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

Views and Opinions

God and Dr. Cronin

LAST week I dealt "faithfully" with a novelist, the proud author of a best-seller. This week I defer my intention of dealing with further examples of the way in which many people—Freethinkers and godites—are carrying about remnants of their early religious influences, in order to deal with the author of another best-seller, and which in these days of newspaper competition for the patronage of the great unthinking, appears to be enough to entitle a man to take the rank of a law-giver on topics with which he is plainly lacking the equipment to deal.

Dr. A. J. Cronin, some time ago, wrote a novel dealing with medical "quacks." That there are quacks in the medical world everyone knows, as also there are many medical men not overburdened with intelligence. But quacks are also present in every other profession, and are certainly not absent from the writing world. The article of Dr. Cronin, with which I intend dealing, demonstrates the truth of this last remark. But when all has been said about medical "quacks" I am still convinced that taken as a whole there is no other profession or following in this country in which so much quiet heroism, so much sheer self-devotion, so much excellent work done for a comparatively small financial return, exists as in the medical world. In many houses the doctor is a general "spiritual" father, and without the many impostures that mark the course of the priest or parson. But here was a very easy field to exploit, and Dr. Cronin has made the most of it. And as newspapers struggle for men in the limelight, from Prime Ministers to prize-fighters, to give their opinions on any and every subject, Dr. Cronin appears in the *Sunday Chronicle* as the writer of a special article on "What Life has Taught Me."

* * *

Religious "Truth"

Dr. Cronin is, I am informed, a very ardent Roman Catholic, and his article certainly demonstrates that

"quackery" is not confined to the medical world. For there are passages in his article that no man with an adequate understanding of modern medical science, particularly of psycho-pathology, could have written. Much of what Dr. Cronin has written is, on his own statement, simply untrue. And other portions are—well, let us say, deplorable. Take this line with which he opens his article:—

Life has taught me to believe in God.

This would imply that Dr. Cronin was without belief in God, and that his experience and his reflections concerning his experience had brought him to believe in God. But he immediately disproves his own statements. He says he was brought up in a "narrow Scottish town" that was saturated with religion. It may be taken that Dr. Cronin's parents brought him up to believe in God. Had it been otherwise, he would have said so because it would have sent up the missionary value of his article. So that the *fact*, as opposed to the first statement, is that he had always believed in a God, and maturity did not lift him, so far as religion was concerned, out of his infantile stage. The second mis-statement is this, and it is evidently made with the usual extravagance of the advertising convert. In his youth he says:—

It was unfashionable, a little in bad taste, to avow one's belief in a Creator.

One would like to know in what part of Britain it was unfashionable to believe in a God, or in what part it is still unfashionable. There is another sentence worth citing. This follows the customary lie of the convert at evangelistic meetings who sends up his value by detailing the "horrible" life he led before conversion. Dr. Cronin verges on this when he says that in the University of Glasgow:—

Most medical students take to billiards and agnosticism in their first year.

Well, billiards is not at all a degrading game, some decently respectable people play billiards, and its connexion with Agnosticism is not very obvious, although bad shots may lead to the depravity of a "God damn!" But the well known marks of the orthodox convert are in both statements. First the poor child brought up in ignorance of religion, then the youth spending a vicious life until the "spirit of God" calls the sinner to better ways. Dr. Cronin's yarn is not put quite so crudely as is that of the Salvation Army converts, but that is due to his greater literary skill, not to his desire to stick to the exact truth. For Dr. Cronin never did disbelieve in God, and therefore experience did not teach him to believe in that ancient bogey, neither, outside Church preaching, does Agnosticism grow out of a revulsion against good living. If a man wants an excuse for misconduct he need not get out of religious circles. Religious

"quacks" profit from these yarns, and the semi-moronic section of newspaper fans expect to get the tales to which they are accustomed.

* * *

God Hunting

How did Dr. Cronin make his alleged discovery of God? The first thing that happened was at the bedside of a dying child. At the instant of the child's death he "felt with terrifying reality an actual sense of passage in that dim little side-room." Perhaps the room being little, accounted for his feeling the passage of something that might have passed him unnoticed in a larger room. But the novelist is very much in evidence here. This experience he afterwards found to be identical with that of an unnamed famous physician, who said he had had the same experience—exact size of the room not given. Had it been necessary one may expect that Dr. Cronin would have felt as plainly the entrance of a New Testament demon when the child had been taken ill.

The next piece of evidence he had was derived from prayer. No instances are given, but Dr. Cronin was impressed by the "simple, involuntary cry: Lord have mercy on us. Lord hear our prayer. Spare us O Lord." He saw in this "the plain acknowledgment of the universal Jehovah." But it was this factor of prayer, which, he says, "knocked another nail in my atheistical coffin." But as Dr. Cronin never was an Atheist, one wonders how it happened. And the amount of reliance that one feels warranted in placing upon either Dr. Cronin's exactitude or judgment does not prejudice one in favour of his statement—without any further proof—that "within the compass of my own experience, I had striking indication that the skies are not deaf to the cries of suffering humanity." Perhaps he finds evidence in the way "heaven" interfered to prevent the Hitler terror.

Perhaps this evidence, or some of it, is contained in the statement that it was impossible for him "not to observe certain tangible and extraordinary results achieved by the unrestrained application of unbelief." On which one need only say that if Dr. Cronin was not acquainted with the strength of mental excitation in patients for good or ill, and if he has no other explanation to offer than an answer to prayer or the interposition of God, then one must have the greatest sympathy with those who were under his care. Dr. Cronin is a youngish man, and must have passed through his medical course within the past twenty years, and therefore it does really take on something of the nature of the orthodox miracle that he should be unacquainted with the understanding and treatment of various nervous disorders on purely materialistic grounds. Within reach of my arm there are at least half-a-dozen medical or scientific works stressing the power of mental excitation as an important factor in both the cause and cure of certain complaints. Hysteria, again, covers a very wide range of professed disorders. Every doctor, who is a doctor, knows how important it is to win the good will and confidence of his patient, and every doctor knows how often the cure of his patient depends upon removing diseases that are not there, save in the imagination of his patient. Such a book, for example, as Dr. Bernard Hart's *Psychopathology; Its Development and Its Place in Medicine*, should be very informing to Dr. Cronin. I must assume, in his own defence, that he has not read this and other similar books. If I am wrong in this respect I apologize, and then I am left puzzled how it is that a medical man, who must meet with scores of cases in which the belief of the patient plays a great part in both the cause and the cure of a disorder, cites the influence of belief as clear

proof of his own religious convictions, which, in his case, belong to the immature period of his life. I cannot say more on this because Dr. Cronin does not favour his readers with examples, but as a medical man he will appreciate the distinction between symptoms and diagnosis. The patient may be a very good reporter with regard to the former, but the latter belongs to the qualified specialist. And it is sheer verbiage to tell his readers, as though it was of greater value than the visions of a drug-taker or the illusions of an unhealthy mind, that he was conscious of a "thousand spiritual murmurs" which affected his spiritual ear. If Dr. Cronin understood anything of the history of religion, if he would recall to his mind some of the lectures he must have listened to, and some of the books he must have read, if he would remember how he, as a medical man, would act towards anyone who came to him as one subject to "spiritual whispers," and the recipient of "visions," he would never have written the nonsense that he has thrown at the readers of the *Sunday Chronicle*.

* * *

The Old, Old Story

Concluding quite in the manner, and even in the language, of thousands of credulous uneducated local preachers and mis-educated parsons, Dr. Cronin gives an account of listening to a lecture from a "brilliant" scientist, who traced the development of the solar system through the operation of purely natural forces. And then the customary sequel: a little, simple-minded man stood up and congratulated the speaker, but said that "the theory of creation remained the more credible." What a familiar situation this is! Sometimes it is a great Freethinker such as Bradlaugh, at other times it is a great man of letters, or it is a prominent scientist, and then a poor old woman or a weak old man (in Dr. Cronin's case it was a *little old man*) turns up to confound the godless speaker, and reinstate the God whom the lecturer has deposed. It is one of those religious tales in which no man of sense believes, and none who has any respect for the intelligence of his hearers or readers repeats. It does, however, certify the quite Christian character of the mind of Dr. Cronin. He has profited from his reading of the fanciful literature of conversion.

Dr. Cronin concludes that his position is that of the "little old man":—

I refuse to admit that we are the victims of a cosmos governed by the Crazy Gang of an uncelestial Idiot's Delight.

So far as one can tell there has never been manifested any particular desire on the part of the "cosmos" to please Dr. Cronin's fancies, to gratify his appetites, or to live up to his expectations of what it ought to be. And it would seem that if Dr. Cronin wishes to establish and maintain a reputation for a workable quantity of common sense and a moderate capacity for scientific thinking, he will settle down to the task of trying to understand man and nature, instead of expressing primitive fears and theories in terms sufficiently vague to conceal from himself how foolish they are. What is meant by a "cosmos" governed by a "Crazy Gang," I haven't the slightest idea; it is just a popular novelist's attractive "derangement of epithets." It is a mere collocation of words that means nothing either to Dr. Cronin or anyone else. And with a pretended humility Dr. Cronin closes his spate of words by saying:—

I am aware that my belief is blind, confused and contradictory. I will admit that it comes to me by intuition and instinct.

With the first sentence I agree. His belief is blind, imperfect, confused and contradictory. In fact it is not a belief at all, for a belief must be the verbal expression of some mental picture, and that Dr. Cronin obviously has not. It is a mere string of words, sound and slither, signifying nothing. Even beliefs that come to one by what is called instinct and intuition need not be nonsensical, and they should always provide evidence of their standing for some idea in the mind of the man or woman who professes them. But a Crazy Gang governing an uncelestial universe! What does it mean? I think Dr. Cronin should stick to his novels. He is obviously out of his depth when he ventures on subjects that require some understanding of scientific and philosophic questions, and a due regard for the niceties of language in controversy.

CHAPMAN COHEN.

A Saint of Rationalism

"Write me as one who loves his fellow men."

Leigh Hunt.

"I but looked upward with the rest,
And, where they shouted "Greatest," whispered "Best."

Lowell.

"A SAINT of Rationalism," was the title conferred on John Stuart Mill by no less a person than Gladstone. The description has survived, not because of its felicity of expression as by its truth. Indeed, Freethinking "saints" are better than the legendary creations of Orthodoxy. It is significant that even in Christian Scotland the popularity of St. Andrew's Day is far less than that of Burns's Night. Is it not true also that in the sheer fight of personalities for the possession of England's day, Shakespeare has beaten the egregious St. George, as our American friends say, "to a frazzle"?

Shelley, the poet, died so long ago that one would have thought that the facts concerning his life were well known. Yet few writers have admitted Shelley's nobility of life. His virtues have been treated with the scantest courtesy, and his actions presented in the worst possible light. Great, noble, and beautiful qualities met in this poet of poets. Splendid as his life-work was, he, the man himself, was greater and rarer. To the world he presented the spectacle of a man passionate for truth, and unreservedly obedient to the right as he saw it. He might have lived a life of ease and indulgence, such as that of the Prince Regent and other aristocrats. The narrow, exclusive circle into which he was born would have honoured him for it, but he thought always of other and higher matters. His opposition to tyranny, religion, and custom seemed the merest midsummer madness in the son of a wealthy nobleman of many acres. Society denounced him, for it had long agreed that all reform was criminal. In such cases, indeed:—

"Were it not better done as others use,
To sport with Amaryllis in the shade,
Or with the tangles of Neæra's hair."

Yet simply because Shelley was a convinced Freethinker, Christians insinuate that the great poet was a bad and vicious degenerate. Thus they cast libellous dust in the eyes of the unthinking public, and prevent their seeing the real facts of the case. Incidentally, they discredit the great cause to which Shelley dedicated his life and his genius.

That Shelley was a thorough humanitarian is amply proved. To help the needy and to relieve the sick seemed to him a simple duty which he carried out cheerfully. He inquired personally into the circumstances of his charities, visited the sick in their

homes, and kept a list of the poor persons whom he assisted. At Marlow he suffered from eye-trouble contracted while visiting afflicted lace-makers in their cottages. Leigh Hunt has told us that Shelley, finding a woman ill on Hampstead Heath, carried her from door to door in the vain hopes of meeting with a person as charitable as himself, until he had to lodge the poor creature with some personal friends. Shelley's purse was always open to his friends. Peacock received from him an annual allowance of £100, and he discharged debts of Godwin amounting to thousands of pounds. He gave, or lent, money to Horace Smith, Claire Clairmont. Indeed, Shelley was always giving, or lending, money, and it is very doubtful if he ever got repaid.

So practical was Shelley in his philanthropy that he even went to the length of attending a London hospital, in order to acquire medical knowledge that should prove of service to the poor he visited. When his friend, Captain Medwin, was ill for six weeks, Shelley was by his bedside the whole time, applying leeches, administering medicines, and tending him like a brother. Once, when Byron was attacked by an armed man, Shelley interposed his own body to protect his friend. "I cannot understand it," said Byron afterwards, "that a man should run upon a naked knife in this way." Without a murmur, without ostentation, this heir to one of the richest noblemen of England illustrated in his own conduct those principles of Freethought and Democracy which formed his ethical and political creed. Byron, who was a worldly-minded man, with a cynical view of mankind, acknowledged Shelley to be the best and purest-minded he had ever met. Captain Trelawny, who knew Shelley very intimately in his later life, admitted that the Freethought poet "loved everything better than himself."

Christians have read the basest and meanest motives into Shelley's relations with his first wife. It does not matter to them that Shelley's relations with Harriet form a problem of juvenile love, or that when they parted she and the children were well provided for. Indeed, Harriet's death, over two years afterwards, had nothing to do with Shelley's so-called "desertion." Shelley was but a boy when he married, Harriet but a girl, and it was the very chivalry of Shelley's nature that led to so imprudent a step.

Shelley lived the simple life. A hunk of bread and a little fruit often served him for a meal. "Mary, have I dined?" he once asked his wife. His income was spent on the poor, on struggling men of genius, on necessitous friends, and in publishing his own books and pamphlets, which, otherwise, would never have appeared in print.

Dead at twenty-nine, posterity has but the outcome of Shelley's cruder years; and the assurance of something nobler and wiser was stopped by:—

"That fatal and perfidious barque
That sunk so low that sacred head of thine."

It is precisely because his heart was aflame with human sympathy that his poems have vital and permanent effect so many generations after his death. Shelley devoted himself to the idea of the perfectibility of human nature, and it is the mainspring of his inspiration and his poetry. It glows in the sonorous rhetoric of *Queen Mab*, it radiates in the *Revolt of Islam*; and it reaches its zenith in the masterly music of *Prometheus Unbound*. In the finest efforts of his genius its expression shines with the solemn and majestic inspiration of prophecy. Nor was it mere poetic frenzy, for he was himself the "Julian" of his poem:—

"Me, who am as a nerve o'er which do creep
The else unfelt oppressions of this earth."

Shelley sang of a golden age, of the ascent of man. The society of his day was perfectly agreed that such pestiferous ideas were but a mad illusion. And society denounced Shelley accordingly, persecuted him, and imprisoned the men and women who sold the poet's *Queen Mab*. Florence to the living Dante was not more cruelly unjust than England to the living Shelley. Not until thirty years after the English poet's death was his poetic genius acknowledged widely, and forty years later still, at the Centenary Celebration at Horsham, most of the speakers referred very discreetly to Shelley's Freethought and Democratic opinions, and emphasized his claim on the Sussex county families, worthy folk, but almost illiterate. It was at a meeting of the Shelley Society that Bernard Shaw avowed himself an Atheist, and, to quote his own words, "nearly broke up the Society on the spot."

Shelley was sincerity itself. He meant every word that he wrote. Shortly before his own untimely end, he said to his friend, Trelawny, "I am ninety," meaning that he had lived and felt so intensely that he was far older than his actual years. One of his earliest publications was *The Necessity of Atheism*, and his first published poem, *Queen Mab*, with its Atheistic notes. During the last years of his life, when his intellect was mature, Shelley told Trelawny that the matter of that poem was good; it was only the treatment that was immature. A few months before his death he wrote: "I differ with Moore in thinking Christianity useful to the world; no man of sense can think it true." This is the keynote of his life's work. Shelley's lyrical genius was devoted to Freethought, and his poetry is one of the greater glories of a thousand years of English literature.

What Shelley might have been we cannot conceive. A fine critic, G. W. Foote, has declared that Shelley's death was the greatest loss his country's literature ever sustained. Nearing the age of thirty he was drowned in the sea he loved. His ashes rest beneath the walls of Rome, the Eternal City, and "Heart of Hearts," chiselled on his tomb, says well what all who love Liberty feel when they think of this young poet who gave his life to Humanity, and whose splendid genius was as free as an eagle above the clouds with outstretched wings:—

"O heart whose beating blood was running song,
O sole thing sweeter than thine own songs were,
Help us for thy free love's sake to be free,
True for thy truth's sake, for thy strength's sake strong,
Till very liberty makes clear and fair
The nursing earth as the sepulchral sea."

MIMNERMUS.

"The Death of the Gods"

At our public library I chanced upon a historical novel under the above title by a Russian author, Dmitri Merejkowski. I cannot recall seeing any mention of the book in the Press, though in a translation by Herbert Trench it was issued in popular form in 1926. It seems to be an excellent novel from the general point of view—style, description, characterization, etc.; and it follows closely the known history of Rome during the reign of the Emperors Constantius and Julian. It is calculated to interest Freethinkers on account of the fine picture it gives of the struggle between the dying polytheism of Rome and the (alleged) monotheism of Christianity, and also of the fratricidal strife between the sects into which Christists (some of them at this time being "quasi-unitarians") had become divided.

It will be remembered that Constantius was a Christian. Julian the "Apostate" was, of course, a "pagan," a philosophic scholar, tolerant of all religions; and—like Marcus Aurelius, another non-Christian Emperor—was "among the best men who ever sat upon a throne." (Lecky, *History of Rationalism*.)

Of two outstanding scenes described one is a council called by Constantius, to which the leaders of the various sects were summoned. Here the high priest Paphnutis at once announced his position, viz., the worship of a single God in a Trinity and of the Trinity in a single God. A more sober-minded delegate tried to drown the clamour that arose by shouting, "What is it all about, Isn't it a matter of a single word?" And he went on to tell of scenes he had observed at Alexandria and Constantinople, when the Arians opened with wooden pincers the mouths of those who refused to take the sacrament in heretic churches, and forced the host between their lips; when the breasts of women were crushed by leaden weights and branded with "live" (presumably red hot) iron; that in the Church of the Holy Apostle a struggle between Arian and Orthodox was so sanguinary that the drainage cisterns overflowed with blood, which poured down the steps and streamed into the market square; and so on. But Paphnutis held his ground, vociferating "Let the enemies of God be silent. Anathema on the Arian heresy." After much more of this kind of thing, the disputants became a wild mob, illumined by the flashing of swords. . . . When the Emperor reappeared in the council-room he was attacked by Arians: "Brothers, Christ must be about to descend. Antichrist has already conquered; and that Antichrist is Constantius." Then the wranglers broke into a wild mob, rushed out, trampling many underfoot.

The second scene was at a council called by Julian, with a view, it is suggested, of discrediting the squabbling Christian leaders. When they saw each other trouble at once began. "Holy Mother of God," said one, "What is this? . . . Let me pass out. I'm choking in this pit of heresy; this is not a council, it is a den of thieves." When another "brother" tried to get the conference peaceably abandoned, he was met with, "Leave us, ye accursed. We are not your brothers. We are the wheat ears of God—you are the straw destined for the burning." Another shouted: "Let a Cecilian enter one of our churches, and we'll place our hand on his head, not to choose him as our shepherd but to crack his skull." . . . Riot then began. And after a bishop had spat in the face of an opponent, and two soldiers who intervened had been felled by the mace of a Circumcellian (a member of a specially violent sect of the time), Julian reappeared. He addressed the gathering thus: "Is this how you fulfil the law of love, Gallileans? . . . Verily the wild animals have more compassion than brethren like you. In the words of your Master: Woe to you law-makers, because you have taken the key of the house, and, hindering others from entering, have not entered in yourselves." He then told them that as they could not rule themselves they must submit themselves to him.

As regards the actuality, extent and ferocity of such feuds the following passage from J. M. Robertson's *Short History of Christianity* may be quoted: "At each episcopal election or expulsion," says an orthodox writer, "the most exalted sees of Christendom—Constantinople, Alexandria, Antioch—furnished scenes that would have disgraced a revolution. Julian has told how whole troops of those who were called heretics were massacred, notably at Cyzicus and at Sanosata; while in Paphlagonia, Bithynia, Galatia, and many other provinces, towns and villages

were utterly destroyed. In one massacre in Constantinople, the second in connexion with the forcible re-instatement of the semi-Arian bishop Macedonius there perished more than three thousand people. The Orthodox populace, divided in furious factions, fighting like savages in their very churches, were as brutal as their masters. Gregory of Nazianzun, whose own ferocities of utterance illustrate the character of the period, declared truly that he had never seen a synod do aught but worsen a quarrel."

To understand this deplorable condition of affairs we have to bear in mind, on the one hand, that the primary doctrines of the new religion, associated with ignorance and contempt of real knowledge, rendered possible—or rather inevitable—the wildest vagaries, and on the other hand that the predominant emphasis on belief instead of on rational conduct tended to bring about in some directions a moral condition approaching that of the jungle.

We have also to remember that this intellectual and consequently ethical degradation, which may be regarded as the forerunner of the Inquisition, the later religious massacres and wars, the persecution of Freethinkers, Jews and others, the witch terror and savagery, and other such features, has not yet come to an end. Even in our own relatively forward country the sects on occasion easily take to riot, extending to plain murder. And though some improvement has occurred as a result of ordinary social forces, we cannot reasonably expect to see the end while a barbarous to semi-barbarous tradition in religious and moral affairs is kept alive by the exposition and "study" of a Holy Book, which is regarded as sacred beyond criticism.

J. REEVES.

Problems of Animal Colouring

MIMICRY AND DAZZLE PATTERNS

INSECTS are most interesting animals, as among these are found many examples which are coloured or shaped, or both, to resemble solid objects such as leaves and sticks, or to mimic surfaces such as barks or soils. There are many cases where certain insects look exactly like other types of insects which are well protected from their enemies because they are poisonous, indigestible or equipped with redoubtable defensive weapons. Such is the case of many harmless flies which appear, to us, identical with certain bees and wasps, not only in their colouring, but also in their general shape as well. I will never forget an incident which took place in a wayside station in Switzerland, where, on entering, I found the occupants of the waiting-room in great terror because of three very large specimens of, what appeared to be, hornets, those redoubtable members of the wasp family, whose sting is supposed to be most painful. With every precaution we hunted those insects and killed them. On examining their dead bodies, however, we soon saw that they were perfectly harmless flies, but that their shape, size, colouring, and the noise they had made with their wings had deceived everybody, so great was the resemblance.

The religiously-minded person says that these creatures which are apparently so wonderfully adapted furnish a proof of intelligent creation: "These animals were created thus in order that they might escape the eyes of their enemies or deceive them." But is that the case? Recent experiments, which have been amply confirmed, show that the animals which prey on the insects in question can distinguish them

with the utmost ease from their surroundings or from the dangerous or noxious animal they mimic. What then does this similitude afford them in the way of advantages? or are they merely coincidences which are of no value whatsoever to the animal concerned?

The praying mantis is a queer insect, so-called because of the peculiar formation of its front pair of legs, which are held together in an attitude of prayer. The insect can remain in this position without moving, for hours. It is carnivorous and eats other insects which are unlucky enough to come too near. The commoner types of this insect such as those found in the South of France, are greenish in colour, so that they go well with their surroundings, but in warmer regions these insects not only have protective colourings, but their limbs are often shaped to resemble leaves, parts of flowers, etc., so that they become practically invisible to our eyes when in their natural surroundings. Experiments have been performed with these insects; equal numbers were distributed in environments which suited their markings, and in places in which they were plainly visible to man. The conditions otherwise were made as normal as possible. It was found that these insects were caught by their enemies just as often in their suitable surroundings as in unsuitable ones. Thus, as the death rate in any surrounding remained about the same, it showed that the so-called "protective" colourings afforded but little protection; what is invisible to human eyes is not always invisible to those of other animals. The same results have been obtained with those other wonderful animals, the phasmids; the leaf or stick insects, so-called because of their great similarity to the aforesaid objects. Similar results again have been obtained when dealing with butterflies and many other kinds of insects. Thus, all this elaborate make-up has no protective value so far as we know. This opinion is amply confirmed by study of deep-sea fish and their colourings. A certain type of deep-sea fauna is characterized by the extreme transparency of their bodies. This would render them practically invisible were it not for the brilliant colourings of their genital organs and other vital parts, thus spoiling all the effect. Others again are coloured dark blue in harmony with their surroundings, but this is of little use, as the fauna at those depths have either got very highly developed eyes or are quite blind, and eat anything which happens to get in the way, whether coloured or invisible. There are also many of the inmates of the deep which are garnished with very bright phosphorescent "lamps" of various colours. It has been suggested that these served as "street lamps," and enabled the owner to find its way about, or that it served as a centre of attraction for the smaller animals on which they fed, like a lamp attracting moths on a dark night, or again in order to attract the opposite sex. There again, as the greater part of this fauna have no eyes wherewith to see, these "lamps" appear to have little value in those directions. Incidentally there are also a number of sea animals living near the surface, which also possess these phosphorescent organs in spite of the fact that they can enjoy the light of the sun.

Another problem afforded by animal colouring is what is placed collectively under the heading of "warning colours." This group contains animals whose body colourings are far from inconspicuous, in fact their colours are usually very vivid, and their body is often made yet more obvious by the presence, at times, of dark spots or stripes. I am referring to animals such as wasps, some butterflies, salamanders, zebras, tigers, etc., and many birds. In the case of the wasps and other similar insects, it has been suggested that as these were amply provided in the way of defensive weapons, they had no need to protect them-

selves against their enemies by the use of colourings which harmonize with their surroundings; on the contrary, they have bright colours "on purpose" in order to warn other animals that they are dangerous, or, in the case of many caterpillars, etc., indigestible. These explanations are, however, rather improbable. The bright colours and patterns on the wings of some butterflies are regarded as "distraction marks." That is, they remove the attention of the enemy from the vital parts of its body to the relatively less important wings, so these should incur the greater part of the damage. This again is merely speculation; I do not think that a bird is so easily deceived.

The bright patterns of the tiger, the leopard and the zebra, are said to serve in the same way as the similar designs used on guns and ships during the war. They act as camouflage, the alternate bright and dark lines render the animal difficult to see at a distance as the animals outline is thereby rendered indistinct, to the human eye! But as we know, the human eye is far less developed than those of a great many other animals, so that this hypothesis is also rather a doubtful one.

Professor Cuenod puts forward the following statement: "The characteristics of animals do not correspond to the necessities of adaptation to their surroundings, but their harmonic frequency is such in a given fauna, that they must have a definite relation to their environment. Thus the loss of eyes and of colour so common in cave fauna are not adaptations to environment, since there are just as many coloured and seeing forms in the same conditions, but are rendered thus through the effect of the environment itself."

This theory could thus explain the phenomena of homogeneity in colouring of the flora and fauna in certain regions. It might explain the phenomena of mimicry, especially in certain cases of regional mimicry found among certain species of butterflies.

C. E. BRADLAUGH BONNER.

Ebb Tide

THE closing report of the International Congress which appeared in the *Freethinker* seems—superficially at least—to be our last contact with that memorable event. Those of us who attended any, or all, of the mentally stimulating sessions will be slow to forget the impressions which remained. But, conscious of the short memory which many of us unfortunately have for things which, apparently, do not affect our intimate daily life, I am wondering whether, as day follows day into eternity, some of us will gradually relegate the memory of the Congress into the limbo of forgotten things—something to be referred to at annual dinners and reunions—a scope for conversation.

If this alone is to be the outcome of those four, all too short, days, then the Congress which is now declared a success, will have been a failure. Do not let us, then, allow this to happen. It is not enough to have attended the meetings and listened enthralled to the reports and speeches; something more is needed. If we really have the cause of Freethought at heart, we should now be stimulated by an ardent desire to work for it. Those of us who, perhaps, have only a vague general idea of the principles of Freethought, should make it our business to understand it completely, so that when perchance some honest enquirer desires information, we may be worthy exponents of our cause. Neither should we be reluctant to admit that we are members of this gallant band. Let us be proud—yet not vain—that we are fortunate enough to possess a mind which declines to follow mass thinking. Too few of us wear the badge of the N.S.S. I understand that some object to this, but, some day, someone may ask you what it is and what it represents; then is our chance to introduce our movement, tactfully and without betraying any eagerness

to convert them. Furthermore, are we doing *all* we can to promote the distribution of the *Freethinker*? Does anyone ever think of leaving a copy in the train, 'bus or tram. You know how eagerly a stray newspaper is "annexed" in these vehicles; someone may pick it up and eventually start thinking—someone perhaps with a brand new brain which has never been used. If our own copy is too precious to leave, what about buying an extra copy, say, once a month, less than a penny a week? We know we cannot *convert* people to Freethought—this is entirely a process of thinking—but we *can* introduce it to people who have had the misfortune so far as never to have heard of it. The war clouds which hung so menacingly over us during these latter days, seem to have cleared; I say "seem," because we cannot foresee what is waiting in the near or distant future. Who knows but that in some not too far-off time, we may be called upon to renounce the few liberties we possess; mental slavery may be already "on the agenda" for the next meeting of the "chiefs"; we cannot as yet tell whether our pioneers will have died in vain. Have we others to take their place to bear aloft the lighted torch for future generations? Let us then, try to increase our numbers, even though some may argue that numbers do not count, but quality. In my opinion, we need both—quality *and* numbers. The fewer we are, the more easily could we be stamped out should the occasion arise. Had we to choose one day whether to die standing or to live kneeling, what would we choose? Is there seriously, any indecision on our part?

PENSADORA.

Acid Drops

There is a new Lord Provost in Glasgow, and he happens to be a Roman Catholic. He had invited all the magistrates, etc., to accompany him to the Roman Catholic Cathedral on November 20. But the "Progressive Party" on the Council sent a message to the Lord Provost saying that in its opinion the first visit of the new Council should be to the Protestant Cathedral. We do not care a "twopenny damn" which cathedral is visited or in what order. But the Party might have bethought itself that the Council was not elected to preach religion, or to puff religion, and that it would have been well if each member of the council had been left free to go to Church or stay away as he felt inclined. The new Lord Provost is Mr. Dollan, and it is a pity he cannot see that his first duty to the people of Glasgow is to see that he does not mix his religion up with his secular duties. The Progressive Party seems little better than the others so far as religious equality is concerned. Their duty should have been to remind the Provost that he ought to leave religion alone.

The Archbishop of Canterbury told a religious meeting at Herne Bay, Kent, that "When people thought of what was happening in the world, they must believe that the Christian standard among nations had been vanishing." Sorry, but we cannot let the Archbishop get away with it in this manner. We think these same people—if they have intelligence—are more likely to wonder what has been the use of all these centuries of Christian control if it has not been able to prevent the world being what it is.

Out of the enormous number of visitors to Lourdes last year, there appears to have been recorded only about four cures. The same number of cures could easily have been placed to the credit of any faith-healing quack in the world. But one need not be surprised at this. Consider the thousands of prayers that are said daily. One prayer here or there is concerned with something that would have happened in any case, but the single coincidence in thousands of cases is proof positive that prayers are answered. What an easy game "spoofing" the religious is. It is far too easy to call it a sport. The chances of failing are less than those of winning the top prize in the Irish Sweepstake.

How have the mighty fallen! From the *Belfast Telegraph* we learn that a "Ciborium" containing the "Blessed Eucharist," was stolen from a church in Dublin. The Ciborium was found in a field, but no trace of the "Blessed Eucharist" has been found. The matter is in the hands of the police. Now the Eucharist is, according to the Roman Church, the very flesh and blood of Jesus Christ, and an abuse of it, when God was really operative, entailed frightful consequences. A heretic who tried to eat it, found it had turned to stone in his mouth. Men who swore a false oath and took the Eucharist as evidence they were telling the truth were struck dead or choked. Sometimes those who robbed the altar and carried away the Eucharist were stricken with some terrible disease. With the aid of it pious folk were able to perform miracles equal to those of Jesus. Whole volumes have been written detailing the miracles worked by the Eucharist, and here we have an ordinary thief who steals the whole bag of tricks, breaks open the sacred box, throws away the blessed body of Christ, and—nothing happens. The matter is left to the police. Even the broken holy box was casually discovered by a member of the civic guard. What is the Lord doing, if he cannot look after the body of his own son?

Sir Wyndham Childs calls Father Divine the "World's Worst Evangelist" when, as a matter of fact, we ought to accept the negro's own claim—for, of course, he ought to know—when he says, "I am God, really am God." This popular Deity has made great strides recently, and claims over 2,000,000 "of all types, classes, creeds, and colour throughout the world," including a number of English people. In a book published a few years back, *The Man Nobody Knows*, the author claimed Jesus as the greatest business man the world has ever known, but we think Father Divine has Jesus beaten to a frazzle. He has a large number of businesses, stores, restaurants and farms, and they bring him in more than £3,000 every week. And if anyone dares to cross him he can be as angry as Jehovah.

For example, in one of his "kingdoms" in Long Island, he and his disciples made such a holy row that the other residents had him prosecuted as a public nuisance. God was given a year in prison and fined £100, but the judge suddenly died three days later. This was accepted by God's followers as a supreme mark of his power, and when later, the Court of Appeal quashed the sentence, God was given a triumphant reception by his adoring worshippers far finer than that given to Jesus when he rode into Jerusalem on two donkeys. Sir Wyndham Childs thinks the cult is all balderdash, and says he would be surprised "if the authorities allowed Divine even to enter this country, let alone preach his crazy creed." This gives us an inkling of what would have happened to Jesus if he had tried to preach his "crazy creed" these days in England direct from holy Jerusalem. New religions have little hope in an age such as the present.

After all we shall have to revise Prince Albert's favourite text: "The Earth is the Lord's." Speaking about "Spiritual Re-armament," the Rev. W. E. Sangster declared that having regard to the "one, two, or a dozen men who disturb the peace of nations," he was quite sure that "the world as they saw it was not God's world." This must be disappointing to those who used to believe that God either "created" the world, or at the worst "evolved" it; that even if heaven is where God "sits," at least "the earth is His footstool." We must get a new Columbus to guide us to God's own world. By the way, has Browning's line been misunderstood—"God's in His Heaven, all's right with the world"? Did he mean that so long as God kept out of the world, all might one day be well?

"Hats off to Archbishop Mannix for the banning of shorts from Catholic Tennis Courts," writes a correspondent in the *Australian Sun*. In a distraught world the Catholic Church can be relied upon to keep their eyes on the things that really matter.

50,000 persons celebrated mass in the City Park Stadium, New Orleans. George Cardinal Mundelein, papal legate of His Holiness Pope Pius XI., officiated. Men, women, and children were ringed around the stadium's horseshoe bowl while Bishops, Archbishops, monsignors, papal knights and papal chamberlain sat in banked seats on each side of the altar.

The first turn in the performance, which lasted 15 minutes, was the undressing of the cardinal and re-robing in vestments of gold. For this important operation Monsignor Erman Bonazzi was rector of the papal ceremonies, being sent from Rome specially for the job. The second turn was the celebration of Holy Mass.

Almost without a break, the men's choir continued their chanting of the responses of the mass. About the cardinal were grouped deacons, sub-deacons and other necessary aides in the celebration of the unusual mass, many of them also wearing golden vestments, rich with embroidery on the silken copes and cowls.

The third turn was Archbishop Mooney, who pointed out that the need in the world to-day is "the principle of faith which the doctrine of the Holy Eucharist illustrates and exalts." A characteristic contribution!

For the fourth turn, God took a hand. Rain began to fall. Hundreds of the thousands of spectators fled for shelter. Some of the clergymen, entirely unprotected, were driven to refuge under the altar platform. Cardinal Mundelein remained on his throne during the rain, which became almost a downpour before the credo of the mass was reached. And so, appropriately, came to an end one of those exhibitions "for the delectation of school-girls" that T. H. Huxley used to pour his scorn upon.

Methodist enthusiasm for films, religious or otherwise, is purely sectarian, and has no sort of appreciation for a very harmless entertainment. The Rev. W. E. Garmen draws the attention of the readers of the *Methodist Recorder* to the authoritative judgment of the 1937 Methodist Conference, which directed Trustees and other concerned:—

That it is highly inexpedient to use films on Sundays in localities where the cinema theatres are not open. (*Minutes 1937*, p. 399).

This is equivalent to a complete repudiation of religious films as far as any principle is concerned. But "business is business," and even this devilish business of the Movies may be pursued, but only where the ordinary legitimate Movey theatre already provides what the public wants.

The power of prayer which brought about the "Peace" of Munich seems to have worked equally well in the case of an almost-entombed minor—that is by absolute negation of its "power." For 27 hours, Mr. Percy Hayward, 34, was trapped in a coal shaft on Rhos Fach Mountain, near Brynmawr, Breconshire, with death threatening every hour from shifting masses of pit slag. While prayers "ascended" from sundry quarters, human effort went on, and finally triumphed. In hospital, Mr. Hayward said: "No man could want better mates. They tore their hands until they bled, scooping the stones away." Meanwhile, Mrs. Hayward was saying: "All last night I prayed. Now I feel my prayers have been answered." (The poor torn hands of her husband's noble pals are of no—or merely secondary—account, apparently). While the wife prayed, what was the husband doing during his suspense under *Divine Judgment*? Why—he was *doing sums*! Said he: "I just did sums in my head. I did not think I was so good at arithmetic. I got into a knot once or twice, though." Was ever the puerility of prayer so strikingly shown? And yet Alec Holly, one of the pals who had worked so nobly for their friend, remarked: "Thank God Percy is safe!" Such is the "power" of hereditary doping with religion. "Thank you for nothing" is the apt phrase here, so far as "God" is concerned.

Nicholas Daniel Jacobus van Biljon pleaded before the Salisbury, Rhodesia (South Africa) Court that a sentence upon him of three months hard labour was too severe for his offence under the Witchcraft Suppression Ordinance. Van Biljon had imputed to a Rhodesian native "the use of non-natural means, namely, a bewitched letter" in causing the death of another native, and he accused the first-mentioned native of being a wizard. Von Biljon contended that

the Ordinance was designed to eradicate witchcraft among natives and not Europeans, and that, therefore, a different and more lenient standard of punishment should be applied in the case of Europeans.

With this contention Mr. Justice Lewis was unable to agree. Ever since the occupation of the country, he said, the law had aimed at stern suppression of the witchcraft evil, which was well known to be the originating cause of many serious crimes, such as murder, extortion and fraud.

Heavy penalties had been laid down and the Ordinance had been rigorously enforced, with the result that witchcraft was on the wane. It would be disturbing to the native mind if the impression gained ground that a European could commit this crime with comparative impunity.

The conviction and sentence were confirmed.

"Where Africa's sunny fountains" play (more or less!) they are less tolerant of witchcraft than Europe, including this "Christian country," is. Still: it must be granted that there might be more "native unrest" were Kaffirs to learn that the white man is no more advanced in civilization than he. We would hazard the guess that van Biljon is a staunch upholder of the Dutch Reformed Church in South Africa, and it was foolish of him to challenge the greater accomplishments of the Bantus in superstitious rites and witchcraft.

The *Sunday Visitor*, an American Catholic weekly, masquerades as an advocate of Democracy as opposed to all kinds of (earthly) Dictatorships. It has a headline proclaiming President Lincoln (the famous Freethinker) as a very great man. But, says this Catholic friend of Democracy:—

So far have many travelled from the ideas of our forefathers that, while condemning the dictators, they speak the dictators' language, because they will not admit the place of God, as did our ancestors, in the Government of men.

And it concludes by advertising the merits of its own religion, which, it says, is the "only thing that can make democracy work" because democratic and other Governments "received what authority they have, from God." It would seem—as we should expect—that Hitler and Mussolini are as much indebted to God as are King George and President Roosevelt. We prefer Lincoln's idea that the true ideal is "Government OF, FOR and BY the PEOPLE"—not by God or the Pope.

"What a Word" is the title of Mr. A. P. Herbert's skit on usage of language—the same word covering a multitude of meanings. But what about God's "Word"? Here is a *British Weekly* writer quoting with approval a new meaning for Paul's very plain words (Phil. ii. 12) "Work out YOUR OWN salvation with fear and trembling." The entertaining paraphraser, Dr. Moffatt, argues that what these words "mean" is: "Work out your common salvation with one another." Of course this is no more wonderful than understanding "Swear not at all" to mean SWEAR ON ALL OCCASIONS if required to do so!

Dr. Frank Buchman—inventor of the Oxford Group and other American follies—narrates his experiences during the Two Minutes Silence last week. He "listens-in" to God's conversations and reads God's thoughts:—

Shall I tell you what happens when I listen? I give my mind to disciplined direction. I find that God's thoughts become my thoughts; direct messages come from the mind of God to the mind of man, definite, direct, decisive. God speaks. God has a plan.

Dr. Buchman is over-modest in identifying God's thoughts with his own. We have no doubt that if "God has a plan," it turns out, by a curious coincidence, to be the very thing Dr. Buchman himself "planned." We notice that God's "plan"—like Dr. Buchman's—does not include third-class travel, or second-rate hotels.

The following threat was recently issued by Lord Castlerosse, (*Daily Express*, same issue as above):—

If necessary, I will stand myself for Parliament. Now, what on earth has the British public done to deserve that?

Miss Ellen Wilkinson asked the Speaker of the House of Commons, "What is the use of Ministers coming and saying things which are not true." We are not surprised that the Speaker intervened. Miss Wilkinson should have known better. Her question should have run, "What is the good of any minister coming here if he is not ready at any time to say things that are not true?" Perhaps the best apology for Ministers saying what is not true is that few members are deceived by them. There are certain rules of the parliamentary game, as with other games; and while Ministers are supposed to speak as though they are telling the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth, it is the duty of members to act as though they really believed what they hear. No wonder the Speaker chided Miss Wilkinson for not joining in this "Let's pretend" game.

The *Church Times*, while out for "free speech" in general, objects very strongly to it in particular. This Christian Journal advocates free speech for the B.B.C., but insists upon limits; that is, it is glad that Atheism is banned on the air, and also "freak" religions. But it will allow some allusion to birth-control so long as "a reasonable statement of the reason why it is opposed" follows immediately. But this is all we ask for on other subjects. We have no objection to Christianity being boosted as hard as possible by the B.B.C., so long as a "reasonable" reply by a competent Atheist "follows immediately." And the same thing holds good for any strong controversial question. But we are not surprised that Christians will move heaven and earth to prevent the Freethought case being broadcasted. We are not the least afraid of Christianity; but Christians are horribly frightened of Freethought. And that explains much.

The same journal is not very keen either on "conferences, congresses, manifestoes," which are the "daily incidents of the contemporary history of the Church." Rather does it prefer the part played by the village priest leading his loving flock in the path of righteousness. This also is easily understood. The human flock, like real sheep, is content to follow blindly, and give an example of faith and credulity so dear to the heart of the Church. No inconvenient questions, no controversy—just plain and simple belief. What could be better for Christianity? What a shame that the flock sometimes loses its old time faith and simplicity, and proceeds to ask those difficult questions which have always been the bane of the Church!

Czecho Freethinkers' Relief Fund

Previously acknowledged, £106 15s. 10d.; Secular Society Ltd., £50; G. Smith, £1; West London N.S.S. Branch, £1 1s.; G. Lupton, 2s. 6d.; T. Dellhide, 2s. 6d.; A. Thomas, 1s.; J. W. H. Davis, 2s.; F. Gateshill, 5s.; F. MacLaghlan, £1; A.H., 10s.; S. W. Fawcett, 1s.; Austin Forbes, Jr., 1s.; T. A. Skate, £1 1s.; Lady Maud Simon, £1 11s.; A. G. Sparkes, 2s. 6d.; A. C. Rosetti, 10s. 6d.; A. G. Lye, £2; A. D. Corrick, £1; W. A. Adamson, 5s.; Mrs. E. S. Finney, £2 2s.; "Nicholas Mere," 10s.; Dinah, 5s. Total £170 8s. 10d.

We shall be obliged, if there is any inaccuracy in the above list, or if any subscription is not acknowledged; if those concerned will write at once.

THE FREETHINKER

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TO CORRESPONDENTS.

FOR Advertising and Distributing the *Freethinker*.—E. Horrocks, £2.

FREETHINKER Endowment Trust.—Vivian Phelps, 21s.

A. DAVIES.—Regret delay; see this week's list.

JOLLY JOE.—However much we may sympathize with your suggestion, it is hardly practicable.

R. HAMILTON.—Thanks for paper, also for what you and your Branch are doing to increase *Freethinker* sales.

E. F. RUSSELL.—You "are getting a little tired of our week-after-week ravings about the utter brutality of Nazi Germany." We are sorry, but not for ourselves. It is true that Jews do not suffer more than anyone else. It is also true that in no part of the world, and nowhere in history, has the cold-blooded torture of men, women and children, with the open degradation of a whole people been practised as is now being done in Germany. So we must continue on our road and hope for some improvement in yourself.

J. BESWORTH.—Pleased to hear from so old and so staunch a Freethinker as yourself. One of our regrets is that the only opportunity we ever had of listening to a lecture by Bradlaugh we did not take advantage of. Please accept our best wishes for your continued health.

H. MOSLEY.—Will write you as soon as we can about a visit. Pleased you like the new edition of *Materialism*, and also the new chapters. There was great need to clear up the meaning of "Emergence." It is, as you have seen, nothing more than an extension of the scientific conception of causation. There is more to say on it, and we may write in the series we have commenced to illustrate the way in which many avowed Freethinkers are still carrying round the "ghost of a god."

S. THOMAS.—Most of what are called "philosophical essays on Theism" are little better than presenting the simple basic arguments in such a way that their real nature is hidden to the unwary reader. There are really very few arguments for the existence of a god, although they impose on many by their being presented in about a score of obscure forms. For example, there are about a dozen ways in which the argument from design is presented, and everyone of them is a sheer begging of the question at issue. And yet men of the standing of John Stuart Mill have fallen into the trap. The ground fallacy will be found in number II. of our *Pamphlets for the People*.

A. D. CORRICK.—Sorry to hear you have illness in the family. Hardly anything can be more trying. We wish your wife a speedy recovery.

T. LEWIS.—Pleased to have your appreciation of what you call our "splendid articles on the Crisis." Perhaps their only claim to notice is that they stated the plain and unprejudiced issue. At any rate we had no ulterior motive to serve.

S. MARSHALL.—We have quite a number of new books to which we intend calling the attention of our readers, but we have been very busy on other things, and are under promise to take things as easy as possible. And a weekly paper to look after is in itself enough without counting a hundred and one other things.

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

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.

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. Roselli, giving as long notice as possible.

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

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

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

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

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

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

Sugar Plums

Are there any of our readers who are in a position to offer hospitality to Czech Freethinker refugees for a few weeks, while they are in this country waiting for passport formalities to be completed, when they will proceed to their destination abroad? These refugees are booked for the Dominions, and are admitted to this country for only a definite period. Those who are inclined to help in this way will oblige by sending their names and addresses to this office, when the necessary arrangements will be completed.

The Secular Society Limited, at the last meeting of the Board of Directors, voted a sum of £50 as a contribution to our Czech Freethinkers' Relief Fund. As we said last week, we hope to close this Fund by the end of November. We trust that those who intend subscribing will mark the date. There should be a fair number of subscriptions to come in before the Fund is finally closed.

On Sunday next (December 4) Mr. Cohen will visit Edinburgh. He will speak in the Monseigneur News Theatre, Princess Street, Edinburgh, on "The New Science and the New God." Admission will be free, with reserved seats at 1s. Chair will be taken at 7 o'clock.

Mr. Vivian Phelps, author of *The Churches and Modern Thought*, in sending cheque for the Freethinker Endowment Trust, writes:—

It is true that "it is worry that hurts, not work," a good way, therefore, of expressing sympathy with both you and our Cause is to support the Freethinker Endowment Trust. Nothing is keeping Freethought back more than deficiency in endowment. I take this opportunity of conveying to you my hearty congratulations for articles (9 and 16 October) on "The Crisis." They express logically, clearly and eloquently what every true Freethinker, Rationalist, and Humanist must feel on this subject.

We welcome Mr. Phelps' opinion, and we are encouraged by the large number of letters applauding what we have said. It is mean to write for approval, but it is none the less welcome when it comes.

We do not usually take notice of anonymous letters, but as in this case we owe the writer an apology, an exception must be made. We received, the other day, the following note, accompanied with a copy of the *Freethinker*:—

It is an insult to my intelligence to imagine that I should be interested in this.

Someone has sent this outraged party a specimen copy. We don't know who did it, or whether it was sent by male or female. So on his or her behalf we apologize. First, for the assumption that this person was sufficiently alert to be interested in any of the many topics with which the *Freethinker* deals. Second, for the evidently unwarranted assumption that the recipient of the paper was liberal-minded enough to read things with which he, or she, did not already agree. Third, for assuming without any evidence that the one to whom the paper was sent had enough intelligence to understand what was written in the *Freethinker*. On these specific grounds we offer on behalf of whoever sent the paper our most abject apologies, and we warn those who do take

copies of this paper for distribution that they should take care that it is not sent to anyone who is either mentally deficient or incurably intolerant

At the Secular Hall, Humberstone, Leicester, Mr. R. H. Rosetti will lecture on "The Churches and the Threat to Civilization," at 6.30 this evening (November 27). Mr. Rosetti always receives a warm welcome at Leicester, and the friendly feeling between the Leicester Secular Society and the N.S.S. gives an additional pleasure to the visit.

From the *Manchester Evening News* :—

Materialism Restated, by Chapman Cohen. This is a revised and enlarged edition of the book by the famous Freethinker, first published in 1927, which despite its brevity, has come to be regarded as a standard work on the subject. This new edition is appreciably longer, but Mr. Cohen still insists on saying what he has to say in the least number of words.

Mr. G. Bedborough will speak for the Bradford Branch N.S.S., in the Mechanics Institute, Town Hall Square, Bradford, this evening (November 27) on "Godlessness." Admission is free, but reserved seats may be had at sixpence, and one shilling each. The local saints will see that the hall is well filled, and Mr. Bedborough can be relied upon to serve the platform in a pointed and good humoured lecture. Chair is to be taken at 7 o'clock.

We regret to hear of Mr. A. P. Herbert's indisposition. He would enjoy reading Miss Rose Macaulay's article in the *Star*, describing her hatred of "the jargon called language," of which she considers "Re-armament," and other words beginning with "re" as "awful examples." She does not actually mention the word "Religion," but she says :—

The "re" that I object to is a prefix, and implies a lie. "Re-armament" may be all right so far, for I suppose we have not yet caught up with the arms we had at the height of the last war; when we do, I hope, but do not believe, that we shall drop the "re."

But for "moral re-armament" there seems no case; nor for "return to Christian values," or to civilized standards, or to God. A small point, but with large and sweepingly false implications as of some golden age of virtue in the past from which we have declined.

Fifty Years Ago

CHURCHMEN and Dissenters cannot agree about a single dogma. After eighteen centuries of the only true religion, they are at sixes and sevens as to what it means. So they fall back upon the Bible, and call it the "unsectarian basis," as though Catholics had not one Bible, Protestants another, and Jews another; to say nothing of the Brahmans, Buddhists, Mohammedans, and Parsees, who are all members of the British Empire, and many of whom reside in England. Well, this "blessed book" is agreed upon as a final authority, as the standard of faith and the fountain of morals. With a copy of this "sacred volume" in every hand, the serried ranks of religion confront the common enemy. They differ about every section of it, from Genesis to Revelation, but they agree to use it—for the moment—as their common weapon against "the infidel." This "blessed book" is thrust into the schools, and children are told to read its old-world pages. They do so, and from that moment moral teaching is at an end. Instead of being taught that actions are good or bad as they tend to promote human happiness or human misery, the youngsters are taught to obey the will of God; and blind submission to authority being once inculcated, they become easy victims of the priestly lessons about remaining where Providence has placed them, and ordering themselves lowly and reverently to all their betters.

The Freethinker, November 25, 1888.

The Way of the World

THE *Daily Express* (November 16) says, "there is certainly less public support for the Prime Minister and his policy than there was a month ago. . . . At the time of Munich, we, as a nation, welcomed the Chamberlain policy of appeasement." "We," can mean only those who welcomed the Chamberlain arrangement, for a large section never ceased to question the "policy of appeasement." And, by the way, what was the Chamberlain arrangement? All we know is that Mr. Chamberlain said he placed complete reliance on Hitler's word, and the comment on that is the present state of civilized opinion all over the world. And no one but Mr. Chamberlain knows what he arranged with Hitler. All we do know is that Hitler got even more than he asked for and was invited to ask for more. That is the way in which many a lamb has "appeased" many a wolf.

The *Express* also says that the dictatorships level against the democracies the charge that democracy "is unstable in outlook, fickle in emotion, and cannot be relied upon to hold to one policy. If the British public deserts Mr. Chamberlain now, it will provide a fresh argument for that attack on the democratic system." Was ever greater rubbish, such obviously inspired nonsense, written? A section of the British public was bulldozed into a state of hysteria over Mr. Chamberlain's agreement with Hitler, details of which they did not know, and which has been proved to be no agreement at all. Followed, the disclosure of the extent of Hitler's brigandage, and the robbery and perpetual degradation of 600,000 Jews to satisfy the gangsters that must be placated to keep Hitler where he is. Then the warning from a paper such as the *Daily Express*, that if the British public decline to be a party, even by tacit consent, to such a state of things, we shall be furnishing material for fresh attacks on democracy. The only reply to this subsidized, rascally nonsense, is that if the British public does not show its determination to protest, practically, as well as theoretically against the doings of such blots upon the human landscape as Goering, Goebbels, Hitler and Co., democracy in this country is doomed and deserves its fate. And who is it that we are providing with fresh arguments for attack? Hitler and Mussolini! That is what Munich has brought the British nation to, according to the *Daily Express*. We must do everything that pleases and nothing that will offend these two Lords of Europe. Well, if the British people have come to that level, the sooner the end comes the better. As we have so often said, death need bring no disgrace, that comes only with life; and to walk in fear of Hitler and Mussolini, and to act under the tuition of the *Daily Express* is to make existence a living death.

In a later issue the *Express* observes that there is no need to go to war with Germany over its treatment of the Jews. (One ought not to forget that it is not merely Jews who are being robbed, tortured and killed in Germany. In a lesser degree all who are believed even to harbour thoughts opposed to the Goering-Hitler crowd are subjected to the same treatment). As usual the *Express* lacks the moral courage to be honest in even its rascality. No one wishes to go to war with Germany, and the German leaders are now reminding us that our own hands are not quite so clean as they might be. But when all is said and done our hands are white as driven snow when compared with those of the Goering-Hitler brigade. We have never deliberately made war on children, neither have we encouraged our soldiers to outrage women and to make old men examples of personal degradation in the public streets. No one but that stupid kind of a "patriot" who is himself a blot on the country he appears to praise will deny that our records are stained with many rascalities and many mean things. But Germany has given the positively last word in calculated, cold-blooded sadistic scoundrelism. No other nation has ever equalled it in this respect, and none is ever likely to surpass it.

Still, there is no call from anyone that we should make war with Germany. Such a thought is in the mind of none who does not wish to create an overmastering fear in the minds of the people, such as was done during "crisis week," in order to secure certain unavowed ends. What is asked is that we shall cease to profess admiration and friendliness to German leaders, decline to take part in their hunting parties, or pretend that we have confidence in their honesty and honour, or indulge in the blatant hypocrisy of pretending that our armaments are *not* against Germany and Italy. Let the German people realize where Germany stands in the minds of decent men and women all over the civilized world. It is a moral encirclement that Germany needs. The bulk of the German people are kindly folk as are the bulk of people everywhere, but they may not speak, they are afraid to speak. Even those anti-Hitler Germans who are in England are afraid to speak lest their relatives in Germany shall taste a concentration camp as a consequence. But the rest of the world can and should speak for them, even though it may offend Lord Beaverbrook. If this advice were taken even Lord Beaverbrook might change; for the *Daily Express* has no opinions, it has only policies.

What, by the way, actually *is* the "Munich Pact?" So far as we know the public has never been told. We have only heard that Germany does not wish to go to war with England, which we can quite believe, so long as England does not stand in the way of Hitler grabbing what he wants. And it must be admitted that up to the present England has raised no obstacles in that direction. Events show that England, or the English Government, has been Hitler's best friend. He could not so depend upon France, nor, it is evident, upon the United States, in spite of its large German population. Even Italy might "rat" so soon as it paid her to do so. But we are still in the dark as to what is the "Munich Pact." Events made it look as though it was really a new reading of a well-known New Testament passage, "Give to him that asketh, and even that for which he has not asked shall be added to him." At any rate it was plainly said that this country, with France, would guard the independence of the new Czechoslovakia. Bratislava was one of the places which, even until yesterday was considered an inalienable part of Czechoslovakia. But now Germany is taking over Bratislava, and in addition, Taus and other places. It looks as though our description of the "Munich Pact" was not wide of the mark.

Even if one may call Hitler's vague "We have no desire to go to war with England," anything but mere verbiage, it is quite clear that this gracious expression is not unqualified. For the official statement has been made in the *Frankfurter Zeitung* :—

We cannot make a pact with Chamberlain and then suddenly be faced with a Churchill. We cannot offer our hand to M. Daladier only to find M. Mandel in his place.

So that we can only bask in the light of Hitler's smile so long as Mr. Chamberlain is in power, or some Government agreeable to Hitler is elected. We hope that electors will bear this hint in mind, and remember that every vote against Chamberlain is also a vote that will excite the displeasure of Hitler and Goebbels, and Goering and Streicher. Meanwhile we can, on the assurance of Mr. Chamberlain, be merry, and look forward to undiluted happiness at Christmas time—if we can forget the German concentration camps, the outraging of Jewish and anti-Hitler women in Germany, the mad race in armaments—not against Italy and Germany—and so forth and so forth. As the *Daily Express* says, it is not our concern what goes on in Germany.

There is an old story in the Bible. "And Cain rose up against Abel his brother and slew him. And the Lord said unto Cain, Where is thy brother Abel? And he said, Am I my brother's keeper." But we cannot expect the *Express* to absorb an intelligently good lesson, even from the Bible.

In the case of Italy our Government has consistently taken up the ground that it will believe very little against Italy, which is not admitted by Mussolini. If the same policy is pursued with regard to the Goering-Hitler Government we may expect to find Mr. Chamberlain reciting the following statement of *facts* as given in Goering's organ, *The National Zeitung*, giving the official statement of the recent Jewish troubles. During the riots the journal says :—

No Jew had a hair of his head touched. Thanks to the outstanding discipline of the German people only a few window panes were broken in last week's riots. *Daily Telegraph*, November 17.)

Lord Winterton might be put up to read this official information to the House of Commons. It would help us all to be merry at Christmas. But the kindly forethought of the German Government is shown by the official order that in future outbursts against the Jews, no property belonging to them is to be injured. *It is intended to introduce measures for confiscating all such property.* Nothing is said about beating-up and assaulting Jews and Jewesses.

Hitler loudly proclaims that there is no opinion in Germany but his. But occasionally another opinion finds expression. For example, up to date, Goering and Co., have not been able to prevent the printing and circulating of an independent paper in Germany, which is often distributed *through the post*. Here is an instance taken from the *Daily Telegraph* of November 16 :—

Foreign correspondents in Berlin received through the post to-day a typed memorandum headed : "A necessary statement."

This consists of the minutes of a meeting of "representatives of all classes of society," including officers and members of the National Socialist party, which is stated to have taken place in Berlin on Sunday.

The memorandum declares that this meeting unanimously adopted a series of resolutions containing the following :—

"Decent persons feel deep shame at the recent events in Germany.

"Ninety per cent of the German people neither took part in the outrages nor approved of them.

"Decent persons feel that the description of these deplorable deeds by Dr. Goebbels as the expression of the people's will is an unparalleled insult and a befouling of the German people."

Those present unanimously demanded the resignation of Dr. Goebbels as Minister of Public Enlightenment and Propaganda.

All the same, no regular newspaper in Germany is allowed to appear that publishes news or comment of any kind of which the Goering-Hitler gang does not approve. Therefore the following from the *Schwarze Korps* may be taken as representing the official opinion concerning Einstein and one of Germany's foremost writers, Emil Ludwig :—

Without the applause of degenerate intellectuals, Jews like Emil Ludwig and Einstein would be consorting with pickpockets and prostitutes in workhouses, and trading in old trousers and bone meal instead of getting into print and becoming famous.

We commend this to Lord Halifax, Lord Redesdale, and our Prime Minister. They might cite it as evidence of the accuracy of their high opinion of Hitler and Co. For filthy abuse of great men these friends of Londonderry, Halifax and Redesdale "take the biscuit."

Those who are intimate with what is really going on in Germany know that one of the favourite amusements of the followers of Goering and Hitler is the stripping naked of Jewish young women and whipping of girls who are suspected of sympathy with Communism, or of holding anti-Hitler opinions, or disobeying orders. This amusement usually takes place in police stations. Jewish girls were also, until they were excluded from the universities, treated in this manner by Nazi students. That kind of

news is carefully kept out of our press, as are other items of news, when it is not to the interest of the Government to have it published. But here is another sample of what is happening, that is taken from the *Daily Telegraph* special correspondent, and is the evidence of an eye-witness:—

Throughout Czechoslovakia the victims of different forms of political persecution are suffering great distress. I have just seen some of them at the Sudeten frontier towns, where a new wave of Jewish emigration from the Nazi terror has set in.

Members of one party of refugees were forced to watch the burning of the local synagogue, to don sacred vestments and in them to dance and perform degrading antics before the mob.

Then all men under 50 were forced to crawl on hands and knees from the German frontier into "no-man's-land," the zone between the Czech and German forces, being kicked and spat upon as they went. Women and men over 50 were allowed to walk upright.

After attending to their injuries and giving them food and shelter for 48 hours, the local Czechoslovak authorities were ordered by Prague to send them back to German territory. The German officer in command at the frontier promised them safety, but hardly were they across when Nazis mobs attacked them again.

Prague, it will be noted, thanks to the Hitler-Chamberlain arrangement, is now to all intents and purposes part of Germany. We hope that when Mr. Chamberlain is enjoying the merry and peaceful Christmas he claims to have created he and others will in the midst of their merriment spare a thought for some of the above reported matters.

QUONDAM.

Religion and the Industrial Revolution in England

(Concluded from page 743)

ONE more quotation, concerning the Mores, from the Hammonds' book, I must give. "The period covered by this Journal was marked by two famines; they were naturally both discussed by Hannah More in her charges, and her comments on them are characteristic! 'In suffering by the scarcity you have but shared in the common lot, with the pleasures of knowing the advantages you have had over many villages in your having suffered no scarcity of religious instruction.' It mattered little that wheat was at 134s. a quarter, so long as the labourers who were living on a shilling a day, had the story of Cain and Abel at their fingers' ends. But the subject of the famine was explored in a more comprehensive spirit in a charge that Hannah More gave to the women of Shipham in 1801: "It is with real concern I am obliged to touch upon the subject which made part of my address to you last year. You will guess I allude to the continuation of the scarcity. Yet, let me remind you that probably that very scarcity has been permitted by an all-wise and gracious Providence to unite all ranks of people together, to show the poor how immediately they are dependent upon the rich, and to show both rich and poor that they are all dependent on Himself. It has also enabled you to see more clearly the advantages you derive from the Government and constitution of this country—to observe the benefits flowing from the distinction of rank and fortune, which has enabled the high so liberally to assist the low: for I leave you to judge what would have been the state of the poor of this country in this long, distressing scarcity had it not been for your superiors. I wish you to understand also that you are not the only sufferers. You have indeed borne your share, and a very heavy one it has been in the late difficulties; but it has fallen in some degree on all ranks, nor would the gentry have been able to afford

such large supplies to the distresses of the poor, had they not denied themselves, for your sakes, many indulgences to which their fortune at other times entitles them. We trust the poor in general, especially those that are well instructed, have received what has been done for them as a matter of favour, not of right—if so, the same kindness will, I doubt not, always be extended to them, whenever it shall please God so as to afflict the land." The lesson was well learnt, and the villages in which the sisters laboured were conspicuous for their loyalty to Church and King. . . .

... One of Hannah More's Cheap Repository Tracts told the story of a Lancashire colliery girl who was taken down the pit, when nine years old, to act as drawer with her brother, who was two years younger! She cheerfully followed him (her father) down into the coal-pit, burying herself in the bowels of the earth, and there at a tender age, without excusing herself on account of her sex, she joined in the same work with the miners, a race of men rough indeed, but highly useful to the community. The father was killed by an accident down the pit in the sight of his children. The girl continued to work in the pit for fourteen years, at wages of 2s. a day, sometimes earning 3s. 6d. in 24 hours by taking 'double turn,' and supporting her mother and brother for some years. Then her health broke down, 'and her head was also troubled by some of those strange and unpleasant imaginations which are known by persons conversant with the diseases of the poor, to be of no unusual consequences of bad food, and great bodily fatigue, joined with excessive grief.' She applied for employment as a servant, but there was a prejudice against her because she had been a collier, and her application failed. Fortunately, by that comforting dispensation by which afflictions are turned into blessings, her bearing and patience attracted notice, inquiries were made at the colliery, and she received such a glowing character that she was taken into employment! 'This story,' the tract concludes, 'may teach the poor that they can seldom be in any condition of life so low as to prevent their rising to some degree of independence if they choose to exert themselves, and that there can be no situation whatever so mean as to forbid the practice of many noble virtues.'

In the writing of Wilberforce, one finds the same atmosphere of unhealthy moral ideas, and perverted Christian teachings. In a *Practical View of the System of Christianity*, a very popular work, first published in 1798, he undertakes to demonstrate that the poverty-stricken masses, living brutish lives, with bodies and minds alike starved and stunted, were immensely better off than their leisured, comfortable masters. He benignantly explains to the poor that "their lowly path has been allotted to them by the hand of God; that it is their part faithfully to discharge their duties, and contentedly to bear its inconveniences; that the present state of things is very short; that the objects about which wealthy men conflict so eagerly are not worth the contest; that the peace of mind, which Religion offers indiscriminately to all ranks, affords more true satisfaction than all the expensive pleasures which are beyond the poor man's reach; that in this view the poor have the advantage; that, if their superiors enjoy more abundant comforts, they are also exposed in many temptations from which the inferior classes are happily exempted; that, having food and raiment, they should be therewith content, since their situation in life, with all its evils, is better than they deserved at the hand of God; and finally, that all human distinctions will soon be done away, and the true followers of Christ will all, as children of the same Father, be alike admitted to the possession of the same heavenly inheritance."

Paley also talked the same kind of immoral nonsense in a publication. *Reasons for Contentment Addressed to the Labouring Part of the British Public*, which he ranked as the most important of his works. Again I take the quotation from *The Town Labourer*. Says Paley (in the tract which first appeared in 1793): "Some of the necessities which poverty (if the condition of the labouring part of mankind must be so called) imposes, are not hardships but pleasures. Frugality itself is a pleasure. It is an exercise of attention and contrivance, which, whenever it is successful, produces satisfaction. The very care and forecast that are necessary to keep expenses and earnings upon a level form, when not embarrassed by too great difficulties, an agreeable engagement of the thoughts. This is lost amidst abundance. There is no pleasure in taking out of a large unmeasured fund. They who do that, and only that, are the mere conveyers of money from one hand to another." However, the gentleman who wrote these lines did not himself sell all he had and give it to the poor that he, too, might enjoy the inestimable pleasures of a half-starved, overworked existence. It is difficult to resist the belief that the man who could write in such a manner was not a deliberate hypocrite. But probably he was in a large measure sincere; his perverted reasoning and seeming callousness to suffering are the product of the age in which he lived. He did but reflect the attitude and spirit of the ruling class, whose interests he sought to serve. He continues, "A yet more serious advantage which persons in inferior stations possess, is the ease with which they provide for their children. All the provision which a poor man's child requires is contained in two words 'industry and innocence.' With these qualities, though without a shilling to set him forward, he goes into the world prepared to become a useful, virtuous, and happy man. Nor will he fail to meet with a maintenance adequate to the habits with which he has been brought up, and to the expectation which he has formed. . . . With health of body, innocence of mind, and habits of industry, a poor man's child has nothing to be afraid of; nor his father or mother anything to be afraid of for him." This at a time, be it remembered, when babes of five and six were carried half-asleep by their parents, to work long hours in the vitiated atmosphere of mills, there, often enough to fall into the unguarded machinery, that was kinder to them than this "Christian" gentleman, for it put an end to their pitiful existence. Paley must surely have been aware of the barbaric conditions under which children of "the labouring part of mankind" worked in mines and factories—conditions that cannot but affect any warm-hearted man or woman; he must have known, too, that babes were forced by threats and blows and torture to serve as chimney-sweeps, and sometimes perished miserably of suffocation in the chimneys they were cleaning. Yet he could write the humbug I have put. But humbug is, perhaps, too strong a word; he was most likely quite sincere in the attitude of lofty tolerance of the working class, that he adopted. Again this philosopher and theologian wrote: "The rich who addict themselves to indulgence lose their relish." The workers of that period were paid such handsome wages that the whole family (father, mother and kiddies so soon as ever they could lift a hand to help), were forced to labour for long hours, in order to get enough food to keep body and soul together.

One of Paley's contemporaries was even a little more logical—or frank—than the reverend gentleman just dealt with. In 1798 Arthur Young published a paper pleading for more churches. "A stranger," he said, "would think our churches were built, as indeed they are, only for the rich. . . . Where are they ('the lower classes') to learn the doc-

trines of that truly excellent religion which exhorts to content and to submission to the higher powers?" He suggested, as a remedy, the building of churches in the form of theatres, with benches and thick mats for the poor, and galleries and boxes for the higher classes. His plea fell on deaf ears, but "twenty years later, one Englishman out of seven being at that time a pauper, Parliament voted a million of public money for the construction of churches to preach submission to the higher powers." (*The Town Labourer*).

For those of my readers who would like to pursue this subject more deeply, and compare the abominable conditions under which "the lower orders" of the period lived, with the rubbish talked about them by the "uplifters" who then thrived, there are, I believe, no better books than the three volumes dealing with the Industrial Revolution, by the Hammonds—*The Town Labourer*, *The Skilled Labourer*, and *The Village Labourer*.

"Religion is the opium of the people."

W. H. MORRIS.

Book Notes

MR. MALCOLM MUGGERIDGE—author of *The Earnest Atheist*—has written an interesting fantasy called: *The Valley of the Restless Mind* (Routledge). To some extent the book follows Mr. Shaw's *Black Girl in Search of God*, except that this is a white man's quest, which begins: "Looking for God, I sat in Westminster Abbey." Like Shaw's black girl, Mr. Muggeridge fails to find this most elusive Deity.

This tale is not too mystical, but if not "wropt in mystery" it is not a straightforward yarn of obvious commonsense. There is an element of frankness about the author's sexual references—his hero seeks satisfaction, if not in God, in "Lust"—amongst other sources of inspiration. His chapter "Lust Along the Euston Road" is not very instructive: it is perhaps meant to be cynical.

There is a sentimental charm about some of the passages and incidents, embellished by the author's genius for expression. In Chapter 18, is told a characteristic story of a commonplace incident of modern medical science which puts in the shade all the millions of so-called "miracles." A patient in hospital is cured by blood transfusion from a stranger. Mr. Muggeridge rightly contrasts this with the meaningless words of Jesus. For here we have the authentic literal generosity of human beings saying: "This is my blood—drink ye it."

* * *

Mrs. Norah Lofts is an author whose half-dozen novels can be highly recommended to readers of this journal in search of excellent fiction from the pen and brain of a cultured, civilized, modern thinking woman. Mrs. Lofts is not only possessed of advanced ideas, religious, social and moral, but she has the rare quality of courageous candour which must terribly shock conventionalists and cowards. *Out of This Nettle* is a long and entertaining story of the old slave days. By making her hero an educated white man instead of a negro, she shows slavery in its vilest form. We also recommend her earlier book *Requiem For Idols*, which will indubitably give intelligent readers a taste for more of her work. Her *White Hell of Pity* is a study of the modern slavery called domestic service.

G.B.

Steadfastness under persecution says much for the sincerity and still more for the tenacity, of the believer, but very little for the objective truth of that which he believes. No martyrs have sealed their faith with their blood more steadfastly than the Anabaptists.

T. H. Huxley.

Correspondence

A FREETHINKER VERSUS A CHRISTIAN

TO THE EDITOR OF THE "FREETHINKER"

SIR,—I attended the Archbishop's nursery (St. Mary's Portsea), to hear an address by the £936 per year Canon Robins. His subject being "Why I Belong to the Church of England."

He gave various reasons for his belief: this is a Christian country; there is nothing better, etc. He thought he might get into hot water for opposing the 39 articles. Like other parsons he, parrot-like, emphasized his belief in the sacraments. The prayer-book was a priceless possession, but regretted that Parliament did not sanction the new one (1928 version). The King was governor of the Church, but not in Spiritual things. He thought that with dis-establishment the State would be the loser.

Being a Man's Conference he only felt it necessary to include a couple of Latin phrases in his talk, and concluded by saying that the Church had rendered yeoman service to the World.

As a Freethinker I drew his attention to the Established Church being a gigantic Business, with a sacred Balance-sheet with a colossal sum of £67,000,000 backed by 40 Bishops drawing from £3,000 to £15,000 per year, which no doubt attracted a few young men. To which he replied that there were priests with private incomes in "poor livings." Again I retaliated by saying that this was *practical* Christianity. To my enquiry, "If a God worthy of worship should desire it, or if a God who needs worship should inspire it," he remarked that it sounded rather clever! but, was I married? So I frankly told him that that had nothing to do with it, and the greatest man who ever lived, according to his own teaching, was Christ—the bachelor.

At this stage one of his honorary workers seemed dissatisfied with his reply, and stated so. At the close of the meeting the Canon apologized for not answering me, for which I thanked him, and reminded him that he had evaded my question. We afterwards met and had a short conversation. He explained that his failure to convince me was due to my intellect.

It was three years ago that I visited this famous parish; the Canon then is now the £3,000 Bishop of Ripon, and in 1896, our present Archbishop was the priest in charge. Surely there can be no better proof why my Reverend friend is a Christian.

A. W. SCOTT.

BRITISH FOREIGN POLICY

SIR,—In the House of Commons Mr. Chamberlain said that his Foreign Policy was based upon three principles: "First, on the protection of British interests, and the lives of British Nationals; secondly, on the maintenance of peace . . . and thirdly, the promotion of friendly relations with other nations who are willing to reciprocate our friendly feelings, and who will keep those rules of international conduct without which there can be neither security nor stability."

He has "protected" British interests and the lives of British Nationals by helping to establish two Fascist countries on the frontiers of France, our almost sole surviving ally, and by condoning the bombing of British ships and killing of British seamen and hampering of British trade with Spain and Eastern Europe.

He has helped the maintenance of "peace" by allowing the aggressor nations to dominate Europe with their "stand and deliver" policy, and make war in Spain and China.

He has "promoted friendly relations with those nations who will keep the rules of international conduct" by betraying Abyssinia, China, Czechoslovakia and Spain (nations who did *not* "break the rules of international conduct"), and by making concessions to Hitler and Mussolini, who have consistently broken those rules and violated their pledges.

Is this success? Or is it too optimistic to hope that when Mrs. Chamberlain was pictured praying in the

Abbey during the fateful "crisis," she was praying that words might have some meaning, and morality and ethics once again play some part in the government of this country?

PETER NORTHICOTE.

National Secular Society

REPORT OF EXECUTIVE MEETING HELD NOVEMBER 17, 1938

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

Also present: Messrs. Clifton, Elstob, Wood, Preece, Ebury, Silvester, Bedborough, Griffiths, Mrs. Quinton and the Secretary.

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

New members were admitted to Birkenhead, Glasgow, Kingston, West London, North London, West Ham Branches, and the Parent Society. Correspondence concerning Edinburgh, Birmingham and the International Congress of the World Union of Freethinkers was dealt with. Delegates reported on the Conference on the Official Secrets Acts and the Freedom of the Press. The Executive expressed its readiness to associate with any further movement resulting from the Conference.

The next meeting of the Executive was fixed for Tuesday, December 20. A number of routine items were dealt with and the meeting closed.

R.H. ROSETTI,

General Secretary.

SUNDAY LECTURE NOTICES, Etc.

LONDON

OUTDOOR

KINGSTON BRANCH N.S.S. (Market Place): 7.30, A Lecture. Weather permitting.

NORTH LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (White Stone Pond): 11.30, Sunday, Mr. L. Ebury. Parliament Hill Fields, 3.30, Mr. L. Ebury.

WEST LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (Hyde Park): 3.30, Sunday, Messrs. Bryant, Barnes, Collins and Tuson.

INDOOR

SOUTH LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (Alexandra Hotel, South Side, Clapham Common, S.W.4): 7.30, Mr. B. M. Harvey-James (London Freedom Grp.)—"Marx and Spencer."

SOUTH PLACE ETHICAL SOCIETY (Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, W.C.1): 11.0, W. B. Curry, MA., B.Sc.—"Bertrand Russell on Power."

WEST LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. ("The Laurie Arms," Crawford Place, Edgware Road, W.): 7.30, Archibald Robertson—"Some Forerunners of Freethought in England."

COUNTRY

INDOOR

BIRKENHEAD (Wirral) BRANCH N.S.S. (Beechcroft Settlement, Whetstone Lane): 7.30, G. Thompson (Liverpool)—"Have We a Free Will?"

BRADFORD BRANCH N.S.S. (Mechanics' Institute, Town Hall Square, Bradford): 7.0, Mr. G. Bedborough—"Godlessness." Reserved seats 6d. and 1s. each.

EAST LANCASHIRE RATIONALIST ASSOCIATION (28 Bridge Street, Burnley): 2.30, Mr. Oakes (Secy., Burnley N.S.S.)—"Bird Migration."

EDINBURGH BRANCH N.S.S. (Free Gardeners' Hall, Picardy Place, Edinburgh): 7.0, Debate—"That the Bible is the Word of God." Pro.: Mr. David Porteous (Scottish Reformation Society). Con.: Mr. Frank Smithies (Edinburgh N.S.S.).

GLASGOW SECULAR SOCIETY (East Hall, McLellan Galleries, Sauchiehall Street, Glasgow): 7.0, Muriel Whitefield—"Why the Jews are Persecuted."

LEICESTER SECULAR SOCIETY (Secular Hall, Humberstone Gate): 6.30, Mr. R. H. Rosetti—"The Churches, and the Threat to Civilization."

(Continued on page 767)

SYLVIA PANKHURST

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(Continued from page 766)

LIVERPOOL BRANCH N.S.S. (Transport Hall, Islington, Liverpool, entrance in Christian Street): 7.0, R. E. Stafford (Liverpool)—"The Struggle in China."

MANCHESTER BRANCH N.S.S. (King's Café, 64-66 Oxford Road, Manchester, near All Saints Church): 7.0, Mr. Ben Ainley (Manchester)—"Europe—What Next?"

PRESTON BRANCH N.S.S. (Market Square. If wet, under Covered Market): 8.0, Mr. J. V. Shortt—A Lecture.

BLYTH: 7.0, Monday, Mr. J. T. Brighton.

NORTH SHIELDS (Lord Nelson): 7.0, Tuesday, Mr. J. T. Brighton.

MIDDLESBROUGH (Labour Hall, Newport Road): 7.0, Wednesday, Mr. J. T. Brighton.

NEWCASTLE (Market): 7.0, Friday, Mr. J. T. Brighton—"Persecution."

TEES-SIDE BRANCH N.S.S. (Jubilee Hall, Stockton): 7.30, Mr. J. Robson—"Is there a Divine Purpose in Revolution?"

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CHAIRMAN: CHAPMAN COHEN

Company Limited by Guarantee.

Registered Office: 68 Farringdon Street, London, E.C.4
Secretary: R. H. ROSETTI.

This Society was formed in 1898 to afford legal security to the acquisition and application of funds for Secular purposes.

The Memorandum of Association sets forth that the Society's Objects are:—To promote the principle that human conduct should be based upon natural knowledge, and not upon supernatural belief, and that human welfare in this world is the proper end of all thought and action. To promote freedom of enquiry. To promote universal Secular Education. To promote the complete secularization of the State, etc. And to do all such lawful things as are conducive to such objects. Also to have, hold, receive, and retain any sums of money paid, given, devised, or bequeathed by any person, and to employ the same for any of the purposes of the Society.

Members pay an entrance fee of ten shillings, and a subsequent yearly subscription of five shillings.

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