-hearted," said Foote, "he can't bear to see a book exposed to the rain." Wheeler emptied many an inkpot in the service of "the best of causes," but his most enduring work was his *Dictionary of Freethinkers*, a work which ought to be re-issued and brought up to date. Wheeler had prepared a history of English Freethought, but it was still in manuscript at the time of its death. An untiring journalist, his articles were perhaps remarkable for the light they threw on his love of liberty, and his insatiable desire for knowledge. All his own books were annotated, and, so punctilious was he, that he would visit the British Museum library to get information for a correspondent. All his life he carried on the great tradition of scholarship with enthusiasm. His friendship with Foote was real and lasting. The two came up to London together, and Foote obtained work at a West-end library. After Foote started the *Freethinker* in 1881, Wheeler joined forces with him, and continued until his death in 1898. He was saved, as he had wished to be, from all consciousness of decrepitude.

The *Agnostic Journal* followed the *Secular Review*. Its editor was W. Stewart Ross, poet, bookseller, publisher, lecturer and author. As a poet he never received his due, but as a prose writer he proved himself the master of a florid style which attracted a large circle of readers, who helped him, financially, to maintain his paper. G. K. Chesterton, who knew him well, immortalized him in his novel, *The Ball and the Cross*. Indeed, Ross introduced Chesterton to Freethought, as he did a number of Fleet Street scribes. For he was for ever debating with his customers, and I fear that his zeal as an apostle often overrode his instincts as a business man. In this respect Ross resembled that brave, old veteran, Edward Truelove, whose bookshop too often resembled a debating society rather than a place of trade. Let us not make excuses, but take the pioneers as they were, with their rebellion and their urgencies, perceiving that they had to be so to win

from emancipated generations of free souls the gratitude due to precursors.

Gott of Bradford produced a slender monthly, the *Truthseeker*, which had a chequered existence for some years. Towards the close of his life he published a facetious sheet with the quaint title, *Jerusalem Star*, which he sold all over England. In its pages he retailed Biblical stories in modern journalistic style, but the humour, clever as it was, proved remote from public taste.

The story of these Freethought editors is a plain tale, but it stirs the blood like martial music. For it shows the determination and resolution in the hearts and minds of these brave pioneers. Faced with ruin, risking imprisonment, subsisting on soldiers' wages, they fought the good fight for human emancipation. They dedicated their lives to Liberty, and were ready to die for so splendid an ideal. The outside world sees but the husks the fierce antipathies of the dreamer—but knows that they are rooted in a sympathy as wide as the humanity to which it is unselfishly devoted. They hated the tyrants because they knew the sufferings of the slaves.

These editors of pioneer papers, including men of character, even of genius, are but signposts to meet the reader and direct him towards the wondrous universality of Freethought. These men varied in talents, in education, in social position, but they all cared, not for wealth and notoriety, but for intellectual honesty. Each one of them was, in his own way, an apostle of Freedom, and the bare records of their doings thrill and fascinate by very reason of their simplicity. Indeed, they are potent because of this sincerity. Liberty was their sovereign specific for the ills of their time. Finding their contemporaries bound with chains of their own manufacture, it was their purpose to break those fetters and to set them free. In an age of compromise these men remained faithful to principle; in an age of greedy commercialism they cared only for truth. Their work was well and truly done.

MIMNERMUS.

The Superman of Pagan Rome

JULIUS CÆSAR made himself immortal by his deeds and death. A far-seeing statesman, he was completely emancipated from the superstitions of his time, and pursued the policy of a realist who sought solid achievements by already available means. Powerful as he became, he ever displayed a clement and generous disposition, and rose so far above the paltry passions of his period that he was popularly regarded as a superior being, semi-divine in character.

This majestic Roman was born and lived in a stormy time. The Gracchi had fought and perished in their struggle with a despotic landed interest and commercial plutocracy. The Senatorial party remained supreme and still vetoed nearly every remedial measure designed to alleviate the wrongs of the people.

The Roman Republic which Cæsar overthrew has been pictured as an institution of unsullied purity and perfection, while, in reality, its political life had deteriorated into a cesspool of corruption. Even the noble and patriotic Brutus has been ridiculously idealized, while the other assassins who conspired to murder Cæsar (Cicero among them) were urged to the commission of their crime by envy, hatred and pique, rather than by any desire to benefit the community.

For ten years, civil war had raged in Italy, and the atrocities perpetrated by Sulla after its suppression, and even his subsequent agrarian reforms, had brought

no permanent peace. In 78 B.C., Sulla went into voluntary retirement, and some of the democratic leaders who had escaped his proscription reappeared in Rome. Among these was the youthful Cæsar, who soon became aware of the indiscipline in the army, as well as the rebellious temper of the slaves, some of whom had deserted to join the pirates who now infested the Mediterranean, while other escaped slaves plundered rural estates or waylaid and robbed travellers on the Italian roads. In the provinces anarchy reigned, while Lepidus strove to revive the civil conflict and capture the City. Although Lepidus was defeated, the Senate was driven to invoke the aid of the army. Pompey was selected by the Senate as military commander, and the high terms he demanded for his services the Senators were compelled to grant.

War had scarcely ended in Spain when an outbreak occurred in the East, while Spartacus led a motley assembly of runaway slaves and other malcontents who pillaged the countryside in Italy. In 71 B.C., Crassus was commissioned by the Senate to suppress Spartacus, and when a semblance of order was restored the Senate found itself confronted by the victorious generals, Pompey and Crassus, the former being given unprecedented authority in order to sweep the pirates from the seas. Pompey then sailed to the East, where he despoiled the dominions of the aggressive Mithradates.

Pompey's return was now awaited in a still turbulent Italy. With the financial assistance of Crassus, Cæsar conducted a democratic campaign, and was suspected of complicity in the Cataline conspiracy, which was designed to degrade the Senate, and then legalize on a more extended scale the rejected land reforms of Gaius Gracchus.

After a visit to Spain, Cæsar returned to Rome in 60 B.C., and arranged an alliance with Pompey and Crassus. In the following year, Julius was elected Consul, and, as the most energetic member of this First Triumvirate, Cæsar, despite the antagonism of the Senate and his fellow Consul, carried through his schemes of settlement and pacified Pompey's veterans.

In the apportionment of offices, Cæsar accepted a five years' governorship of Cisalpine and Transalpine Gaul, where his victories over the restless barbarians who were an abiding menace to Rome gained him his great reputation as a military leader and pacificator. He was determined on the complete subjection of the turbulent Celtic tribes who had taken and sacked the Eternal City in earlier days, and had been quite recently expelled from Italy with the utmost difficulty. Cæsar, who was a born writer, made manifest to the Roman world the vast importance of the task he had undertaken in his famous *Commentaries*. It is justly urged that these military reports are "always terse and precise, never vague or exaggerated, and, written in masterly style, tell from year to year the story of his operations in Gaul, Germany and Britain."

The conquest of Gaul was completed after nine years' strenuous warfare. His military triumphs enabled him to control a devoted army and a small supply of money. But while Cæsar was campaigning abroad, Rome had become the scene of political disturbance. The Senate viewed his victories with disfavour, and there was a danger of the desertion of Pompey and Crassus to his enemies. Nevertheless, in 56 B.C., Cæsar with great adroitness at last persuaded his colleagues to renew their former agreement.

Crassus, however, was slain by the Parthians after they had defeated his army in Syria. Meanwhile, Pompey lingered in Rome, where constant rioting and pillage ultimately compelled the Senate to consent to his sole election as Consul clothed with dictatorial authority. He then led his legions into the City, where order was restored.

Intensely anxious as was Cæsar for a peaceful settle-

ment, he realized the necessity for securing his personal safety by means of his election to the Roman Consulship in his absence, while still retaining his military command. Should Cæsar return under these conditions, Pompey would be reduced to a subordinate position, as he was painfully aware of his rival's superior powers. So he threw his influence on the side of the Senate, and when Cæsar crossed the Rubicon and advanced towards Rome, Pompey considered discretion the better part of valour and sailed away.

As conflict was now unavoidable, Cæsar promptly fell upon Pompey's army in Spain, but failed to defeat his African forces. But, at the battle of Pharsalus in Thessaly, Cæsar utterly routed his antagonist's troops. Pompey, however, fled to Egypt hoping to renew hostilities, but the ruler of that country, dreading complications, sent Pompey to his long account. War continued in Africa and Spain, but Cæsar's genius as a commander soon ended the conflict and overthrew the authority of the Senate. Cæsar now stood supreme with a Senate of his own appointment, and with a well-trained army reverentially devoted to their leader.

In 46 B.C. Cæsar attained sovereignty and remained supreme until his assassination on March 15, 44 B.C. He disdained to repeat the wholesale butchery which disgraced the triumphs of his predecessors, Marius and Sulla. He magnanimously declared that henceforth he would make no distinction between Pompeians and his own adherents, while the Roman populace was feasted and entertained at the dictator's expense. He accepted as colleagues the leading representatives of the faction opposed to him, which included Cicero, Cassius and Marcus and Decimus Brutus. His predominant desire was the strengthening of the Roman frontiers and the reign of universal tranquility.

Cæsar assumed many responsibilities, and he nominated Octavius, his adopted nephew, as his successor. This ultimately proved a sagacious choice, for the peaceful and prosperous reign of this prince, famous to posterity as the great Augustus, was one of the most beneficent in human annals. Nor was Cæsar's brief dictatorship a mere military despotism; it received the cordial assent of the general community. Rostovtzeff, whose attitude is decidedly detached, admits that the "masses regarded him with a kind of religious awe. To them he was not only the favourite of fortune and the military genius, but also a superior being. The religious ideas of antiquity drew no hard and fast line between the human and divine; and they were ready to recognize Cæsar as a superman, a hero in the ancient religious sense of the word."

When restoring the ruined commercial cities of Corinth and Carthage, Cæsar decreed that the Roman colonists must afford accommodation for the native population. He reformed the calendar which had been shamefully manipulated by the priestly college for political purposes. He rectified the Civil Code and reformed the Criminal Courts, and projected a digest of the whole Roman Legal system for public service; the draining of the Pontine swamps in the interest of hygiene and husbandry; the founding of public libraries, with many other invaluable undertakings.

Cæsar's legions were stationed outside Rome and, although for a time he was attended, as bearer of the supreme command by a small detachment of guards, even these he dismissed just prior to his murder. His democratic inclinations were gall and wormwood to the proud and haughty patricians, particularly when he introduced plebians and provincials into the Senate. So they plotted and carried out the assassination of an intellectual colossus, who as statesman, military commander, man of letters and orator, among other accomplishments, ranks as perhaps the supreme genius of antiquity.

Mommsen's description of the Roman magnificence which Cæsar was charged with destroying is a vivid one. This eminent historian tells us that: "A police supervision of streets, of river banks, of fires, or of building was almost unheard of; if the Government troubled itself at all about the inundations, conflagrations and falls of houses which were of yearly occurrence, it was only to ask from the state-theologians their report and advice regarding the true import of such signs and wonders. If we try to conceive to ourselves a London with the slave population of New Orleans, with the police of Constantinople, with the now industrial character of modern Rome, and agitated with politics after the fashion of the Paris of 1848, we shall acquire an approximate idea of the Republican glory, the departure of which Cicero and his associates in their sulky letters deplore."

In a celebrated speech in the Senate, Cæsar expressed decided views concerning the future state. Froude in his fascinating sketch of Cæsar's career summarizes this address thus: "Death was the end of human suffering. In the grave there was neither joy nor sorrow. When a man was dead he ceased to be. He became as he had been before he was born." "Probably," comments Froude, "almost everyone in the Senate, even Cicero himself, thought like Cæsar on this subject at the bottom of his heart. The only difference was, that plausible statesmen affected a respect for the popular superstition. . . . Cæsar spoke his convictions out."

While disdaining the arts of the demagogue, Cæsar was sincerely democratic. Yet he was convinced that firm government was essential to order, progress and prosperity. He never pretended as Cicero did that God was on his side, and he scorned to descend to artifice. He never persecuted any of the countless religious cults of the many tribes assembled under the Roman eagles, and he was ever considerate and kind to the Jews. In the words of Froude: "He thanked his soldiers after a victory, but he did not order *Te Deums* to be sung for it. . . . He fought his battles to establish some tolerable degree of justice in the world; and he succeeded, though he was murdered for doing it."

T. F. PALMER.

A Friend of God

THE Congress of the World Union of Freethinkers had some curious effects. The Secretary of the Lord's Day Society, for instance, advised all those who attended Church or Sunday School on September 11 to sing the hymn:—

Jesus shall reign where'er the sun
Doth its successive journeys run;
His Kingdom stretch from shore to shore,
Till moons shall wax and wane no more.

This appears to one unsophisticated mind to be an excellent illustration of the expression "Whistling to keep up one's pecker."

Another happy band of brothers elected to parade the streets in manner dignified and stately. Others assisted the coming of the Kingdom of Christ on earth by forgetting what they had learnt at mother's knees about George Washington; others, many others, forgot their manners. And there was still another class that would have forgotten them had they ever had any.

A periodical named the *Christian* did its best for the Faith once delivered to the Saints by bringing out on September 8 a *Christian Witness* issue. In this the Faith was eulogized and its enemies pulverized in special articles.

A very special article is that of the Rev. John

Thomas, M.A. It is called, *Christ, the Lord of the Intellect*. The Reverend Gentleman is clearly disturbed by the fact that the evangelical teacher of today has to face the suspicion of being "blankly un-intellectual." He does not like to be considered as one of those who have been "left behind in the dark by the march of intellectual light." One can understand his irritation and sympathize with his efforts to prove these suspicions false, but, after we have said that, we offer no bouquets. We would have preferred to say that though we differed from his conclusions we commended his spirit, his scholarship, his accuracy, and his passion for truth. If these qualities were visible we would have rejoiced in saying so. But all we can truthfully say is that he has in his short article gone far to cross the t's and dot the i's of the general indictment he so much deplures.

Mr. Thomas is not one of those who think Atheism a rarity in the land. On the contrary, he considers it has pervaded the minds of the common people far more than is commonly supposed. "The anti-Christ forces have, in fact, an obvious advantage numerically." "More than that they irrationally claim that this furnishes clear proof of their intellectual superiority." Who are *they*? What Freethinker can he name who would subscribe to this? As one who was almost nurtured in a Freethought atmosphere, I know that the statement that you cannot put opinions up to the vote, or that a majority in favour of any proposition proves nothing, is perhaps one of the most constantly reiterated platitudes of Freethought. It is the devotee of superstition who is prone to say, "Well, *you* may not believe it, but there are millions who do."

And these anti-Christian beliefs have nothing in common, says the Rev. John Thomas, M.A. They believe all kinds of things, these people. They speak with divided voices and without a shred of authority. (They do happen, by the way, to agree on their rejection of the Gospel of Christ and Him crucified). *Without a shred of authority*. Precisely! All the Freethinker says is This is what I believe, this is why I believe it; teach me better, if you can. He does not say, Holy Mother says so or the Holy Bible says so. The Claims that have been made for these to have Authority they have examined and rejected. Mr. Thomas sees the difference between a Christian and a Freethinker clearly enough, but it is foolish for him to be annoyed because a Freethinker believes that the mind of man goes from triumph to triumph whilst what the Christian (of Mr. Thomas's type) believes is that the Word of God is the same yesterday, to-day and to-morrow. To the Freethinker the things of yesterday belong to yesterday. And to-day when he is thinking of to-morrow he is prepared to learn from yesterday. But he has no use for either Pope or Revelation.

The Word of God, Mr. Thomas tells us, gives us knowledge which the limited mind of man could not have discovered. This helps us to understand why Mr. Thomas is so eager to accept the Authority of the Bible. It enables him to write down the "Anti-God" forces as fools. This is so easy and so very, very satisfying. "The depravity of the human mind easily leads to a sheep-walk in organized sceptical Intellectualism." Well, some quality of the human mind has led Mr. Thomas into the sheep-walk of Bibliolatry. We do not think it useful to analyse the phenomenon; obviously, but for a geographical accident, Mr. Thomas would have been lauding an entirely different Holy Book as his authority. But we do feel that it must be very comforting to have one's intellectual difficulties settled by an Oracle, particularly when it tells us that babes and sucklings are the salt of the earth, and that those who do not accept

Mr. Thomas's fetish are not only fools, but depraved fools.

Mr. Thomas, M.A., in fact enjoys so much his divine right to hurl adjectives, that he has omitted to note that there are many other than the Anti-Godites who are huddled into the sheep-pen of the Anti-Christians and the Anti-Bibliolators. Take, for example, Dr. Inge, Dr. Matthews and Dr. Barnes.

They're wrong, says Thomas, that I know
Because the Bible tells me so.

The Bishop of Birmingham, in fact, seems to have been specially considering Mr. Thomas's case:—

The most disquieting feature of the present religious situation in England was the loss of personal interest in religion. But the Christian tradition contains many things which educated men cannot accept, and which they will never again accept unless a new age of barbarism comes on. For the sake of our faith the gulf between new knowledge and the old beliefs must be closed by the acceptance of the new knowledge.

"Barnes," says Thomas, "The Word of God is majestically and comprehensively rational." "Thomas," says the Bishop, "Your point of view may be that of your Revelation, but that is the point of view of long ago, and can only become again generally accepted by the return of a new era of barbarism."

"Are you, too, amongst the fools?" says Thomas, retiring to his corner, purring.

Perhaps the Lord of the Intellect has something to say at this juncture. Like Ruskin he can generally be quoted for and against most propositions. Yes, Jesus said, "He that calleth his brother a fool is in danger of Hell Fire." But what cares a spiritual luminary such as Thomas, M.A.? The Lord of the Intellect must be put in his place. Jesus, plainly, cannot be allowed to join the ranks of the real intelligentsia, the pick and choose brigade, to which Mr. Thomas belongs.

T. H. ELSTON.

Brookwood

A CUSTOMARY part of the International Freethought Congresses is a visit to some place or monument which recalls a memory important to Freethinkers. From the contemplation of this spot, from the recollection of the man or event with which it is connected, Freethinkers may gain strength and inspiration for the present.

The London Congress, having brought its sessions at Conway Hall to an end, having dined (a remnant of Heathenism which has much to commend it), shook off the dust of London for a few hours on Tuesday, September 13, to visit the heathy cemetery at Brookwood. Here nearly 48 years ago was buried the founder of the National Secular Society, who was also one of the founders of the International Freethought movement, Charles Bradlaugh.

Brookwood is a tranquil spot, where gentle breezes whisper through the trees and bear the scent of heather to the bees. Even the rumble of passing trains cannot disturb the serene peace of its green swards.

When the Congress party (about fifty in number) arrived in the early afternoon of a warm sunny day, they found the bronze bust of Bradlaugh had been removed. Some persons during the preceding night had stolen the heavy bronze. They left behind them so that we might identify the source of the outrage, a Nazi anti-Jewish poster and, a symbol of their kind, a chamber-pot.

Freethought and Bradlaugh cannot be affected by the cowardly insults of such excreta of mankind. Too craven to come out against us in the light of day, these human hyenas dared only to break into an unprotected graveyard by night, there to wreak their obscene venom.

Mr. Arthur Bonner, Bradlaugh's son-in-law, welcomed the Congress to Brookwood in a brief address, in which he recalled the 1881 London Congress, of which he is one of the very few survivors, as well as that of 1887, and that of 1920 at Prague. He told of Bradlaugh as he had known him, kind, considerate and patient, both in his home life and with his collaborators. He also spoke of Bradlaugh's two daughters, who are both interred in this grave, of their devotion to their father and to one another, of how the younger endeavoured, when both father and sister were dead, to carry on the work to which they had put their hands, and to defend Bradlaugh's memory from the mean defamations of the base and envious.

Dr. Terwagne and Herr Hoving expressed the indignation which the foreign delegates present felt at the desecration of the tomb, and saluted Bradlaugh as a hero of Freethought.

Mr. J. P. Gilmour recalled how over 50 years before he had fallen under Bradlaugh's influence, had later become a contributor to the *National Reformer* and then to the *Reformer*, and how he had enjoyed the friendship of Mrs. Bradlaugh Bonner for some forty years, and reminded his hearers of the immense debt English freedom owed Bradlaugh. Mr. Bayard Simons regretted Mr. Cohen's absence through illness, expressed his admiration for all that Bradlaugh had done and stood for, adjured his hearers "not to bury the hatchet" in the war against reaction, and quoted his own excellent poem which appeared at the time of the Bradlaugh Centenary in the columns of the *Freethinker*.

The party arrived back at Waterloo about 4.30 p.m., and, with the last farewells, felt that the Congress had been an outstanding event in the history of modern Freethought.

C.B.B.

Acid Drops

Cardinal Innitzer, who welcomed the Nazis and their political creed to Austria, now seems to repudiate most of the latter. At all events, he and the entire Austrian hierarchy have signed a pastoral protest breathing defiance to, at least, two of the measures inspired by the German Government. They are against the secularization of marriage, and the exclusion of priests and nuns in the schools. All religious schools have been closed, and Catholic professors have been dismissed from the Vienna University. It will prove interesting to see how the Catholic hierarchy all over the world will react to the insults hurled at them by the people who were so warmly welcomed by Cardinal Innitzer.

It should be pointed out that this attack on religion and religious schools by the Nazis does not actually mean that they are in favour of Secularism all round. It is indeed doubtful if the Nazis know or care two hoots what the Secularist ideals are. The real reason for this attempt to suppress religion, or rather the Catholic religion, is simply that it represents a world dominion outside the Nazis worship of state. This worship of State demands entire and unqualified obedience by the individual who has no right whatever himself. Roman Catholicism, while admitting that man has individual rights, insists on obedience to the State also, but first and foremost to the name of God. A man's interest is thus divided which is anathema to the Nazi creed.

But there are further complications. One is that at the Anti-Jew Exhibition in Vienna noted Catholic editors, after having been dismissed from their posts, are now being pilloried by being given special mention in the roll of dishonour. They are, of course, "Aryans," but this is the notice accompanying the portraits:—

These persons are as dangerous as the Jews because they are active supporters of Catholicism, which is a Jewish religion.

We wonder whether this honours more the Jews or the Catholics.

According to Fr. Leo Ward, an English priest serving in Japan, it appears that the campaign against Japan "is as unfair as that being conducted against Christian Spain." The Japanese, says Fr. Ward, "were far too religious to be materialists, and far too intelligent to believe in race-mysticism, or self worship. So far from being the enemies of civilization, they were its best friends in the Far East." Well, we are indeed glad that the Japs are so religious. When we read of the foul air-bombing of the helpless Chinese people, the rape and torture of their women, the horror and bloodshed the Japs have spread over a peaceful population, we almost could "thank God" that they are not materialists. Fr. Ward's precious words should be emblazoned in letters of gold.

The *Spectator* referring to the attempt of that stupid person, Captain Ramsay, to prevent the "Godless Conference," says that Sir Samuel Hoare "very rightly refused to lend himself" to any move towards stopping the Congress. That is not a truthful presentation of the case, and we must not let such a person as Sir Samuel Hoare off in this manner. Our Pecksniffian Home Secretary expressed himself as being in *full sympathy* with Captain Ramsay, but pointed out that he had no power to prevent the Conference. If English means anything at all this does not mean that Sir Samuel Hoare refused to stop the Conference, only that he regretted he had not the power to do so. We must remember that of Sir Samuel. Also that Freethinkers will have freedom just so long as they fight for it and defend the measure of freedom they have achieved.

Here is how—alas!—another genuine ghost has been laid. From the ruins of a burnt-down friary at Hausen, near Coblenz, precisely at midnight issued strange creaking and sighing sounds, causing people from all parts to thrill with horror. At last, some courageous youths decided to investigate the ruins; and they found hidden away a small electric clock which had escaped the fire, and which precisely at midnight automatically wound itself up, the process becoming more and more painful through rust and age. Very good, so far, but who can say that this clock was not preserved by some spirit friend and set going when necessary? We invite the attention of Mr. Price and some other ghost detectors to look into the matter and report.

In Mrs. Loraine's biography of her famous actor husband, there is an account of the narrow escape he and Mr. G. Bernard Shaw had from drowning. Swimming in a rough sea, it was only after a very hard struggle they succeeded in coming to land. Robert Loraine asked Shaw afterwards whether during the struggle he saw visions of his past life . . . or did he think of God, Hell, or Heaven? Said Shaw:—

No, a man does not think of fairy tales within two minutes of certain death. . . I considered whether people could help us if we sang out . . . I thought of Mrs. Shaw getting the news that I was drowned . . . I asked myself how many more strokes I could swim before the effort became too great. . . Then my foot struck a stone and instead of saying, "Thank God," I said Damn!

In fact just purely secular thoughts—as one would expect. But we have an idea that this passage will not be used by the "God-like" people to convert the "God-less"!

The Rev. Leigh Waller, writing on "Television and the Churches," suggests a number of "Bible Stories that Could be Dramatized." We remember the fate of many Bible Romances, which did not stand very well the "acid test" of dramatization. It is better to leave these things in the Museum where they belong. Some of the more salacious stories might be welcome in the dreary atmosphere of unromantic Christendom, but we are not sure that many of them would pass the Censor. Some of the less smutty—such as Creating a World from Nothing at All might be made amusing perhaps. God exhibiting his pants to Moses might raise a smirk or two. Noah has already been shown on the "pictures." And incidents in the life of Jesus are hidden in dense disguise under such titles as "The Passing of the Third Floor Back." We must say the precedents are mightily discouraging.

Sir Samuel Hoare recently stated that he had "secured the friendly co-operation of the Churches" for the projects of A.R.P. This claim is hotly contested by the Editor of the *British Weekly*, who denies that the "Churches" have been consulted, or that anyone is entitled to make so definite a statement. All this is quite on a par with Sir Samuel professing to speak in the name of the people of England in "wishing he had the power" to prohibit the International Conference of Freethought. The fact is that NOBODY except the Prime Minister ever gave Sir Samuel Hoare any office or authority. He represents himself and the Prime Minister—with the possible addition of the Dowager Duchess of Norfolk, who fired the last shot at the Conference by proclaiming that it was "un-English"—a "Howler" from which the mere title "International" ought to have saved her.

"Gracious, generous folk, who don't know the meaning of hate or fear or suspicion. Just natural beauties, inside and out," is how a man from Samoa described to Piers England (writing in a Sunday newspaper) the South Sea Islanders as he had known them before white "civilization" had reached them. Even after they "have been brought into contact with some of the blackest white men that ever disgraced our name," added the narrator, "somehow they have come out clean. Anyway, there are few Europeans who are morally fit to sit at the same table with them." Then he told how the war of 1914 affected a land where "peace, love, and happiness reigned." Ships came to Apia (Western Samoa) full of 'flu cases. Instead of being put in quarantine, passengers and crews were allowed to land, and, "infected nearly the entire population." Said the traveller:—

Samoans are among the healthiest people in the world. Colds are unknown among them; but a lot of their natural vitality has been destroyed by their being forced to wear European garments.

Mr. England's informant went on:—

In their natural state they went about more or less naked. But the missionaries couldn't stand for that. (our italics). They made the women wear shirts—sort of nightgowns—with the result that they became more susceptible to disease, especially consumption.

The tragedy of a young Polynesian told by the same person to Mr. England, is a story beyond treatment by stage or film. Tamasesee, "the essence of manly beauty and dignity," was the son of a leading and well-loved chief. Under the New Zealand mandate, a new Governor was appointed to the island, who introduced regulations which did not meet with the acceptance of the Samoans. Tamasesee took up their cause, but counselled his followers against violence. "Our cause is just; no bloodshed must defile our golden land," said he. He pleaded that cause so well in New Zealand that they returned him to his country with honour. But the Governor had then proceeded to back his demands by force, and Tamasesee was shot dead as he interposed his body between his own people and the Government force in an endeavour to keep the peace. (Let us leave it at that: without even commenting on missionaries or civilization).

Australia's falling birthrate is a greater menace to the country than the possibility of war, declared Dr. Mowll, Anglican Archbishop of Sydney, addressing the Diocesan Synod.

To have no lambs for the slaughter "is a greater menace" than to have the butchers knee-deep in blood. Isn't that the "MOWLL"-DY conclusion?

James, lying on the seat in Trafalgar Square, looked like a skeleton that had been lifted from a grave. The white boniness of his skull had wisps of dank white hair on it, wisps that fell damply over his eyes and the ridge of his nose; his mouth, gaping open, revealed yellowing teeth: the bones of his body seemed fragile and disordered under the decaying remnants of his clothes.

His hands drooped whitely towards the stones of the square. His boots were rotting on his feet. He lay, in the hard bright glare of the lamps, in a stillness as profound as death.

So runs the sketch drawn by the *Evening News* policeman "featurist" of a man charged at Bow Street for "wandering abroad and sleeping in the open-air." For some unexplained reason he was not allowed to sleep in the much-advertised crypt of St. Martin's (Trafalgar Square), and he refused to accept the offer of an all-night shelter ticket from a constable, because—as he told the court—"they stole the clothing off his back" when he was last there. He was formerly a clerk (no: not in "holy orders"), and said he was without home or friends.

The "accused" had had twopence the previous day, which he spent on bread and cheese; and, no doubt feeling plethoric after his indulgence, all he wanted to do was to sleep. Being deprived of that common follow-on to a hearty meal perhaps accounted for his indifference when the magistrate (Mr. McKenna) discharged him with the injunction that he "mustn't do it again." So exit the man whose

eyes looked out from the bones of his face with a kind of blurred anger, whose lips were a thin, bloodless line, and whose hands, clutching the tatters of his coat, moved like talons.

In the vivid words of the journalist quoted: "Blessed are the poor," for they are spared ducal nights of unrest trying to circumvent death duties and taxation. "Blessed are the poor," for they know not the problem whether to spend the night at town house or country seat. "Blessed are the poor," for they have not to endure the digestive derangements of one-to-five guinea a-head feasts. What could the parsons and priests of a Christian country do without you?

Fifty Years Ago

JESUS was God or man—there is no middle course. Those who accept his godhead are logical in making him the object of their daily worship; but if he is once regarded as a man, it will be found the world has far more pressing tasks than to "reconceive" one of the many figures that crowd the galleries of history. Nor is the "reconception" easy, even if possible. Mrs. Humphrey Ward is very unfamiliar with historical criticism, or she strangely misreads its results, when she declares that "we may now discern the true features of Jesus of Nazareth." Another female writer—George Eliot—who was far better informed, stated the real truth in one of her letters, when she asserted that the materials for a biography of Jesus do not exist. We go a step farther, and affirm that a character once surrounded with mythology, and infused with the miraculous, is lost for ever. Nothing is possible but that arbitrary method of reconstruction which is affected by Mrs. Ward and her school. They form a new ideal by selecting every good and beautiful feature of Jesus as human, and dismissing all the rest as mythical. But this is not scientific, nor even plausible. It leaves everything in uncertainty, and one man's conception of Jesus is pitted against another's, until the futility of the method is exposed to the point of absurdity.

THE FREETHINKER

FOUNDED BY G. W. FOOTE

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TO CORRESPONDENTS.

TAB CAN.—Thanks for good wishes; the paper you kindly sent may have been overlooked.

J. M. GANTVOORT.—We have no objection to your reprinting article, *About Books*, with acknowledgments, or any other matter from the *Freethinker*.

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

To Advertising and Distributing the *Freethinker*.—Mr. and Mrs. C. Potter, 2s.; H. Hunter, 5s.; D. Fisher, 4s.

H. ROBERTS.—The new and greatly enlarged edition of Mr. Cohen's *Materialism Re-Stated* will be out in the course of a week or ten days. The price will be 3s. 6d.

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.

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

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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

In response to many enquiries, Mr. Cohen is taking a brief holiday, and is very much better. He was none the worse for his efforts during the Conference period. He is away on the coast and is within easy reach of London, so that he may be able to come to town whenever needed. Meanwhile he is doing no more than is necessary, and he will resume lecturing as early in the autumn as possible. With all those who have written him please take this as an acknowledgment—at least, for the present. For the next week or two, those who write him on private personal matters will oblige by marking their envelopes "Personal."

During the agitation, from the Christian side, over the International Conference, the Secretary of the Christian Evidence Society has advocated the policy of non-intervention, so far as suppression is concerned. But it is of all things the most difficult for Christian advocates to tell the whole truth about anything, and in this case the reason advanced for tolerance is that it is better for Freethinkers to come out into the open with their propaganda, instead of conducting it in a surreptitious manner. So far as the official conduct of an anti-Christian campaign is concerned, the work of the N.S.S. has never been other than open. There has never been the slightest concealment as to what we were doing or how we were doing it. That has been the policy and the practice of Freethought propaganda since the days of Richard Car-

But if the Secretary of the Christian Evidence Society implies, in that fundamentally dishonest way that is characteristic of Christian advocacy, that a great many non-believers in this country do not openly express their opinions, and when they give voice to them do so quietly and unobtrusively, then we not only agree with him, but he is only saying what we have said more times than we are able to count. We have always complained that a great deal of the strength of religion in this country is derived from the silence, the weakness, even the mental timidity, of those who have no belief at all in religion. The man who is an Atheist at heart prefers often to call himself an Agnostic, and invents a number of elaborate exercises in self-justification. Or he claims to have a religion, while being without everything that would warrant him in wearing a religious label. But that there is some kind of organized secret propaganda going on other than this is absurdly untrue.

And the responsibility for Freethinkers not openly avowing their opinions, or of quietly insinuating their unbelief into the minds of others, lies entirely with Christians. If there are Christians who really, honestly, wish all Freethinkers to express their opinions openly, the remedy lies with them, and it should be shown by their conduct. Let them, in the name of intellectual honesty and civic righteousness advocate (1) that anti-religious opinions shall be given the same opportunity of expression in the public press as is given to pro-religious ones. (2) Let them see to it that a man does not find open expression of non-religious or anti-religious opinions stand in his way in business, or in seeking civic and political advancement. (3) Let it be seen that teachers do not find anti-religious opinions stand in the way of their rising in their profession. (4) Let them advocate the repeal of all laws that give believers privileges and protection that are not given to non-believers. In other words, let them advocate absolute equality of every opinion before the law whatever be its character. We shall then know that these "liberal" Christians really mean what they say.

Multitudes of men and women, for business reasons, hide the fact that they are without religion and sit in church with outward reverence for ceremonies they despise. Parents of families bring up their children in ignorance of their opinions for fear it should seriously affect their "worldly" prospects. Others go to any extent to discover some term which will hide their actual Atheism. An outstanding quality of our social life is its hypocrisy, and the responsibility for this lies wholly with the Christian Church.

If, then, Christians are desirous of intellectual and moral honesty, they have only seriously to practice the art of intellectual hospitality. They must remove not merely the legal barriers to freedom of speech, but also, and of greater importance, the social ones. Average men and women are not wishful to play the hypocrite but neither have they the strength to stand up against possible legal punishment and certain social and business boycott. The measures of mental cowardice and hypocrisy in our midst is the measure of the evil influence the Christian religion has exerted on human society.

The North West Federation of N.S.S. Branches will hold a Freethought Demonstration in the Market, Blackburn to-day (September 25) and invites the co-operation of all local saints towards its success. Details of membership may be obtained from the officials present, and Pioneer Press publications will be on sale. In the event of rain a local hall will be available.

The Plymouth Branch N.S.S. will hold meetings in the Plymouth Market from to-day (September 25) until Friday at 7.30 each evening. Mr. G. Whitehead will be the speaker. Pioneer Press publications will be available at all meetings, and we recommend the passing on of copies of *Pamphlets for the People* as a very useful method of propaganda.

The following appeared in the *Daily Telegraph* for September 8:—

In his will, Mr. William Cole, of High Street, Cowes, Chemist, who left £4,444 (n.p. £1,095), stated:—

"I die as I have lived, an Atheist. I direct that no religious ceremony, whatever shall take place at my funeral. I most solemnly abjure my adopted daughter to see that this great wish of mine is not violated. I also direct that my brief philosophy, enclosed herewith, be published in at least two local or Isle of Wight papers, so that those who wish may understand the real meaning of Atheism."

He left all his property to his adopted daughter, Ivy Hilda Parsons, of the same address.

The *Manchester Guardian* recalls an old but good story:—

To recently mentioned details of Sabbath-keeping in Scotland this story may be added: While at Balmoral Queen Victoria caused great consternation by being rowed on the loch on Sunday. A game-keeper's wife who was loud in lamenting that falling from grace, had her attention drawn to the fact that Christ himself sailed on the Sea of Gallilee on the Sabbath. "Aye, I ken that," she said, "but twa blacks dinna make a white."

The London Freethought Conference

THE Twenty-Fifth International Congress of Freethought, held under the auspices of the World Union of Freethinkers (until recently known as the Federation of Freethought Societies), took place in London from Friday, September 9, to Tuesday, September 13. The decision to hold the 1938 Congress in London was arrived at after the receipt of a joint invitation to do so, extended by four British Societies, namely, the National Secular Society, the Rationalist Press Association, the South Place Ethical Society, and the Union of Ethical Societies. All the sessions were held at Conway Hall, in Red Lion Square, Holborn, except that on Sunday evening, September 11, when a demonstration took place at the Scala Theatre in Charlotte Street, London, W.1. The President of Honour of the Conference was M. Edouard Herriot, President of the French Chamber of Deputies.

A full report of the Congress will in due course be published in booklet form: last week (September 18) the *Freethinker* contained two articles giving the writers' general impressions of the Conference. One, by Mr. Bayard Simmons, made a comparison between the London Conference and the preceding Conference, that held at Prague two years ago. The second article, by Mr. T. H. Elstob, dealt with the social side of the Conference, and gave something of its philosophic background. The present account, therefore, is to strike a mean between these two methods of reporting. It is an account, in chronological order, of things that happened in the Conference, together with brief summaries of the speeches of the principal delegates.

Before the formal opening of the Congress on Saturday morning, a reception of the delegates and a social gathering was held at the Conway Hall on the evening of the day before. This reception and social, which was well attended by both delegates and visitors from the Provinces, was undertaken by the South Place Ethical Society. Part of the programme consisted of a musical interlude, and refreshment was offered the guests. The "high light" of the proceedings was the arrival of Mr. Chapman Cohen, President of the National Secular Society. This had been unexpected by many, as it was known that Mr. Cohen had been seriously ill. Though still a sick

man, Mr. Cohen's will and his sense of the importance of the occasion overrode the weakness of the flesh, and he managed during the Conference to put in no less than four attendances. No welcome could have been more hearty than that given Mr. Chapman Cohen on that Friday evening. The President of the World Union, Dr. Terwagne, in shaking Mr. Cohen's hand on the platform, expressed at the same time the admiration of all present at the courage and devotion to duty evinced by the President of the N.S.S.

The Conway Hall, on the following morning, was an animated sight. The platform was tastefully decorated by beautiful ferns, and the galleries, which like the body of the hall, were full, were brightened by a display of bunting. The hall was admirably suited for the purposes of the Congress, and was doubly congenial to the delegates owing to the fact that it belonged to one of the inviting Societies, i.e., the South Place Ethical Society. Foreign delegates numbered nearly 70, while membership tickets to the number of 800 were issued to the British Freethinkers attending.

The Conference was opened by a brief speech from Dr. Modeste Terwagne, President of the World Union. Dr. Terwagne is something of a patriarch in the European Freethought movement, a fact to which he alluded in his opening speech. Certainly, with his portly form and his mass of white hair (something like the silver locks of the late British Premier, Mr. Ramsay Macdonald, or, better still, Mark Twain) and his little imperial beard, he presents a striking figure. He had been for many years a member of the Belgian Chamber of Deputies, and he is a most practised orator; with one exception only the most able orator in the French tongue at the Conference. He is certainly the Nestor of Freethought in Europe, and was, as he said, probably the only person present who had been at the last International Freethought Congress in England, that held in London in 1887, half a century ago! Later in the Conference he spoke of Bradlaugh with pride in his personal knowledge of this giant of British Freethought.

For the different sessions, morning and afternoon (and sometimes evening) different chairmen were appointed. The opening session was devoted to the subject of the "Present Religious Reaction and the Menace of the Vatican," and it was presided over by Mr. J. P. Gilmour, President of the Board of Directors of the Rationalist Press Association. Although this menace is not so open and obvious in Great Britain, there was a certain fitness in getting Mr. Joseph McCabe, a Britisher, to make the opening address on this subject. As most members of the British Freethought movement are aware, Mr. McCabe was formerly an active member of the Church of Rome. Mr. McCabe, who has so effectively "blown the gaff" on Roman Catholicism in his *Twelve Years in a Monastery*, and many other books, was admirably equipped for his task. He opined, in his opening sentence, that the Congress was meeting this year in circumstances of greater gravity to Freethought than ever before. The struggle for and against was now world-wide—from Latin America to China. He made the significant observation that if the Congress had been held ten years ago in England, the British movement would have welcomed the representatives of thirty millions of German and Austrian Freethinkers. There would also have been delegates from the same number of Freethinkers in Spain and Italy. Ten years ago, in fact, the delegates, on comparing notes, could have boasted that more than 200,000,000 people had been won from the world's religions to Atheism in little over a decade. To-day, he said mournfully, we have to report that nearly one-half of them are silenced, and such Freethought organizations as they had have been

destroyed. We are back in the days of feudal tyranny, for the clerical corporations in most countries have allied themselves with violence and brutality. This tyranny, which is now again entrenched in a dozen powerful countries, is growing, and its shadow creeps year by year over still further countries.

For this reason the speaker welcomed the holding of the International Congress in England. He hoped this would shake the complacent insularity of so many British Freethinkers. But in view of what was happening in these days, he feared that it would seem to our foreign visitors that England had forgotten the splendid tradition of the last century, when it denounced injustice and tyranny in every part of the world, and when it sheltered refugees from that tyranny as hospitably as it now shelters dethroned kings. The speaker went on to enumerate the causes of this set-back in the various agencies of public instruction—broadcasting, the press, the schools, the courts of law, and so forth. "Science" and "Labour," once allies of the Freethought movement, were luke-warm, few of the leaders of these two worlds would raise a finger to-day against the tyranny of the Christian minority in Great Britain. The result of the suppression of truth and distortion of facts was that the great majority of people in England did not realize the nature of the struggle that fills half the world to-day, and may fill all the world to-morrow. This struggle was a gigantic, perhaps the final, struggle of all privileged minorities to retain their privileges against the assaults of a new spirit of enlightenment. It was an attempt by an alliance of kings, or dictators, and priests, with every privileged minority to use violence against argument. In Spain, in China, and in many other countries the Vatican can be found, through its agents, the Roman Catholic priesthood, in alliance with violent reaction. Quite openly, so openly that one can read it in the *Times* or the *Tablet*, the Vatican calls upon Germany to extend this new brutal type of warfare to Russia, and upon the United States to apply it to Mexico.

The greatest need of England, and doubtless of many other countries represented in the Congress that day, is, concluded the speaker, a knowledge of facts. In forty years of public life he had never known so much suppression of truth as there is in journalism and popular literature to-day. He called upon the new generation of Freethinkers, of every nation, to realize the extent of the reaction and the Vatican's part therein. The fire of love of truth and freedom must be rekindled, and the struggle against priestcraft intensified.

The speech of Mr. McCabe was very well received, and this summary of it has been given at greater length than others that follow, for it was what is termed in American political conventions a "keynote" speech. A summary of this speech was given to the Congress in French by Mr. Bradlaugh Bonner, and a full German translation of it was available for the delegates printed in the September issue of *L'Étoile Rationaliste*, the organ of the World Union. This forthright and uncompromising address set the tone for the rest of this session and, indeed, of the whole Conference. Thus we find that the paper, contributed by Dr. F. H. Hayward, to the next session, that devoted to education and youth, was entitled "Vatican ways of Propaganda." This seeking out and attacking by the speakers at the Congress of the main centre of infection shows the right surgical instinct.

As was only to be expected, most of the orators who followed Mr. McCabe came from Catholic countries. Foremost among them were Messieurs Paul Braun (Belgium) and André Lorulot (France). Both are editors of Freethought journals in their respective countries, and Mr. Lorulot is the very able leader of

the Freethinkers in a country which can boast as long a lineage of Freethought writers and orators as any country in the world. M. Lorulot is a fine writer, but it is doubtless to his prowess as an orator that he owes his position. When earlier in this report it was written that Dr. Terwagne was the most able *French* orator but one in the Congress, M. Lorulot was the exception in mind. Mr. Chapman Cohen, the most brilliant (to use an adjective he will probably dislike) *English* speaker, was unfortunately unable owing to his illness (which has been referred to elsewhere) to contribute a paper. It is saying much for M. Lorulot's talent to compare him with the best English Freethought orator, but the comparison is fully justified by competent judges.

It is much to be regretted that space will not permit of even summaries of MM. Braun's and Lorulot's observations. It must suffice to say that M. Braun, who, incidentally, is the Secretary of the Federation of Freethought Societies in Belgium, dealt faithfully with the Encyclicals and Syllabuses of the recent Popes (Leo XIII., and Pius IX., X., and XI.), while M. Lorulot emphasizes that while the Church in his country posed as neutral in regard to the Republican régime, she did not hesitate to fight against the Popular Front, which she accused of having ruined France. But while *politically* the Church, in France, is strong and rich, *morally* she is weakening. On this note of hope M. Lorulot concluded a trenchant and inspiring address.

The final speaker in the morning session was our British "specialist" on the Vatican, Mr. Allan Flanders, who made admirable use of the case of Mr. A. Noyes, the English literary man and poet, who, being a Catholic, has been ordered by the Holy Office to write something in reparation for his offence in publishing a book in which he sought to show that Voltaire was a good Christian if not a good Catholic!

The present writer hopes he may be forgiven if he intrudes into this report the remark that his fellow poet is well named—Mr. No Yes.

A few words on the afternoon session on Education and Youth must bring to an end this instalment of a report which will be concluded next week. The speakers in this section included Dr. Hayward (already mentioned), Mr. W. B. Curry, and M. R. Strivay, the Belgian Treasurer of the World Union. Dr. Hayward, said to be a former school inspector, made the assertion that the Roman priesthood takes care that, long before the child or youth can think in a consecutive fashion, his affections and animosities are engaged and the former enlisted on the Roman Catholic side. His advice was that before punching the Vatican we should give ourselves a kick for our supineness in allowing our Governments to grant large sums of money for the upkeep of Catholic schools. Mr. Curry affirmed that in the matter of religious and philosophic belief schools are curiously at variance with the general outlook of educated people, and he slated those parents who, knowing better themselves, seemed often not to mind the instruction of their children in superstitious doctrines. Their attitude that "it will do no harm" was one he failed to understand.

BAYARD SIMMONS

(To be concluded)

I expect neither profit nor fame by my writings; and I consider myself as being amply repaid without either. Poetry has been to me its own "exceeding great reward"; it has soothed my afflictions; it has multiplied and refined my enjoyments; and it has given me the habit of wishing to discover the Good and the Beautiful in all that meets and surrounds me.—Coleridge.

The De Tribus Impostoribus

A LITERARY MYSTIFICATION

A WORK bearing the above title has been ascribed to various persons. The Emperor Frederick Barbarossa, who died in 1190, and the poet John Milton, who died in 1674, were, as far as I can find, the first and the last of those to whom the aforesaid ascription has been made. During that long interval the book was put to the credit, or rather the discredit, of the following men whose death-dates are herewith appended to their names. Averroes (1198), Frederick II. (1250), Arnould de Villeneuve (1313?), Boccaccio (1375), Poggio (1459), Pomponatus (1525), Machiavelli (1527), Erasmus (1536), Dolet (1546), Rabelais (1533?), Servetus (1553), Aretin [the pornographer] (1556), Ochinus (1564), Ramus (1572), Cardan (1575), Moret (1585), Pucci (1599?), Bruno (1601), Vanini (1616), and Campanella (1639). Every man on this list possessed great abilities, all had distinguished themselves, one way or another, in the sphere of thought or in that of letters, or in both these spheres. They differed much in regards tastes and principles; but in one respect there was no difference: for all alike made bitter enemies, and these enemies as their supreme reproach accused them of having written the *Liber de Tribus Impostoribus*. Since, however, the work had been often named in the course of successive ages, there is something very strange in the fact that learned men of later times should have ventured to father it upon their own contemporaries, or upon authors who had flourished long after it was first mentioned. A salutary change came over the treatment of the problem in the first half of the seventeenth century, when critics began to observe that although the work had often been named, it had never been quoted, and that, with the exception of one or two untrustworthy witnesses, nobody had ever claimed to have seen it. Moreover, as there was no record of its having been condemned to destruction, its invisibility could not be attributed to drastic suppression. These facts caused some critics to deny that it had ever had anything more than an imaginary existence. Gabriel Naudé (1600-1653), held this opinion. He was a fine scholar, eminent for his acquaintance with rare books. From 1631 to July 24, 1641, he was librarian and Latin secretary to Cardinal Cagni at Rome; and from 1644 to 1651 he was librarian to Cardinal Mazarine at Paris. During the seven years which he spent in the last-named employment he guided his master in collecting 40,000 volumes. After the fall of Mazarine, Naudé was invited by Christina, the learned Queen of Sweden, to take charge of her library. Finding himself unable to settle in her country, he departed thence in 1653, loaded with presents; but died on the way back to Paris, his native city. In the last article of the collection named *Naudæana*, this famous bibliographer is reported as giving the following testimony upon the present subject:—

I have never seen the book *De Tribus Impostoribus*; and I believe that it has never been printed, and hold as falsehood all that has been said about it.

These words are the more remarkable because Christina greatly desired to have the work which they mention. Indeed, either before or after Naudé retired from her service, she offered in vain the huge sum of thirty thousand *livres* to anyone who should bring her a copy of it. We also learn that a man named Salvius acted as plenipotentiary for Christina in the course of the lengthy transactions at Munster ended on October 24, 1648, by the signing of the Westphalian Peace; that Salvius died whilst on his mission; that, when she

got the news of his death, Christina, who had heard a rumour of his possessing the *De Tribus Impostoribus*, but who had thought he would not let her see it, sent her principal physician, Bourdelot, to Munster, instructing him to ask the widow of Salvius about the book; and that this woman described to him how her husband, inspired by remorse had caused it to be burned in his sight on the eve of his death. The eagerness of Christina to have the work, and the fact that Naudé became her librarian only three years later than the making of the aforesaid Peace, render it certain that she would tell him what Bourdelot had reported to her about the destruction of the copy which in her opinion Salvius had possessed. The inevitable conclusion is, that if Naudé expressed the above sentiments after he had heard her story, he did not regard this as proving the book to have existed; whilst if he had expressed them before hearing her story, he would certainly have repudiated them upon hearing it, had he believed it. The story itself comes from the fourth volume of the *Menagiana*, a collection of observations made by Giles Menage (1613-1692) to his literary friends. He was famous for his learning and wit; and for his prodigious memory, and his remarkable recovery thereof after temporary interruption. It is quite possible that Christina was misled by a false rumour, and that the widow of Salvius, hearing Bourdelot name the book, mistook it for some other heretical work which her husband had caused to be destroyed when on his death bed. Thirty years after the death of Naudé, a still more famous man, Bernard de la Monnoye (1641-1728), poet, historian, and critic, took up the puzzle of the *De Tribus Impostoribus*. Bayle tells us that in 1693 the Abbot Nicaïsius sent him a manuscript Dissertation upon the above subject, written by M. de la Monnoye; and that the MS. "is full of choice observations, and deserves exceedingly to be printed." According to Bayle the Dissertation treated the book as "a mere chimera." Elsewhere, we learn that M. Monnoye wrote his Dissertation because a German named Daniel George Morhof wished to publish a work defending the reality of the *De Tribus Impostoribus* as a printed book; and that Bayle sent the Dissertation to M. Basnage de Bauval, who produced an extract from it in February, 1694, in his *Histoire des Ouvrages des Savants*. Morhof, however, had died in 1691 without issuing any such publication. M. Monnoye developed his thesis more fully in a letter to M. le Président Bouhier, dated Paris, June 15, 1712. This, or an amplification of it, was probably the Dissertation which he published among the independent pieces in his *Remarks Upon the Menagiana* (4 vols., 12mo., Paris, 1715). A striking incident was occasioned by that publication. For, on January 1, 1716, the press of Leyden issued a letter, signed J.L.R.L., which attacked M. Monnoye's theory in a very unexpected way. The writer, afterwards revealed as Peter Frederick Arpe of Kiel, declared that because he himself had not only seen the *De Tribus Impostoribus*, but had also assisted in translating it, M. de la Monnoye was most certainly wrong in regarding this work as a mere myth. Arpe then relates the following story.

In 1706, at Frankfort on the Maine, he and his friend Frecht, a theological student, met in one of the best bookshops in the city with a German officer named Trawsendorff, who because he was well acquainted with Frecht, showed unto both of them a printed work and two manuscripts which he had offered, and was still offering to the bookseller. The first of the two manuscripts was the only item that Frecht appreciated, and his appreciation was so great that he persuaded Trawsendorff to cease haggling with the book-

¹ Dictionary, London, 1710 *Art Aretin* (Peter).

seller, and to accompany him to his own dwelling. There Arpe and Frecht, after plying him with good wine, asked him to leave the manuscript in their hands for a time. It was a Friday evening, and he told them, that if they swore with a terrific oath not to copy the manuscript, he would let them keep it until the next Sunday evening. They swore gladly, but, as soon as he was gone they sought a means of evading the oath. Arpe suggested that copying only meant transcribing, and therefore did not include translating. After raising a few objections, Frecht agreed, and they set about the translation. The language used is not stated. Each made a copy of the finished version, promising not to let anyone see it. As for Trawsendorff, he made a good bargain with the bookseller. This man was acting on commission from a Prince of Saxony, who knew that the manuscript had been stolen from the library of Munich when the Germans captured the city after defeating the French and the Bavarians at the Battle of Hochstet. Moreover, Trawsendorff informed Arpe and Frecht, that he himself had committed the theft. The manuscript, written in Latin, occupied ten leaves of large folio size. The calligraphy was so diminutive, and the abbreviations were so numerous, that decipherment exacted great labour. Instead of a title, a dedication in big letters stood at the top of the first page, and read as follows:—

To the most illustrious Otto, my dearest friend,
F.I.S.D.

Then came a letter, beginning thus:—

That which concerning the three deceivers of the nations hath at my command been duly arranged by a very learned man, with whom in my study thou didst hold discourse on that matter, I have had copied out, and this codex written in a style equally true and pure I now send to thee at the first opportunity for [I learn that thou art very desirous of reading it.]²

Arpe and Frecht agreed in thinking that the Otto above-named was Otto the Illustrious, who in 1230 succeeded his father Lewis I., in the dukedom of Bavaria, at the time when the Emperor Frederick II., upon his return from Jerusalem, had a complete breach with the Pope. Hence the two cities conjectured that the letters F.I.S.D. meant *Fredericus Imperator Saluten dicit*. They also thought that the "very learned man" mentioned in the text must be Peter of the Vines, secretary, or, as some declare, Chancellor of the aforesaid Frederick. The work was found to have been divided into six chapters; which with their paragraphs composed the following plan C. i. 6, pars; ii. 11 p.; iii. 23 p.; iv. 6 p.; v. 7 p.; vi. 7 p. In every case Arpe gives a brief *résumé* of the contents, thus enabling the reader to perceive the aim of the work, and the principles of its author. He then remarks, that although the translation is ready for printing, and is provided with a preface relating the discovery of the manuscript, and furnishing various conjectures about the origin thereof; yet, nevertheless, his performance seems unlikely to appear because of the risk which he himself would incur by its publication.³

C. CLAYTON DOVE.

(To be concluded)

² The Latin text here offered contains a misprint *quorum* for *quocum* (i.e., "of whom" plural for "with whom" singular); and it also lacks the termination placed within brackets. In both cases the text given by M. de la Monnoye in his Rejoinder to the present Response enabled me to make the necessary rectification. As the Response was several times reprinted, such mistakes might easily occur.

³ Philomneste Junior (of whom more anon) says that Arpe's "pretended translation" has been printed, but he does not mention the time or the place. (p. xxx.)

By the Way

THE Freethinker can initiate attacks upon the pretensions of the orthodox from various points of view. Personally, I feel that in the past there has been a tendency to overdo the attack in the field of ideas, and not to devote adequate time to the field of practice—finance, economics, etc. That there are many difficulties in the way I know, but consider just one aspect of the problem—an aspect which is lent topicality by recent events.

The Labour majority on the London County Council has announced its intention of promoting a Bill to Rate Land Values, thus forcing into use unused land on which, under our present crazy rating system, no rates are paid. This raises once more an old issue on which Mr. Lloyd George once stumped the country, and if the old futilities are repeated (which seems only too likely to happen) the result will doubtless be much about the same. The elder among my readers will no doubt recall that Mr. Lloyd George eventually dropped the offending Land Clauses from his budget, and the whole matter was pushed into the background, no doubt with the thought "Least said, soonest mended."

What is the lesson in these repeated attacks on the landlords of England? What attitude is a Freethinker to take up in the matter? I have often wondered why the Freethought movement did not devote more attention to the landowning "racket" of the Church of England—and, to an increasing extent, of the other Churches also. True, one or two books have mentioned it. The late Alan Handsacre's summary of religion and its wealth, *The Revenues of Religion*, pointed out the immense income of the Church, and Graham Peace's *The Great Robbery*, contained a chapter entitled "Treasure on Earth" which added poignancy to the contrast between the ostensible theories of Jesus, and the way in which their Lordships the Bishops and Archbishops have put those theories into practice. It is not accidental that these leaders of the Church, clad in their gorgeous robes of their calling, sit in the House of Lords cheek by jowl with the greatest landlords of the country, who have managed to get such a stranglehold on industry, via the various routes of ground-rents and royalties.

It is, I repeat, not accidental, because the Church is, in essence, one of the greatest landlords in the country, drawing vast sums every year from the pockets of those who can least afford it. The other Sunday Mr. Osbert Sitwell wrote an article comparing the Church with the B.B.C. I wonder was it with tongue in cheek that he said the main difference between the two organizations lay in the fact that the B.B.C. has a large income?

In a rambling article such as this I cannot attempt to deal with the matter in any detail. I am merely trying to suggest a line of thought which may be new to some Freethinkers. For their benefit I will give a few figures. There has been only one really extensive survey of the way in which the land of this country is held. It was made in 1873, at the request of the then House of Lords, mainly to disprove the contention made by Bradlaugh and other radical thinkers that a few big landlords had established a virtual monopoly of land. It showed that 317,833 acres were held by the Church of England, and that in addition to this some 1,863,487 acres were held by parsons, of whom nearly ninety per cent owed their status as landlords to the fact that they held office in the Church. Recent comments on the slum ownership of the Ecclesiastical Commissioners will be fresh in my readers' memories, so there is no need to go into that.

As I have already said, these are merely random thoughts, hung around a central idea as a peg, so I will not at this stage suggest what sort of move could be made to dislodge these priestly gentlemen from their position of privilege. I may perhaps return to that later on, if the editor's indulgent hospitality still welcomes me. What I do suggest, however, is that these are the sort of facts that every Freethinker should have at his command. The nauseating frequency with which the Bishop of London and other dignitaries (sometimes more discreet or less honest) appeal for funds to assist the poor, unfortunate clergy who have no income, would rapidly become an impossibility if such details were more widely known.

At this stage in Christian civilization it is presumably too much to expect the Press to tell us the truth about anything that matters. Even the Communist Press, which one might expect to "blow the gaff" on such questions, has only taken up the rating of land values as a "stunt," since the London County Council decided to try to do something about it. And no paper that I have seen has anywhere pointed out that the great London landlords include the Church in their ranks. The Duke of Westminster and other aristocratic gentlemen have been mentioned, usually in a tone of gentle admiration. (After all, are they not in the position of burglars, who have managed to get away with a goodly quantity of swag?), but the Church has never come under consideration in this connexion.

No doubt similar thoughts animated the gentlemen from Fleet Street who failed, a year or two ago, to point out that Mr. Herbert Morrison's grandiose scheme for constructing an embankment on the south bank of the River Thames fell through largely because the Ecclesiastical Commissioners demanded such great compensation for the wretched slum property in Lambeth and elsewhere, which would have to be pulled down before the scheme could be put into operation.

Even in the realm of literature this ban operates. Mr. M. P. Shiel, one of the most unusual novelists of the age, has been ignored by the pundits of criticism, and the connexion of this with his denunciation of the stupid system of landlordism cannot be missed.

I have here been concerned with one aspect of Free-thought propaganda, mainly because it is, I feel, an important point which the majority of Freethinkers have been apt, in the past, to overlook. If I have laboured a point which to some few of my readers seems painfully obvious, I must apologize to them most humbly. The fact remains that this is a problem which no political party has ever really attempted to tackle, and it seems to me that until it is resolutely dealt with, many other vitally necessary reforms will go into permanent cold storage.

The showing-up of the foolish ideas of many religious folk must, of course, continue as part of our propaganda. The pretensions of Dr. Inge and his fellow supporters of Franco, that "great Christian gentleman," deserve to be revealed for what they are worth, and while we have many doughty champions, both in the columns of this journal and elsewhere, I have no doubt that they will. But the whole matter on which everything turns is largely economic. The N.S.S. and the R.P.A. have built up magnificent endowment funds, but these are as nothing compared with the capital which is at the disposal of the Church.

I know that what I have written here will not appeal to all my readers. Some of them will feel that a continuance of the ideological form of religious debunking is still the most important work for Freethinkers to do. I would ask them one question: Is it not worth while to demonstrate the quite indefensible moral position which the landlordism of the Church has led it to take up?

ONLOOKER.

National Secular Society

REPORT OF EXECUTIVE MEETING HELD (AT VERY SHORT NOTICE) SEPTEMBER 15, 1938

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

Also present: Messrs. A. C. Rosetti, Bryant, Preece, Seibert, Bedborough, Horowitz, Griffiths, Mrs. Grant, Mrs. Quinton, and the Secretary.

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

New members were admitted to Glasgow, South London, West Ham, and the Parent Society.

The President in reporting the International Congress just ended said a feature covering the whole proceedings was the smooth running and undoubted success of every department. Much useful work and exchange of views were accompanied by the well-attended business sessions. The public meeting in the Scala Theatre, on the Sunday

evening, must rank among the finest Freethought meetings held. The number unable to gain admission was considerably larger than those actually turned away, as many who failed to get tickets for the reserved seats considered it useless to turn up. The President reported the attack on the tomb of Charles Bradlaugh at Brookwood Cemetery; the Organizing Committee of the Congress was dealing with that matter.

The Secretary reported the receipt of a legacy under the will of the late A. F. Bullock of Streatham, a member at Headquarters.

Correspondence concerning speakers for Blackburn and Edinburgh was dealt with; the next meeting of the Executive was fixed for Thursday, October 13.

R. H. ROSETTI,

General Secretary.

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

SOUTH PLACE ETHICAL SOCIETY (Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, W.C.1): 11.0, Professor T. H. Pear, M.A., B.Sc.—"Vehicles and Routes of Thinking."

BETHNAL GREEN AND HACKNEY BRANCH N.S.S. (Victoria Park, near the Bandstand): 3.15, Mr. L. Ebury.

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

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

WEST LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (Hyde Park): 3.40, 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

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

CHORLEY (Market): Tuesday, Mr. J. V. Shortt.

EDINBURGH BRANCH N.S.S. (Mound): 7.0, Mr. F. Smithies—"Freethought and World Politics."

LIVERPOOL BRANCH N.S.S. (Corner of High Park Street and Park Road): 8.0, Thursday, Messrs. Thompson and Shortt. Queen's Drive, opposite Walton Baths, 8.0, Sunday, Messrs. Robinson and W. Parry, Junior.

MANCHESTER BRANCH N.S.S. (Eccles Market): 8.0, Friday. Bury Market, 8.0, Saturday. Wigan Market, 8.0, Monday. Preston Market, 8.0, Wednesday. Speaker at these meetings: W. A. Atkinson.

NORTH WEST FEDERATION OF N.S.S. BRANCHES (Vee Cross Café, 3 Victoria Street, Blackburn): 2.0, A Conference. Market Square, 7.0, A Demonstration. If wet, in the Vee Cross Café.

PLYMOUTH BRANCH N.S.S. (Plymouth Market): September 25 to 30, Mr. G. Whitehead, 7.30 each evening.

SUNDERLAND BRANCH N.S.S. (Gill Bridge Avenue): 7.0, Mr. J. T. Brighton—"Evolution."

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