

THE
FREETHINKER

EDITED by CHAPMAN COHEN
— Founded 1881 —

VOL. LIX.—No. 11

SUNDAY, MARCH 12, 1939

PRICE THREEPENCE

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

Views and Opinions

The Complete Atheist

ALWAYS to be wrong is to achieve a distinction as great as that of being always right. This fact is slurred over by those biographers of great men who select and preserve all the wise things their heroes have said, but leave unchronicled the stupid ones. Some day, perhaps, an industrious apprentice to the trade of letters will compile a book with some such title as *Flashes of Folly, or Genius in Cap and Bells*. I was reminded of how difficult it is to avoid being right by a cutting sent me by a Scottish reader. The cutting contains a comment by the Rev. R. S. Wright, of the Canongate Church, Edinburgh, and I shall probably not please either the speaker or the sender of the cutting by agreeing with what was said. Not because what Mr. Wright meant is true, but because it points to a truth that is too often ignored.

What Mr. Wright said was "There are few 100 per cent Atheists in the world." What he meant was that the number of people who reject the idea of God is very small, and that is not true. There must be several millions of them. But when he spoke of 100 per cent Atheists he implied something quite different, and I fancy was just using words without any proper appreciation of their significance. I think that, like most pulpit speakers, Mr. Wright was indulging in a kind of wish-fulfilment. For the pulpit rule is, "Say what you would like to be true, and what you would like your hearers to believe is true, and leave the rest to God." On the facts, however, and keeping to Mr. Wright's sense of Atheism as merely a disbelief in God, he is decidedly wrong. Atheists were never so plentiful as they are to-day. But the deliberate rejection of the belief in God is really only the first step in the direction of a 100 per cent Atheism. A great many people never get beyond this first step. They have developed so far as ceasing to believe in the God who, religiously, does things, but they retain the god-idea in connexion with their ethics, their science, their philosophy and

their politics. For the belief in gods is so primitive, so deeply imbedded in language, customs, institutions, and forms of thought, that it is a very small minority that has achieved complete Atheism. But in the common religious sense of the word, that of belief in a specific God, Atheism was never so common as it is to-day. And the proof is that Theists no longer shiver with dread at the sight of an Atheist, they accept his existence as a matter of course.

But a hundred per cent Atheist! I am afraid that a hundred per cent character in any direction is not common. The man who is 100 per cent honest, or truthful, or healthy is the exception. And if we apply the test in the opposite direction the result is the same. The liar falls short of being a complete liar by now and then dropping into the truth; the thief will occasionally refrain from stealing, the brute may sometimes be found guilty of an act of kindness. It is hard to find a man completely perfect after his kind. Even parsons will fall into accuracy and politicians decline into making a trustworthy statement. It is difficult for man to achieve perfection in any direction.

* * *

Half-liberated Minds

Nowadays we have reached a stage at which the idea of God is formally separated from many departments of life. (Please note that I say "formally," not actually). In most of the affairs of life there is no formal reference to the activities of gods as being essential. But that is a late, a very late stage, in the general history of mankind. The original stage is one in which *everything* is dependent on the gods. The cultivation of the soil, the breeding of animals, the conquest of natural forces are all expressed in terms of the power of the gods. More, and worse in its ultimate consequences, the language in virtue of which man hands on to succeeding generations the rules of the game of life he has fashioned, is saturated with profound religious implications, man's consciousness of the world is expressed in terms plainly borrowed from his own vitality. The waves of the sea are "angry," the wind "roars," there is a smile in a thunderbolt. Gravity "attracts," the moon "draws" to it the tides, life "enters" into an organism, nature has its "higher" and "lower" aspects, the semi-fetishistic mind still wonders "why" events happen as they do. These and thousands of other turns of speech and modes of thought, bear unmistakable reference to a time when the gods were more than mere existences, they were a very vital part of human life.

Now no man with even an approximate conception of the nature of human evolution would expect thought to be cleansed of its fetishistic heritage in the course of a few generations. Even the earliest and the grossest superstitions were given up by a section of the people only a few generations ago. A

century and a half ago the sight of an Atheist was still enough to excite comment. But the first step in the change over from Theism to Atheism was easy enough. This took place over two thousand years ago, when nature was first conceived as a self-regulating mechanism. Since that first step—allowing for the return to savagery initiated and maintained by the Christian Church—the rejection of the gods as controllers of nature has gone on with increasing impetus. But this, as I have said, is no more than the initial stage. It is the subsequent steps that are difficult to take. Voltaire said in the case of the beheaded saint, who walked a hundred paces with his head under his arm, that it was the first step which presented the difficulty. If a headless man could take one step with his head under his arm the rest would be easy. The mere growth of scientific knowledge, the removal of gods as actual, close-at-hand manipulators of natural forces, has been enough to take many over the first step towards complete Atheism; but—despite Voltaire—it is the after steps that prove to be the most difficult. There is needed what Santayana calls a process of mental disintegration, and we may add another one of mental analysis; but how many are there who can rise adequately to this?

God in Philosophy

The avowed Atheist is to be found on all hands, but in by far the majority of cases, he is a mere beginner, a neophyte in one of the most difficult of "mysteries." He has dismissed the idea of God as a manipulator of nature, but he retains a form of Theism in his ethics, his politics, his science and his philosophy. Of late years we have had quite a recrudescence of the belief in the existence of what are called ethical values. By this is meant not merely that certain ethical rules are of use to man, but that they are good in virtue of themselves. We do not get a "thus saith the Lord," but we do get our duty to obey the "moral law," by which apparently is meant a rule that is above circumstances, and which has all the force of a primitive taboo. We must obey the "moral law" in complete "scorn of consequences," when to a 100 per cent Atheist it is only the consequences of actions that determine their being classified as good or bad. To the hundred per cent Atheist a rule is not good because it is right, it is right because it is good, and the good has to be something good for you, for me, or for society as a whole. As Socrates said, a thing must be good for something or it is good for nothing. There is no midway form of goodness, and to lose oneself in a mystical rapture over some non-understandable "good," is just another form of god-worship with "god" expressed in more abstract terms. The shadow of the ten commandments given on Mount Sinai still hangs heavily over the field of ethics.

We see the same thing in our sociology. For centuries the splendid leap forward that Greek thought made when it conceived all institutions as so many experiments in social living was overlaid by the primitive superstition of the Christian Church that social institutions were created by God. Hence the ideal of Christian Europe was that of a set order with the Church in spiritual command. To question institutions was a crime. They were covered by the religious taboo. We have the relics of that teaching in the common feeling that it is morally "wrong" to question existing institutions. The Greeks would have argued it out. The Christian Church replied to all questioning with the prison and the scaffold. The would-be reformer was worse than wrong, he was "wicked," doomed to meet the wrath of God. We had a striking illustration of belief in the sanctity of

institutions a couple of years ago, when there was an exhibition, at the coronation, of one of the most primitive of human superstitions—the transformation of a man into a God, with the cream of English society decked out in pantomimic costumes and the Archbishop of Canterbury playing the reserved part of the early medicine-man. Not the thickness of a sheet of paper divided the participants in that ceremony from the veriest savage that ever walked the earth. We should agree with Mr. Wright that there were few 100 per cent Atheists among that crowd, although there may have been some who had taken the first step towards a complete Atheism by giving up the belief in God.

More Survivals

Not quite so common as it was a generation ago, we have the same spirit in national and international affairs when we are referred to a nation's "destiny," or to the possession of some mysterious qualities in Englishmen that members of other nations lack—with, of course, substantially the same ideas that other nations have of themselves in relation to us. Once upon a time this kind of thing would have been taken as a direct consequence of the superiority of the "Joss" of one tribe over the "Joss" of another tribe. As that crude form of the idea weakened it became transformed into a "destiny" that had been marked out for a people. Britons had a destiny which was expressed in their annexing this and that land, while other countries also developed destinies. Even Hitler and Goering and Goebbels are working out a destiny, although had they been in Chicago, their destiny might easily have been the electric chair. In the week of "crisis," Mr. Chamberlain became not merely the subject of prayers, but also the one who was destined by God to "appease" Europe. Of course one might as reasonably talk of the destiny of Italians to eat macaroni, or Germans to drink beer, or British politicians to talk nonsense. It all serves to illustrate the truth that it really is difficult to find people who are 100 per cent Atheist.

One final example, this time from science and philosophy. The primitive theory of events was that the behaviour of things was the outcome of some indwelling spirit. The much later scientific theory—the Atheistic theory—is that things behave as they do as a consequence of the play of "natural forces." The one conception negatives the other with a 100 per cent Atheism. But in operation things do not work out in this strictly scientific manner. The "spirit" inhabiting the object becomes the spirit behind the object and manipulating it. Then follows a further rationalization of this primitive notion, and the things we know are mere "appearance" (phenomena). So we enter the phase at which professed Atheists may be found asserting that in spite of all the material changes that take place "matter" "in itself," disguised in some way as "substance" is the real thing. And the circle goes round full turn when we find modern Theists re-christening this substance as the "Reality" with which science can never get into touch, but which is the equivalent of the Theist's God. But the type of Atheist who clings to an underlying substance which is the real "matter," is, as I have so often said, quite unconsciously carrying round the ghost of a God without being in any degree conscious of the burden he is bearing.

There are numerous other illustrations I might give, but I hope that what I have said will make it quite clear why I agree that the 100 per cent Atheist is not so plentiful as some imagine. For a 100 per cent Atheist means more than the non-belief in a God as applied to religion; it means one who has cleared from his whole scheme of life, and definitely from

his thinking, all traces of "gods," whether crude or refined. I don't believe for a moment that the Rev. R. S. Wright had this scientific Atheist in mind. I feel certain that all he had in mind was one who did not believe in the god that all religions posit, and said so. But these are not uncommon at all. They are very common, and are getting more numerous. Mr. Wright is speaking without his book. Next time I am in Edinburgh if he cares to attend one of my meetings I could introduce him to scores of Atheists of the type he says hardly exist. But of the 100 per cent Atheist, that is quite a different thing. For behind us all stands "Our Father the savage," who gave us all the gods there are. And after him there followed thousands of generations given up to this primitive belief. It was impressed upon the mind of every child born into the tribe or nation; and to question it meant severe punishment or death. The elimination of the more mentally alert helped to develop a type of mind susceptible to superstition, and to create a social environment that made powerful the dread of new ideas. With all these things in mind, it is not surprising that the 100 per cent Atheism is not common. But the belief in an undisguised God is growing very common. Humanity is on the march, and the elimination of the ghost of a God is certain to follow.

CHAPMAN COHEN

Sun-Proof Sundays

Dost thou think because thou art virtuous there shall be no more cakes and ale?—*Shakespeare.*

The Puritan hated bear-baiting, not because it gave pain to the bear, but because it gave pleasure to the spectators.—*Macaulay.*

Why should a small minority of people in authority in this country decree that the weekly holiday should be a very dull day, the dreariest of all? Throughout Europe it is the liveliest time of the week. From Moscow to Marseilles men and women attend theatres, cinemas, circuses, casinos, and all the merry-go-round of pleasure. The Continental working-man can eat where he likes, drink when he pleases, and laugh all day long. Not so the unfortunate and unhappy Briton. He, poor wretch, is "all dressed up and nowhere to go." In England theatres are shut, libraries are closed, sport prohibited, so many other innocent amusements taboo. In a few towns cinemas are open, and present old films and shortened programmes when the day is nearly done. The choice for the Briton lies mainly between the public-house and the place of worship, between spirituous and spiritual intoxication.

This dire state of affairs is not due to racial differences between the Continental and British working-people. For, in Pre-Puritan days, this country was as merry as it is now dull on Sundays. Theatres were open, games and sports of all kinds were permitted, and people could laugh loudly. And, mind you, all this liveliness did not prevent people from going to church, if they so wished. This is also noticeable on the Continent. Places of worship are far more crowded throughout Europe than in Britain. So, the one solitary argument of the Sabbatarians is proved to be wrong, and the alleged horrors of the Continental Sabbath-breaking a bogey invented by the British Puritans to scare Britons into submission to the gloom of the sad Sunday.

It is the Puritanical element in the religious world which is responsible for all this narrow-minded restriction. The Puritans themselves are not very numerous, but they are very active. At Licensing Sessions they pack the Bench with teetotallers, Sunday-school

teachers, and other bigots. In Parliament they exercise pressure all round; telling Conservatives they must not offend the electors, and informing Socialists that hours of labour must not be extended. In plain English these fanatics hold the balance of power, and the British working-man is swindled of his weekly holiday by a mere handful of fussy fanatics. For it is the plain, ordinary citizen who suffers. Rich people do as they like. They hold their choicest parties on Sunday, and amuse their guests with cocktail-bars, cinema shows and theatrical entertainments. If these things pall, they fly to a foreign casino, and gamble to their heart's content. Indeed, if working people only knew how the "upper crust" amuse themselves, there would be such a row as would make most political crises pale their ineffectual fires.

This cast-iron Sabbatarianism is peculiar to the inhabitants of the British Isles, and to their descendants in Canada, the United States, and elsewhere. It provoked Ingersoll's pleasantry that:—

The Pilgrim Fathers landed on Plymouth Rock, but it would have been better if the Plymouth Rock had landed on the Pilgrim Fathers."

Puritanism in its worst phases is a thing to be wondered at. It was an offence for a man to dig his own garden on Sunday, or to kiss his wife in public. Aiming to make men "good," it only succeeded in manufacturing humbugs. So far as England is concerned, it is now the ebb-tide of Puritanism. Yet, owing to the fact that the Kill-Joys are organized efficiently, and the ordinary citizen is too busy earning his living, things are allowed to get worse and worse. On Sunday the City of London, the heart of a large empire, resembles a city of the dead. You may walk from Liverpool Street Station to the Marble Arch without encountering anyone but hurrying travellers, a stray policeman or a caretaker's cat. Not until six o'clock in the evening is there much sign of animation. And this state of affairs can be paralleled in many provincial towns. There is no "sun" in the Christian conception of Sunday.

The time has come now when patience is no longer a virtue on the part of the working-class, who comprise the vast majority of the nation. They should join together and protest loudly against being treated like naughty boys in a reformatory. They should lift up their voices in a chorus of rage against the petty regulations which limit the plain citizen's plain right to innocent recreation on the weekly holiday. They should unite in insisting upon the same freedom as their European brothers.

The pious Pecksniffs who do their utmost to make the lives of working-class people a nightmare, are, usually, persons of large means and ample leisure. Life to them is just a grand holiday, or as near a holiday as wealth can make it. They can eat seven-course dinners, drink expensive wines and liqueurs, and have servants to minister to their wants. To attend a director's meeting represents a hard day's work to such men. Is it fair, is it reasonable, that they should be permitted to grind the faces of less fortunate citizens by limiting the pleasure of the populace on the one day in the week when they are free to enjoy it. The English love of authority has its drawbacks. This is especially the case in the Sunday question, when petty tyrants play the fool with the recreations of the plain citizen. The State protects the lowly against the cruelty of the well-to-do; it should preserve the plain citizen from the onslaughts of the fanatics.

Let there be no mistake on one point. The Englishman is not a sour-faced individual who takes his pleasure sadly. But he is so hedged-round with a network of religious Sabbatarian restrictions that he has

little choice in the matter. If games were permitted, theatres opened, art galleries accessible, cafe-chantants provided on Sundays there would be no lack of patronage. The favourites of the cricket and football fields would receive as rapturous reception on Sundays as on other days in the week. If a free referendum were taken on the Sunday question there would be an overwhelming majority in favour of freedom. Yet, beyond the efforts of the Sunday League and National Secular Society, little has been done to hasten the freeing of Sunday from the taboos of the priests. For a century the "Intellectuals" have protested against this theological tyranny. It is high time that sterner action was taken to make the weekly holiday worthy of its name. The latest Sunday restriction Act is such a mass of contradictions and compromises that it pleases neither the Sabbatarians nor the ordinary citizens. It is neither law nor justice, but a jig-saw puzzle of legal imbecility.

The Puritanical objection to all forms of pleasure is passing wonderful. Not only Sunday recreation, but so many methods of relaxation rouse their high-sniffing opposition. Stage-plays, music-halls, cinemas, dancing, all come under their ban. A mere suggestion that a sports stadium is to be erected in a working-class district rouses them to fury. In a recent case in East London, one of the objections raised was that property would deteriorate. Just as if slums could suffer from such an ailment. That such objections are largely hypocritical is shown in the Puritan opposition to cinemas. For twenty years the "unco guid" professed to regard such amusements as being demoralizing to young and old alike, and as being a cause of crime. Now Hollywood films are being shown in church halls and annexes to chapels, in order to attract the declining congregations. And the Methodists not only show ordinary films, but permit the production of stage-plays, which they used to regard as being Satanic. You cannot say that such persons have forsaken their principles. They have never had any principles to forsake.

This Sunday question is, in the last analysis, a struggle between the "haves" and the "have-nots." If a man has a decent home, or has access to other decent homes, with sufficient space to "swing a cat in," Sunday may not be intolerable. But what of the hundreds and thousands who live in crowded rooms with no amenities? "The Key of the street" is dependent on daylight and decent weather. Tired shop-assistants and artisans want something more amusing than gazing at fossils in a museum. Think of the thousands and thousands of young people who wander aimlessly in the great towns on Sundays. They could enjoy a cafe-concert, or a play, or an opera, or even roller-skating, or other innocent amusement, but the Puritanical Pecksniffs won't permit such awful wickedness among working-class folk. Such snobishness is entirely out of harmony with Democratic ideals, and the sooner the Pecksniffs and Kill-Joys are made aware of this the better it will be for everybody.

MIMNERMUS

The list of those who have been denounced as infidel or Atheist includes almost all great men of science, general scholars, inventors and philanthropists.—A. D. White.

I see a new-born generation rise
Fearless, unfettered, striving hand in hand
To set men where full surely he might stand;
Reason their every action glorifies,
And fire of pure goodwill shines in their reverent eyes.

Eden Phillpotts.

The Sins of Press Censorship

THE multiplication of books made possible by the invention of the printing press early aroused the interest of the Church and State. Secular or religious writings deemed detrimental to constituted authority were therefore penalized and suppressed. In England, during Tudor and Stuart times, the Crown adopted a triple policy. Treasonable, heretical, seditious and blasphemous publications were criminally indicted. Then the State conveyed far-reaching powers of control to the Stationers' Company, which served as a censorship, while the authorities occasionally issued ordinances for the purpose of increasing the powers of the Company (which was incorporated in 1556) in determining the general activities of the printing industry. By such means unlicensed books were suppressed, and a rudimentary system of copyright originated. As early as the fourteenth century an association of authors existed, and the term Stationer was applied to a group of purveyors of books somewhat later. In his great standard *History of English Law*, Vol. VI., Sir William Holdsworth notes that in 1480 the term was given "to persons whose craft consisted in binding, dressing and gilding MSS.; and it is probable from the account given by Christopher Barker, in 1582, that the word 'Stationer' was applied to all the various members of this joint craft."

Evidently the Stationers were the traders who purchased from the printers their bound volumes, and who furnished them with finances which enabled them to conduct their business. At an early date stationers and authors had congregated in the vicinity of St. Paul's and the chief centre of their activities was named Paternoster Row, where were vended "all sorts or books, then in use, namely, A.B.C. or Absies, with the Paternoster, Ave, Crede, Graces, etc."

The Tudors entrusted the printing, publishing, and disposal of books to the Stationers' Company, and only those sharing its monopoly were permitted to print and publish, and great was its indignation when the University of Cambridge was accorded the privilege of establishing a printing press.

Not only did the Stationers exercise extensive power over the activities of the trade, but they were instructed to seize and destroy any writing to which the State took exception. Moreover, the Company in return for the favours it enjoyed was expected to aid the authorities in preventing the appearance of any heretical or treasonable publications, and in discovering the authors of such pestilent prints. Under this severe censorship a system of registration was evolved which placed all independent writings under complete Governmental supervision and control.

This compulsory registration has left its mark on all subsequent legal enactments relating to copyright, for when a work was registered in its author's name this established the writer's incontestible property in the work in question. So those who infringed literary copyright became liable to pains and penalties, and a publication seems to have become the permanent property of its owner. As far as ascertainable, the only limit to perpetual possession is assigned in an order issued in 1588, that when a work ran out of print, and its author failed to republish within six months "any member of the Company could do so, provided that the author did not refuse." Also the original owner of the copyright was granted such proportion of the profit as the Company deemed fair.

Apart from this, patents were sometimes granted to printers for the sole issue of law manuals or prayer books. Still, the system of press censorship exercised by the State soon proved unworkable, and as the printing industry developed many obstacles were presented to complete control. Journeymen printers and

apprentices became increasingly discontented, and protested against the monopolies enjoyed by a favoured few. They even united in an organization which "systematically pirated the books belonging to the patentees."

A temporary peace was concluded when the Elizabethan Government decided to take over the complete control of the press. The Stationers' Company continued to function, but it was strictly supervised and regulated by the State. The Star Chamber ordained that printing must be strictly limited to London, Oxford and Cambridge, while all publications, save those issued by the Queen's printers, and books concerning Common Law were to be licensed by two leading ecclesiastics. Those who contravened this order rendered themselves liable to prosecution in the Court of High Commission, while a diligent search for publications of an obnoxious character was imposed on the Company.

Under James I. more elaborate precautions were devised to calm the prevailing unrest. All unlicensed works printed abroad were prohibited, and law books were now licensed by three legal luminaries, while historical and political writings needed authorization by Secretaries of State. Even works on heraldry were licensed while "all other books, whether of divinitie, physicke, philosophie, poetry or whatsoever (were licensed) by the Archbishop of Canterbury and the Bishop of London." Anonymous writings were suppressed for all works were to bear the author's and printer's names, and no one was allowed to possess or purchase a printing press without the consent of the Company.

The triumph of the Parliament over Charles I. swept away the forms of censorship which depended on the authority of the Star Chamber and Court of High Commission, which bodies were now abolished. But the printing trade now became alarmed at the prospective loss of the copyrights so remunerative to the Stationers and their associates. So, in a petition to Parliament they dwelt on the danger of an untrammelled press to religion and the State. Also, their prosperity would be destroyed with the disappearance of copyright, while authors, widows and orphans, whose income depended on this species of property, would be impoverished. Again, it would bankrupt the Company itself, as it would be no longer able to administer the industry it represented or furnish financial assistance to the State. Moreover, if the press ceased to be licensed, there was no protection against the wholesale importation of undesirable books from abroad or any security for the home industry.

Milton trenchantly declared that complete protection against dangerous and defamatory writings was available without recourse to censorship. But despite the cogency of his claim, Milton's appeal was disregarded. Good and bad Governments alike, he urged, were prone to error, and he invited Parliament "to consider what nation it is whereof ye are, and whereof ye are the governors; a nation not slow and dull, but of a quick ingenious and piercing spirit, acute to invent, subtle and sinewy in discourse, not beneath the reach of any point that human capacity can soar to." Yet this reasoning made no impression on "a mere representative assembly."

Consequently, the Commonwealth granted the requests of the Stationers, and there emerged marked signs of reaction so early as 1549. Professor Holdsworth avers that: "In addition to provisions as to licensing, printing presses were restricted to London, the two Universities, York and one press to Finsbury used to print the Bible and the Psalms; printers must enter into a bond of £300 to observe the ordinance; and no house could be let to a printer, nor implements for printing manufactured, without notice given to

the Stationers' Company. Imported books must be landed in London only, and viewed by the master and warden of the Company before, they were sold. . . . Hawkers of pamphlets and ballad singers were suppressed."

With the Restoration the censorship increased, and the press was penalized not only by the Stationers, but by special licensers appointed by the Crown. In 1662 the official censor, L'Estrange, according to Arber, "gagged the London Press then, as it has never been gagged before or since."

The privilege of printing certain documents or periodicals was granted to favoured personages, and it was even decided that the King's exclusive right to print psalms and primers reposed on his headship of the State Church, and as almanacs had no author there was no copyright, and therefore they were the property of the Crown, and as the King possessed the sole right to print documents concerning State affairs, including law, he could convey his right to others, presumably for a consideration.

After the flight of James II., the press laws remained for a time unchanged. But under William and Mary the dictatorial conduct of Bohun, the official licenser, directed public attention to the shortcomings of the Act, timed to expire in 1692. Also, the extensive circulation of tracts largely composed of garbled extracts from Milton's masterly *Areopagitica*, made glaring the unspeakable evils of the censorship. This coincided with the more liberal outlook on economic and social problems which succeeded the Revolution of 1688. For now the printers petitioned against the renewal of the severe Act of Charles II., and for the granting of a general right of publication of a work bearing the name of both writer and printer. The petitioners complained that the law subjected "all learning and true information to the arbitrary will and pleasure of a mercenary and perhaps ignorant licenser; destroys the property of authors in their copies; and sets up many monopolies."

Nevertheless, the Act was renewed for a couple of years, while its opponents so increased their influence by 1694, that the House of Commons negatived its renewal. John Locke is said to have drawn up the arguments against the Act and his reasonings completed the conversion of the House of Lords. The Licensing Act was abrogated and, although attempts were made to retain some of the provisions of the measure now repealed, not only the censorship, but "the whole of the machinery for the regulation of the printing and other cognate trades," so elaborately organized in Tudor and Stuart times disappeared.

Now that it was released from the licenser's clutches the Press remained amenable to the law of libel, which attained a highly enhanced importance in public law, while copyright, so greatly dependent on the Licensing Act, found its legal standing insecure. This uncertainty led to the enactment of the Copyright Bill in 1709, and this statute formed the foundation of all subsequent legislation on the subject.

Still, before the liberty of the Press was relatively completed, many heroic Radicals and Freethinkers endured prosecution and imprisonment in the nineteenth century itself. Even now, there are powerful and influential religions and political reactionaries who would be only too pleased to see the worst abuses of the past restored.

T. F. PALMER

Science has nothing to do with Christianity. I do not believe there has been any revelation. The Bible is no more to be trusted than the Sacred books of the Hindoos.

Charles Darwin.

An Unseen Friend

THE interesting "Nature Notes" of Mr. Nicholas Mere remind me of the naturalist W. H. Hudson, whose unorthodox views of religion and a future life were set forth in his last work entitled *A Hind in Richmond Park*.

My old friend deplored the wanton destruction of wild life and wrote: "We should protect and hold sacred those types, Nature's masterpieces, which are first singled out for destruction on account of their size, or splendour, or rarity, and to that detestable glory which is accorded to their most successful slayers. Like immortal flowers they have drifted down to us on the ocean of time . . . and when they perish, something of gladness goes out from Nature, and the sunshine loses something of its brightness."

Sad words that came from the heart of one whose passionate love of birds and flowers radiated from all his works. I have written of Hudson as my "old friend," but we were friends by correspondence only, we never met, and the beginning of our communion arose thus.

Many years ago being in need of rest and quiet, I took lodgings at a secluded farmhouse in the New Forest. On waking early one morning I became conscious of something moving about the room, and on looking round was aware of a brown squirrel seated among some books on a table near my bed. He regarded me intently for a few minutes and then elevated his tail and bounded out of the window. When I mentioned this visit to my host he laughed and said: "Why that be Mr. Hudson's squirrel; uncommon knowledgable about birds and animals he was to be sure." My visitor returned several times, but always seemed, as I thought, disappointed to find that I was not his friend Hudson.

The return of Viscount Grey's Elizabeth, which Mr. Mere mentions, recalls a similar incident.

Some twenty years ago in a suburban garden I made the acquaintance of a thrush; she had the cares of a recently hatched family, and my offering of meal worms was immediately accepted. For six years our friendship continued, sometimes she disappeared for a month or two, obviously for a country holiday as she returned clean and in brilliant plumage. On these occasions she usually flew into my bed-room and settled on my dog's basket.

She had several families, most of which were destroyed by predatory cats, and always took food from my hand for herself and her infants, but at last she came no more. I trust her little white bones lie in some quiet spot where her brethren sing when spring returns.

Writing of this companionship reminds me of another friend, Monsieur Pol, who for many years fed and sported with the sparrows in the gardens of the Tuileries; some old folk will remember him with pleasure.

Wet or fine, in summer time and winter, his quaint little figure was to be seen attended by his pensioners; the birds, it seemed, were always on the look out for their friend, and when he appeared they descended on him and occupied every coign of vantage on his person. I have seen many people who were on familiar terms with the birds in public parks, both at home and abroad, but none has shown the perfect intimacy which existed between the little Frenchman and his satellites.

Not only did M. Pol feed his followers, he talked to them, joked with them, and punished the greedy and unruly; one, the clown of the party was, of course, known as "Anglais." M. Pol died many years ago full of years and honour, for he had been

decoré by his Government, not for service to any party, but because he had, in the words of Orlando's faithful old servitor, "providently catered for the sparrows."

E. SYERS

Acid Drops

As one might have foreseen, the election of a new Pope has let loose columns of newspaper slush. In this country the Roman Church is well served in the press, and by a mixture of bribery (not necessarily in cash) and threats (not necessarily of the explosive bomb kind), it manages to secure the admission of all sorts of unmerited praise and to prevent all sorts of deserved criticism. If anyone tries to get a straight attack on the Roman Church into an English newspaper he will soon discover he is up against an invisible, but not negligible, force. Our press is not "controlled," but it is well regulated. Please don't ask us to explain the difference; it is enough that it happens.

Here, for example, is the kind of thing that is served up in a special article for the readers of the *Daily Express*:

Will Pius XII. come to war with Fascism? Or Nazism? He is a man of peace. He will seek peace with Mussolini and Hitler. But on *his* terms. The heresy of racialism cannot be tolerated. The State must not usurp the rights of the family. The individual has rights—freedom to worship, freedom to marry, freedom to have children educated in his religion—which the State must respect. Those rights are being denied and attacked.

The article is unsigned, but the passages cited represent the Roman Catholic apologist in his most deceptive vein, and the yellow press in its most dishonest mood. It may be granted that the Roman Church cannot well come to terms with so stupid and so unscientific a theory as "racialism." But this is not because the Roman Church is more scientific, or more humanitarian in its outlook than other Churches, or other parties, but simply because it claims to be a universal Church, with an implied authority from God to rule all men. As we pointed out a week or two ago, the Church has no politics, and, given certain conditions, it may leave untouched any sociological or political theory. Where these conditions are not forthcoming it will fight, openly or in secret, any form of political life, from Communism at one extreme to high Toryism at the other.

It is the rest of the passage cited that exhibits either the ignorance or the duplicity of the writer. "The State must not usurp the rights of the family." Why? Because the Church claims the absolute right to dictate this herself. The Roman Church simply does not recognize the right of any State to say what form family life shall take. It reserves this right to herself. The individual has against the Fascist State, "freedom of worship." But what freedom to worship is the individual against the Church given wherever it has had the power to deny it? Suppose that in a country where the Roman Church rules a number of members of that Church resolve to break away and form another Church. Will the Roman Church tolerate that? Has it ever freely tolerated that? Why, one of its basic principles is the denial of the validity of religious "orders" beyond its own orbit.

The Church demands "freedom to marry." But what freedom does the Church give its own members to marry? Actually it does not admit—except under duress—the validity of any marriage between a Roman Catholic and a non-Roman Catholic, and it declines to admit civil marriage at all. And where force of circumstances compels it to tolerate a mixed marriage, it is on condition that the children of such marriages shall be brought up Roman Catholics, and the interference of the priest is a constant cause of friction in the case of "mixed" marriages. The Roman Catholic has always in theory, and where possible, in fact, forbidden one of its members to marry a non-believer.

The Church believes, we are told, that a parent must have the "freedom to have his children educated in his religion." Agreed, but it must be the Roman Catholic religion. What if a Roman Catholic wishes to have his children brought up in a Protestant school, or in a school without religion, what then? Will the Church stand up for the right of the parent to do so? Has it ever defended the right of the parent to do so? Or are the champions of the Roman Church not foremost in the circulation of lies, indecent lies, concerning families that are brought up in this way? The truth is that the Church is bound to oppose Nazism and Fascism—really two forms of the same thing—because the claims of Fascism are the claims of the Roman Church expressed in a wholly religious form instead of in a semi-religious one. The new Pope must oppose Fascism wherever its claims conflict with those of the Church. But we decline to see any virtue in this. It is the old battle of the King and the Nobles. When the King wished to fight the Nobles he appealed to the people. When the Nobles wished to fight the King they appealed to the people. In the course of the conflict the people often gained privileges they would not otherwise have obtained. But the people would have been much better off in the absence of both King and Noble. It is quite a pity that the name of the writer of the *Express* article was not given. It is misleading enough in its purpose to have come from the pen of Mr. Hilaire Belloc.

Finally, Freethinkers particularly, and the rest of the world in general, ought never to forget that the orgy of deliberate lying that went on in this country concerning the International Freethought Congress of September last, had its origin with the Roman Church, and at this work no man was more industrious in circulating these deliberate lies than Cardinal Hinsley. There was no possibility of these stories being innocent mistakes, they were deliberately manufactured falsehoods, while all sorts of open and concealed pressure were brought to bear upon the Government to forbid the Congress. And at a special Pontifical High Mass held at Hove the *Catholic Times* for August 26 announced that on September 11, twenty Roman Catholic Bishops would be present "in reparation for the deadly insult offered to God." If the Roman Church in England could have had its way, not only the International Conference would have been suppressed, but all Freethought movements. The *Express* informs its dupes that the Roman Church demands "Freedom to worship"! What freedom would Freethinkers have had in this country if Roman Catholics could have worked their will?

The Dean of St. Paul's (Dr. Matthews) says, "We thank God for the skill and knowledge" which enables "our own nation to vindicate its place in the foremost rank of technical ability." But we wonder what God has to do with it. Does the Dean mean that British workmen could not hold their own without supernatural assistance? Or is he thanking God for holding others back so that they may not excel the British workman? In either case it is not very complimentary to the British workman. We suppose the explanation is that no man can drag God into anything without making himself ridiculous.

Dean Matthews' remark was made at what was called "a dedication service for the Birmingham section of the British Industries Fair." Again we are puzzled. Does this mean that the rest of the country can manage without God, or that Birmingham is so far behind the rest of the country that a miracle is required to bring it up to scratch? But perhaps it does not mean anything, or means only that the parson must have a finger in the pie at any cost.

Edmonton Borough Council has dispensed with prayers at their quarterly meetings. The Mayor is responsible for not issuing any further invitations to the Lord to keep an eye on the council, and he explained that he had not appointed a chaplain because so many of the members did not make an appearance till after the prayers were said. Probably in these circumstances prayers would have placed the Lord in a delicate situation. If he

blessed the Council with unusual wisdom, then he benefited those who did not pray, and that discounted the value of wholesale prayers. If he did not give the members more wisdom than usual the wicked might scoff and say there was as much wisdom amongst those who did not pray as with those who did. So it was probably helping the Lord out of a dilemma by not praying at all.

There was quite a touching scene in the House of Commons on February 28. Mr. Attlee had suggested that the Prime Minister had not been telling the truth to the House. Whereupon the Prime Minister paid himself the compliment of saying that he was incapable of telling a lie in the House of Commons. The very pious member for S. Kensington, Sir William Davison, asked the Speaker whether it was in order to accuse the Prime Minister of telling an untruth. The Speaker replied that the accusation was "terribly near something that should be withdrawn." Perhaps the Speaker had in his mind a version of the old saying, "there are lies, damned lies and official statements." But in his spare time we should like Mr. Attlee to consider whether any Government official—belonging to any party—does not tell lies to the House of Commons whenever it is thought to be officially necessary. The manner in which the officials of one party are shocked at officials of another party telling a lie, would be amusing if it were not so silly. In his private capacity Mr. Chamberlain may be as truthful as any ordinary decent individual. But as Prime Minister, well, if he did not tell official lies, and connive at other officials doing the same, he would not be in office for a month. Lying is as much part of the political as it is of the religious game. And as this applies to all sects, so it applies to all political parties from vivid red to bright blue.

Until yesterday there was but one man in history who was credited with giving himself a certificate that he was incapable of telling an untruth. That was George Washington. Now a second has been added to the list. Some of the defenders of Washington have indignantly repudiated the traditional slur on the character of their hero. Will Mr. Chamberlain have to wait as long as the hero of the American Revolution for a vindication of his character?

A *British Weekly* writer, with what approaches blasphemy, regrets that Jesus instead of talking about wine, did not use a cup of tea for illustrative purposes. Well, there is yet time for some commentator to point out that the correct translation would be tea, although Jesus not merely talked about wine, but went the lengths of changing water into wine, when the guests had already had as much as was good for them. Meanwhile, we may note that teetotal believers have already discovered that the wine Jesus made was non-intoxicating. So he may have made, miraculously, ginger beer. And one miracle is just as good as another.

Baillie Armstrong, of Glasgow, says he has never known a Methodist a criminal. We would not question a Christian Baillie's word or memory, but we wonder whom the Methodist prison-visitors go to see. We feel certain that neither the Church of England, nor of Scotland, or the Roman Church would sit down quietly while their members in prison were being visited by the ministers of another Church. Baillie Armstrong must have been peculiarly lucky never to have had a Methodist in front of him. We know there are Methodists in Scotland, and we can hardly believe Methodists are willing to pay for the upkeep of prisons without the members of their sect sharing the hospitality they have to pay for.

Reading the serial articles in religious weeklies against the Football Pools, almost makes us wonder if we are living in an ideal world where widespread war, persecution and superstition had long ago been eliminated. Mr. John Bretherton who writes the articles condemns the Pools, "especially for social and moral reasons." He fails to produce reasons on either count. He quotes with approval the ridiculous accusation that Pools are "the

private traders' Public Enemy No. One." As for the "public," not a single individual need spend a penny in any pool. We think there are many better ways of spending money than by investments which promise vast but problematical prizes. Economically there is a good case against these speculations, but there is also a good case against religion. The Pools at least do not promise us Heaven, or pretend that it can give us a valid draft on the Wealth of God by praying for it by means of the Church's fallacious formula.

The "Rev." Bransby Williams was once a popular reciter on the Music Halls. He now preaches at various Nonconformist gatherings. Consequently he is now described—in religious journals—as "The Famous Actor." The Rev. Guy Teale declares

he will never forget a long talk he had with Mr. Williams on the subject of religious faith, and describes the actor as a great Christian gentleman.

and Mr. Williams himself—"in person"—is stated to have given "a most inspiring address." It seems remarkably easy to become "Great!"

The Rev. C. A. de Jong, curate of Isleworth, says that 90 per cent of his flock are living just as though they had never been baptized. That is rather a good illustration of the saving power of baptism. But one is in doubt as to just what Mr. de Jong has in mind when he speaks in this way of the people who have been baptized. Does he mean they are bad characters—socially bad—or merely that they do not attend Church regularly? At any rate it looks as though Mr. de Jong might well give up baptizing people. Perhaps regular Turkish baths would be more effective.

Some correspondents of the *Daily Telegraph* are protesting against the German Nazis being permitted to establish a centre for propaganda in Belgrave Square. One writer asks, "Can one imagine a Democratic House in Berlin?" Perhaps not, but the two cases are not analogous. We have helped the Nazis to get so much, while they have given us nothing but an enormous war expenditure and an umbrella. And after helping the Nazis so liberally, it seems ridiculous to draw the line at a house in Belgrave Square.

It seems possible to tell a Roman Catholic congregation anything, with the certainty that if it comes from the mouth of a priest it will never be questioned. Take the following passage from the Lenten Pastoral, issued by the Roman Catholic Bishop of Leeds, and which was read in all the Churches:—

Everything we hold dear in our civilization was founded on the truths taught by the Catholic Church; the rights of God, the rights of the individual and the family, the rights of the State, together with the obligations consequent on those rights.

We may let go the rights of God, since we have no idea what these rights are, or whether they mean more than seeing that the priesthood and the Church are well looked after. But a priest who can tell his congregation that the rights of the individual, of the family, of the State, and so forth owe their existence to the Roman Catholics must be a pretty healthy kind of a liar, and have unflinching confidence in the credulity and ignorance of those whom he addresses. Bishop Poskitt winds up by saying that civilization is possessed by the devil, and he "entered in under the name of liberty at the time of so-called Reformation." When we remember that parents hand their children over to this type of man for instruction one may be excused for looking at the future of civilization with some little fear.

Christian legends die hard, and Christian liars are almost immortal. Many of our readers will remember how a number of the clergy in this country—including the Bishop of London—seized hold of a story of a cloud of angels that rescued the British Army from disaster at Mons in the early part of the "Great War." The story was written by Arthur Machen who never intended it to

be taken seriously, and who publicly denied that it ever had any basis in fact. But the clergy ignored all protests, and went on producing witnesses to the existence of the angels. All of which proved that the pulpit has no monopoly of religious liars.

Perhaps the success of the Pope in demanding part of the City of Rome has encouraged the Methodists of Clerkenwell who are said to be

CLAIMING CENTRAL LONDON FOR CHRIST.

Perhaps we could spare some of our worst slums which so often surround our "noblest Cathedrals." It would be cheaper than indulging the usual Christian claim of "The World for Christ."

Apropos of our note last week on the religious yarn about the angels that saved the Peking Legation from slaughter during the Boxer Rising, we were reminded of the fact that the Legation was never in any serious danger, although for various interested reasons, our yellow press exploited this manufactured danger as it did the danger of the British in South Africa as an excuse for the Jameson raid. The reminder came in a letter from Mr. Linei-Chong, published in the *Daily Telegraph* of March 1. He writes:—

There was no actual attempt to storm the Legation. In fact barricades were erected by the Chinese, civilians and Boxers some distance away from the Legation, as they feared that the actual Westerners would sally forth and attack them.

It was the Chinese who feared the attack, not the inmates of the Legation. So we have, first, the interested financial lie, then the religious lie about the angelic hosts which protected the British from slaughter. One day we will retell the whole story of the Mons Angels. It is well worth telling, as it is rather an instructive lesson of the way in which religious legends may be built up even to-day. In fact, given a change of tale, we feel pretty certain that credulity is as rife to-day as it was 2,000 years ago. The way in which in each generation there are sufficient fools born to support rogues is enough to make one believe in a special providence.

Fifty Years Ago

WHEN the body of Piggott, the perpetrator of the *Times'* forgeries was examined by the authorities at Madrid, a scapular was found under his shirt, bearing the sacred letters I. H. S., which the Church renders—we think fictitiously—from three Latin words as "Jesus the Saviour of mankind."

Not humanity, but self-interest induced Piggott to wear this holy chest-protector. It was a soul-insurance policy. He trusted to his own shiftness to elude the punishment of his offences in this world, and to the scapular to save him from too warm a punishment in the next. The article was thus "significant" of Piggott's trust in the immoral trumpery of Rome. The creeds are, indeed, all founded on selfishness; but Christianity has the evil distinction of being the only faith which promises heaven without the necessity of any merit in the sinner.

A religion of ritual, indulgence, priestcraft, and imperious authority, like Catholicism, is only moral under compulsion. Its hopes and fears are quite independent of ethics. The best man may be damned for disrespecting its ordinances; the worst man may be saved by respecting them. For the blackest sin it has absolution; only heresy is never forgiven in this world or in the next. Piggott was no hypocrite in following such a faith. A forger himself, he never suspected forgery in Holy Mother Church. He was awed by her vastness and satisfied with her promises. His composure in facing death, compared with his agony in the witness-box, is indeed significant. The scapular could not protect him from Sir Charles Russell's ingenious torture, but it would protect him from hell and damnation; and he pulled the trigger of his pistol in complete reliance on the sanctified scraps of wool under his shirt.

The Freethinker, March 10, 1889.

THE FREETHINKER

FOUNDED BY G. W. FOOTE

61 Farringdon Street, London, E.C.4

Telephone No.: CENTRAL 2412.

TO CORRESPONDENTS.

I. MORRIS.—Our statement was strictly correct. The Russian Civil War, financed and otherwise aided by the Allies, ended in 1920. The diplomatic recognition of Russia by this country did not take place until 1924. The official reason given was mainly that Russian propaganda was being carried on in this country, and this made recognition impossible. The German Government to-day openly establishes a Nazi centre in London for the avowed purpose of political propaganda.

E. BRYCE.—We should much like to see written a scientific study of the growth of "Secularism" as a philosophy. A good starting point would be the Reformation period. We have plenty of material for such a work, but lack time to put it in order. But an essential condition would have to be the work of popular freethought since the time of Paine.

G. SKELTON (Leeds).—We still have a few bound volumes for 1938, and if required, will put one by for you, then you can send for it, at your convenience.

H. SILVESTER.—Thanks for cutting. Will be useful.

WINIFRED KNIGHT.—Our work is a very special one, and the organized freethought movement has distinct aims. But it does not follow that we or the N.S.S. must expend energy on every movement that is worthy of public support. That would be to spread our activities over so wide and so general a field that they would produce no particular result. One must beware of becoming ultra-sectarian in the name of freethought, and so losing sight of the greater purpose in a too great attention to immediate ends.

C. ACROX.—We are obliged for your keen interest, and are getting into touch with your newsagent.

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THE CHURCH AND SCIENCE

Has Science ever retreated? It is Catholicism which has always retreated before her, and will always be forced to retreat. Never does Science stop; step by step she wrests truth from error, and to say that she is bankrupt because she cannot explain the world in one word and at one effort is pure and simple nonsense. If she leaves, and no doubt always will leave, a smaller and smaller domain to Mystery, and if supposition may always try to explain that mystery, it is none the less certain that she ruins, and with each successive hour will add to the ruin of the ancient hypotheses, those which crumble away before the acquired truths. . . . It makes one laugh to hear people assign a rôle to Science, forbid her to enter such and such a domain, predict to her that she shall go no further, and declare that at the end of the century she is already so weary that she abdicates! Oh! you little men of shallow or distorted brains, you politicians planning expedients, you dogmatics at bay, you authoritarians so obstinately clinging to the ancient dreams, Science will pass you and sweep you all away like withered leaves!

Zola, "Rome."

Sugar Plums

Mr. Cohen visits Nottingham to-day (March 12). He speaks in the Theatre of University College, Shakespeare Street. The chair will be taken at 2.30. Admission is free.

As already announced the Annual Conference of the National Secular Society will this year be held at Bradford, as voted for by the Branches. All resolutions for the Annual Agenda should be sent in to the General Secretary not later than March 25. Private members have the same right as Branches to send in resolutions, and it is hoped that many will avail themselves of the privilege if they have any question to raise. Of course resolutions must be of a suitable character. That is, they must come within the scope of the Society's Principles and Objects, although that does not bar a resolution that aims at a reasonable alteration of those Principles and Objects. We should like to see the attendance at Bradford equal that at Glasgow last year.

The Earl of Athlone, who happens to be Chancellor of London University, told a meeting of the Taunton Old Boys' Association that it was important for parents to see that their sons completed their public school education. And if a boy was to enjoy the full benefits of his schooling he should be at school "at least until he is 17, or better still, till the age of 18." We hope that those who think that the coming raising of the school-leaving age to 15 is too much, and that compulsory attendance at school should end at 14, will take notice. But we do not think the Earl of Athlone had in mind the "common" people. He was thinking only of those who attend our "public schools."

Mr. R. H. Rosetti will speak for the West London Branch N.S.S., in the Laurie Arms, Crawford Place, Edgware Road, London, W., at 7.30 this evening (March 12), on "The Churches and the Threat to Civilization." There is every promise of an interesting evening, and the local saints will see that there is a full house.

One of those common stories of Atheist persecution of Christians in Russia was of so unlikely a character that on its appearance in the *Christian World*—which was not the only journal which published the yarn—one of our readers wrote a polite note to the *Christian World*, asking it to give the source of its information. We wish to say at this point that the *Christian World* is far and away the least untruthful transmitter of foreign news generally. The *Christian World* gave our reader the source of its information, which was stated by their correspondent to have been "derived from a bulletin issued by the International Christian Press and Information Service at Geneva." It is just as well to remember where newspapers get their foreign news, and for all readers to discount tainted news coming from a thoroughly one-sided biased source.

We see that while it is the custom of most Borough Councils to have prayers, it is not the practice with Urban Councils. It looks as though there is snobbery in heaven as well as elsewhere. The Lord is not expected to bother about the prayers of public gatherings below a certain dignity. We have the same things in the prayer-book. Special prayers for the King and the Royal Family, a general *ad hoc* prayer for all the rest of the community. Special prayers for the success of an army, and no prayers at all for the success of a champion boxer. Decidedly there is snobbery in heaven as well as on earth.

From the *Reader's Digest* (taken from an American newspaper):—

IMPORTANT NOTICE.—Positively no more baptizing in my pasture. Twice here in the last two months my gate has been left open by Christian people, and before I chase my heifers all over the country again, all the sinners can go to hell.

The Springs of Behaviour-I.

We have defined the study of mind as the study of conscious behaviour. We have defined as conscious any activity of whose causal history cortical disturbances are part, and which is alight with the quality of "awareness." Feeling and memory are two essential conditions of awareness. Throughout the biography of an individual his behaviour becomes more and more fixed along the lines of definite "pattern-reactions," until it is possible to ascribe to him certain normally unwavering characteristics. His responses become more and more predictable (with complete knowledge they would always be wholly predictable) and his character takes a more or less permanent core. We have used the word "normally." In such practices as psychotherapy it is apparently possible to affect, sometimes radically, the types of response usually associated with the subject, but there is no departure from determinism. Determinism is, in fact, a necessary postulate. The same applies to the psychology of religious conversion (not to be confused with the mob "conversions" of revivalist meetings, where the same person can be saved from eternal torment every Tuesday and Thursday).

It is our purpose here to combat the religious notion of a divinely implanted soul or ego which, in its journey through life, is always being confronted with the alternatives Right and Wrong, between which it makes its choice. Should it choose wrong we are to suppose that the recording angel duly notes the fact. On Judgment Day his behaviour is reckoned up to the last detail, and his reward or punishment meted out accordingly. That, at least, is the logical extension of a simple creed which is the product of a pre-scientific age, an age when fear was promoted as a powerful determining motive. Few educated people to-day who retain this conception of a soul, whether they call it entelechy, ego, spiritual principle, or even grant it some materiality as "ethereal counterpart to the matter-body," would care to push their doctrine to such conclusions. It is our purpose here, then, to show that the springs of behaviour are to be sought in nature along materialistic lines.

According to the emergentist, Dr. R. G. Gordon,¹ our personality is based on the foundational structure of conditioned reflex, reflex arc and engram. The latter is Semon's term for the structural organization of the organism, dependent partly on heredity, partly on environment, and partly on the given stimuli. By heredity we mean the lasting impressions left as mnemonic influences on the germ plasma: by environment we mean lasting impressions left as mnemonic influences on neuromuscular and glandular systems. Hereditary make-up at once sets a limit to what can be accomplished by training and environment. It is fair to add that this limit is minimized by the Behaviourist.

Now we have maintained in a previous article that we must judge the relationship of bodily conditions and mental functioning by the tests of observation and experimental interference. We can therefore begin by noting the most obvious way in which body conditions mind. It is contained in the well known and oft quoted argument of Ludwig Buchner, and has never been answered, even though Buchner and Haeckel have of late been the recipients of a certain amount of contempt. If, said Buchner, the mind is a thing existing in its own right (independent of the body which it inhabits), why should it succumb to a blow on the head, a sunstroke, the commingling of a few drops of blood with the brain, a few glasses of wine, opium, prussic acid or other poison? The list could be extended—illness, fatigue, fasting, etc.

The reply that the mind cannot use a run-down machine will not do. The engineer is external to the engine. Further, as we shall show, the "engineer" must take the direction determined by the engine (body). Finally deprived even of the steering wheel, what is there left for the engineer-mind to do? The engineer analogy breaks down at every point.

The simple conclusion to be drawn from the observation of a man in *delirium tremens*, that bodily conditions determine mental output, is amply corroborated wherever science investigates the sources of human conduct. We find, for instance, that the history of mind goes hand in hand with the history of the brain, which in turn corresponds with cranial development, and so on. If we could summon back, as Keith has said, all the extinct kinds of man and ape which have flourished on the earth, and marshal them in serried ranks according to the respective periods at which they lived, we should have before our eyes an unbroken succession of forms, linking the brain of the lowest ape to that of the highest man. Nowhere should we discern an unbridgeable gap as though some extraneous power had here infused a soul, or at least some faculty which could not have emerged from the conditions then existent. There is no evidence of sudden inoculation at any point. The differences are due solely to advances in complexity. As the brain increases in complexity it turns out a more complex product (mind). Students of ape psychology, like Kellog, Köhler and Pavlov, report that there is no capability in man that could not have grown by evolution from those of the apes. At no step is the order of a nature arrested and a non-natural soul implanted. Not only can science detect no such break, but the late Sir E. R. Lankester said science is in a position to say there has not been any such break. This is admitted by Bishop Barnes, who remarks, "We may speculate that primitive man differed from his ape-like progenitors by slight changes in brain and vocal chords. Increased brain power enabled him to use his greater power of speech; but in return the faculty of speech made possible that development of intelligence which separates a Newton from an ape" (*Scientific Theory and Religion*). Barnes's book displays perhaps the most intelligent understanding of science that has come from a churchman, despite a rather lop-sided treatment of mathematics.

If we go lower down the scale of life we see the same. In very low organic life, where distinct senses have evolved, the brain is nothing more than a meagrely scattered set of receiving centres. These come closer together in the fish, closer still in the reptile, and still closer in the bird. A detailed attempt to trace the evolution of mind has been made, for example, in Mr. J. McCabe's book of that title.

The usual rejoinder that the very fact of advances in brain complexity is indicative of some extra-natural purpose, either in the organism or in the mind of a purposeful Evolver such as God, can be met on Darwinian lines. Intelligence is a useful factor; it has survival value in a perfectly materialistic sense. Hence those creatures which got the lucky breaks, (advantageous variations and mutations) would be able to carve out a survival path for their successors.

Corroboration of the body-mind relationship is again to be found in embryology. The embryo has first no nervous system, no sense organs, no occupation but growth. It has far less claim to independent life than a plant. At birth we see a fair range of complete behaviour, but there is still far less claim to rationality than a dog or ape.

We may say the babe acts according to instinct. But what is instinct? Is it something for the harassed religionist to ascribe to "soul"? If we use the term instinct vaguely, without any definite connotation, we

¹ Personality.

might as well, à la Stuart Chase, call it "blab." What causes instinct? God? The Life Force? But these are not observed forces. We cannot extract a piece of God or Life Force and examine it. But we can not only locate and extract hormones and enzymes, but can already manufacture some in the laboratory, and it is these that do the work of instinct (another factor being the form of behaviour, known as a tropism). Organic chemistry studies their nature, physiology their function. As McCabe has remarked, the expectant mother who feels her breasts develop and her emotions grow tender is inspired by hormones from her ovaries.

Insect life is a most suitable medium for examining tropisms, and Hogben (*Nature of Living Matter*) has reported the making of a mechanical model to imitate the behaviour of the moth towards the light. Bertrand Russell once quoted the conditioned reflex as something distinctive of living organism. Yet in 1937 there was the report of the construction of what was termed by the two experimenters a "mechanical parallel to the conditioned reflex."

By tropism we mean physico-chemical sensitiveness to the influence of gravitation and light. The growth of a plant and its grip on the soil can be accounted for in terms of tropisms. For a human instance we have the statocysts (balancing organs) in the human head. Hogben has shown how the proprioceptors in the muscles (studied by Sir C. Sherrington) and the labyrinthine organ, a construction of the internal ear, account for our appreciation of space and time, so that Kant's treatment of those categories, "the faculties of pure a priori cognition," becomes "the blab of pure blab blab."

G. H. TAYLOR

A Sturdy Statesman

In one of the monthly magazines recently there was an article giving some extracts from the Parliamentary Records of the Early Victorian Age. One of these I was familiar with, having read the incident many long years ago in Chas. Bray's *Anthropology*, a work published in 1871. I reproduce it here for the benefit of those readers who may not have come across it in their studies, as an instance of one statesman at least, who knew his own mind, and was not afraid to say what he thought. The extract is taken from Bray's work:—

Lord Palmerston, in 1854, was applied to by the Presbytery of Edinburgh, to be informed whether he intended, as Home Secretary, to advise the Queen to order a day of fasting, humiliation, and prayer, to be held in Scotland, in order to supplicate Divine Providence to stay the cholera which then afflicted the people. His reply is memorable as a step in high quarters towards the initiation of the New Reformation. He said:

"The Maker of the universe has established certain laws of nature for the planet in which we live, and the weal or woe of mankind depends upon the observance or the neglect of those laws. One of those laws connects health with the absence of those gaseous exhalations which proceed from over-crowded human beings or from decomposing substances, whether animal or vegetable; and those same laws render sickness the almost inevitable consequence of exposure to those noxious influences. But it has at the same time pleased Providence to place it within the power of man to make such arrangements as will prevent or disperse such exhalations, so as to render them harmless; and it is the duty of man to attend to those laws of nature, and to exert the faculties which Providence has thus given to man for his own welfare.

"The recent visitation of cholera, which has for the moment been mercifully checked, is an awful warning to the people of this realm that they have too much neglected their duty in this respect, and that those persons with whom it rested to purify towns and cities, and to prevent or remove the causes of disease, have not been sufficiently active in regard to such matters. Lord Palmerston would, therefore, suggest that the best course the people of this country can pursue to deserve that the further progress of the cholera should be stayed, will be to employ the interval that will elapse between the present time and the beginning of next spring, in planning and executing measures by which those portions of the towns and cities which are inhabited by the poorer classes, and which, from the nature of things, must most need purification and improvement, may be freed from those causes and sources of contagion, which, if allowed to remain, will infallibly breed pestilence, and be fruitful in death, in spite of all the prayers and fastings of a united but inactive nation. When man has done his utmost for his own safety, then is the time to invoke the blessings of Heaven to give effect to his execution."

Lord Palmerston was Prime Minister for some ten years, except for a short period when he acted as Home Secretary; and it was during this interval that the reply was sent to the Presbytery of Edinburgh. It must have been a bitter pill for that august body to swallow, the majority of the Assembly being scandalized at being told such plain truths by the Home Secretary. We are told, however, that the civic rulers of Edinburgh acted upon his lordship's advice "with very beneficial effect."

It is a little difficult from the history books to get a consistent view of Lord Palmerston's character and policy, but that he had grit and courage is evident in all his political actions. When he first took over the Premiership, the Crimean War had been dragging on for some two years, with a terrible wastage of human life and expenditure. It was not long before Palmerston, pursuing his usual vigorous policy, compelled the Russians to sue for peace. There is one opinion of him, however, which may be quoted for what it is worth. The tribute(?) is that of no less a person than Bishop Wilberforce:—

That wretched Pam seems to me to get worse and worse. There is not a particle of veracity or noble feeling that I have ever been able to trace in him. He manages the House of Commons by debauching it, making all parties laugh at one another; the Tories at the Liberals, by defeating Liberal measures; the Liberals at the Tories by their consciousness of getting everything that is to be got in Church and State, and all at one another, by substituting low ribaldry for argument, bad jokes for principles, and an openly avowed vainglorious imbecile vanity to guard himself from the attacks of all thoughtful men.

But in reading this diatribe one has to remember that Lord Palmerston had just perpetrated one of his "bad jokes" upon the worthy Bishop, by refusing to present him with the Archbishopric of York; one of the richest Sees in the kingdom.

There can be little question that the Premiership of Britain has shown a gradual deterioration in moral fibre, and requisite strength and courage, since the days of Palmerston. Note that Gladstone, his successor, was the author of, *The Impregnable Rock of Holy Scripture*, which from an intellectual point of view would not have shed any lustre on a country curate and showed a reprehensible and inexcusable lack of modern knowledge. And the sight of two British statesmen calling to see the Pope of Rome, is sufficient to make the ghost of Palmerston turn in its grave.

JOSEPH BRUCE

Flashbacks on Tyneside

(Continued from page 140)

DAVID R. BOW (of Pelaw) was the saviour of our Thursday night discussions in their early stages. He had the knack of making a useful contribution on almost every occasion, his matter always being apposite and his manner fluent and agreeable. A couple of "regulars" of the calibre of Bow almost assures the success of this type of meeting. Round them as the nucleus, with ordinary fortune others will gather; all that is needed is patience and persistence. Alfred Howson again gave us valuable help. At one time, under his inspiration, we thrashed out (at alternate gatherings) the question of Free Trade or Protection when it was the burning political issue of the hour. I think it would be then that the Newcastle Rationalist Debating Society reached its apex in numbers and reputation. Howson was a prominent politician and educationalist in Newcastle, and it was through his influence that many of the speakers appeared before us. One of these was Henry Richardson, the librarian of the Literary and Philosophical Society of that time. Well do I remember when the time came for my leaving Newcastle Henry Richardson informing me that it was within his prerogative to send books to people whom he had reason to think would make good use of their loan, a privilege I made use of occasionally in the spirit, I hope, in which it was offered.

In retrospect one can see that the habit of subjecting oneself to the constant clash of opinion that these meetings afford is a very valuable one. Not only is this so in the obvious ways of acquiring the habit of listening good-humouredly to all kinds of opinion that one has little sympathy with, and in imbibing the lesson that a good case gains much by restraint in its presentation; in time other facts become noticeable. One is that it is rather surprising how many questions get narrowed down ultimately to some point which depends greatly upon individual judgment. It is just at this point where a dispassionate estimate of the facts is necessary that many people consider a heaven-sent opportunity to give the free-est rein to their prejudices and prepossessions. It is not enough to have your facts (thingumbobs), one must have the quality of mind to evaluate them before one can come to a useful generalization. Another fact will be apparent to most good listeners. It is the tendency of the generality of controversialists when on their own pet subject not to be content with its presentation, but to lose a sense of perspective and convince themselves not only that their cause is the most useful of all causes to propagate (a permissible view-point), but to hold in varying degrees of contempt those who espouse any other. Yet each person surely should be allowed to assess his own aptitudes and to choose his own particular niche of effectiveness. He may be able to put his own little slab into position in the mosaic of opinion, and it may be the one place where it adds beauty and substantiality to the pattern. The transference of such a person's activities to any other sphere of usefulness may be a minor calamity.

It was through our weekly meetings that we "acquired" Joseph Bryce. He and I took much more than a perfunctory interest in the case of a spiritualistic medium, who had gone through the familiar experience of being "seized" whilst masquerading as a spirit. How that person was "investigated" by a Committee after this ordeal and became "news" to the two Newcastle papers for several weeks, forms quite an interesting story. It was written up by me in the *Freethinker* at that time. If I remember rightly Bryce never found anything

nutritious in Spiritualism, although he was instrumental in forming a Psychical Research Society in Newcastle. I remember I spoke before that body on *The Duty and Value of Scepticism*, and the Newcastle *Daily Chronicle* giving me, the next morning, the measure usually accorded to a *grand seigneur*—greatly to my surprise. On a second visit to the same organization I remember stating that Alfred Russel Wallace had been so impressed with J. N. Maskelyne's feats of legerdemain, that he had written a letter accusing that gentleman of being consciously a spiritualistic medium, and prostituting his great gifts for "filthy lucre." I was there and then accused of being mistaken—as a matter of fact (why conceal it?) I was called a *liar*. I promised to put in an appearance at the next meeting of the Society with the volume of either the *Proceedings* or *Journal* of the Psychical Research Society containing the letter. I kept my promise, but the interruptor, a well-known figure in local Spiritualism, did not have any further curiosity on the point.

It was just at that time that Joseph Bryce, whom I came to know closely, added to his many good habits that of sending occasional articles to the *Freethinker*, a habit he has never lost. After eight years' programmes (eight months to the year), I left Newcastle on my travels, and A. L. Coates, then, if I recollect rightly, became Secretary of the Debating Society, to be followed by H. B. Dodds.

The name of Alfred Howson, it will have been noticed, has appeared in connexion with almost every activity I have mentioned. There is no person for whom, at the time, I had a higher regard, and, even at this time of day, no person who so constantly recurs to my thoughts. He interested himself in every movement which he thought of major social significance, and if he were really in love with the objectives he would work unceasingly for their furtherance. But he was never in the lime-light. He was a very prominent political personage, but his work was behind the scenes. If a good cause needed helping at a meeting of the National Liberal Federation, such as Peace or Secular Education, he would see to it being done, even if he were a solitary figure or one of two or three figures—that made no difference to him. He supported regularly the funds of the Newcastle Branch of the National Secular Society; he was in at the birth of the Newcastle Sunday Lecture Society; he did an enormous body of work in connexion with the partition of the Durham College of Science, working not for a little while but for month after month till *midnight*, during, in fact, the few hours which his business activities left remaining to him. And no one knew of all Howson's activities. I remember there was a fund raised for the dependants of the *Cobra* Disaster—a very large amount was raised—and being told years afterwards that Alfred Howson had been responsible not only for its inception and skilful management, but for the vast amount of clerical work it entailed. And this was at a time when I had been seeing him with great frequency, and without the slightest suspicion of this phase of his manifold activities.

Howson attached himself rather closely to myself and also to Thomas Dixon, *filis*—I can see now that he was very deliberate in including the younger generation in his purview. Dixon I know to have an equal regard for his memory. We are both conscious of his guidance on vital matters, and nothing could ever lessen our feeling of respect and gratitude.

How well I remember Howson telling me, when I had informed him that my weekly reading was the *Freethinker* and the *Nation* (to my mind the best political organ I have ever encountered), that it would be better if I could include the *Spectator* and the *Saturday Review* in my weekly reading, even if it

meant a regular visit to the Free Library. He said one must always be on one's guard against getting lopsided. (Perhaps it is better to state here that the *Saturday Review* of those days bore no resemblance to the grotesque production of a more recent era). I think that particular type of advice has been given me all too rarely. It was extremely characteristic of Howson. Another incident is worthy of relation. It is a grim story, but illuminating. At one of the meetings of the Sunday Lecture Society, Dr. Spence Watson from the chair referred to the distressing circumstance that Howson was suffering at the moment from a severe attack of fever. "And [he went on, in painful silence] like everything Alfred Howson ever does, he is doing it well." Fortunately, Howson made also a good recovery.

And one day Howson came to me and told me casually—most of the things he said appeared to be casual—You will be interested to hear that our next candidate for Tyneside is John Mackinnon Robertson.

T. H. ELSTON

(To be continued)

A Note on Sweden

In *The Norse-Folk*, a book by Charles Loring Brace, published in New York in 1857, the author gives an interesting account of the religious life prevailing in Sweden in the early fifties. He shows that the Protestant clergy, while not officially recognized as the real rulers of the country, nevertheless exercised a very powerful influence over the lives of the inhabitants, the whole school system being under their control. They were represented in Parliament by the House of Clergy, which in 1850 numbered 64 members, who had been elected by a mere 2,773 votes. It was due to their influence that the State enacted that all who wished to be citizens should pass through the outward rites of the church. Everyone was compelled to be baptized, and had to be instructed and approved by the Pastor, and confirmed in Christian doctrine. If anyone could not produce evidence of this instruction he was presumed not to be worthy of the privilege of citizenship.

With this clerical assembly the legislation was such as might be expected. There were laws, enforced by punishments, in the legal code against blasphemy, against the mocking of God's word, and the sacraments, the falling away from pure evangelical doctrine, the spreading of erroneous doctrines, violating the Sabbath, and despising the sermon and the Holy Communion. In 1853 an artist was condemned to six months' banishment, because he had renounced the Lutheran faith. No Jews were allowed either to vote or sit in Parliament, and, before 1854, they were permitted to reside only in a few towns in the whole kingdom. Outwardly the people were very religious, large congregations attending the churches regularly, all apparently so devout that they never neglected bowing reverently at the name of Jesus.

It is perhaps not surprising that the conditions that matter were deplorable. The people were poor, ignorant, steeped to their lips in superstition, and much addicted to licentiousness and drunkenness. The proportion of illegitimate to legitimate children in Stockholm in 1850 was 1 to 2.25, and in the other cities 1 to 5.03.

I have just seen a review of *Democratic Sweden*, a recent survey of that country's political and economic system by the New Fabian Research Bureau. From the following extract it would appear that conditions have vastly improved since *The Norse-Folk* was written:—

If the greatness of a country is to be measured by the size of its Army, Navy, and Air Force, then Sweden is certainly not a great country at the present time. But if other and truer standards of evaluation be adopted, then Sweden must be regarded among the foremost States in the world. Instead of squandering their resources and energies on armaments in an effort to be ultimately in a position to plunder their weaker neighbours or to strive for world domination, the Swedes are taking a deeper view on life and its problems and are endeavouring to raise the standard of living of their own people. The physical and mental advancement of the people is the main preoccupation of the Government, and the results are very gratifying. It is now generally admitted that Sweden, along with the other Scandinavian States, has been marching in the van of progress. In the science of government and in social legislation, in learning and in education, in art and in science, in welfare work, and in the administration of the law Sweden has long outstripped many of the larger and more powerful States of the world.

It may be that the clergy, with their customary effrontery, claim the lion's share in bringing about this improvement, but these improvements coincide, as in other countries, with the decline of clerical influence; and this is all important.

PRO REASON

The South London Branch N.S.S.

(FOUNDED 1888)

FIFTY years of continuous propaganda is the proud record of the South London Branch, N.S.S., founded in 1888, as the Camberwell Branch, and known as the South London Branch since 1916.

Glancing through the old records of the Branch one is struck by the number of names of now famous men and women. The following taken at random are a few who helped the Branch in its early days (particularly in Trockwell Park, Herne Hill, which seems to have been the main "Pitch" throughout the history of the Branch): Mr. Harry Snell, Dr. Allinson, Mr. A. B. Moss, Mr. G. W. Foote, and Mr. Chapman Cohen. I am always suspicious when I hear of "The good old days," but what Branch Treasurer nowadays receives collections of £5 to £6, which were not uncommon in those days?

It is said that Mr. Hyatt rode on horseback to meetings where he was due to speak. The Treasurer for the year 1900 was uncommonly conscientious; we find an entry "To Mr. C. Cohen, 1½d. for lemonade." In later days the name of F. P. Corrigan appears frequently, he has been President of the Branch twelve years, and at his lectures appears to be never happier than when a Roman Catholic is persuaded to heckle him. There is, too, the late Secretary, A. Heath, to whom we owe our gratitude for raising the Branch from the "slough of despond" into which it fell in the post-war era, and making the Branch a force to be reckoned with in South London affairs.

An innovation (so far as can be ascertained) was made in 1928, when a local newspaper published reports of our indoor meetings. True, the representatives of the various movements speaking at the meetings got as much advertisement from the lectures as did the Secularist speakers, but at least the Branch can claim to be well known in South London. On many occasions spirited correspondence followed the publication of the reports of free-thought lectures, thus reaching a much wider audience than is possible at an indoor meeting. 1938 marked a new level when the third local newspaper published reports of the meetings. The "message" thus reaches a considerable number of people, and even the Police are beginning to realize that the N.S.S. has nothing to do with a "Sex-ular Society," and no longer have to ask how to spell "Secular."

In 1938—our "Jubilee" Year—84 meetings were held, spread over the districts of Herne Hill, Brixton, Clapham, and the Alexandra Hotel, and at the forthcoming Annual General Meeting, to be held last Sunday in March, we

would like to see a full muster of members—past and present. Let us endeavour to make this, our Jubilee Year, the most successful in the history of the Branch. Although we appreciate the members who promptly pay their subscriptions and are always ready to help financially when asked, there are others who perhaps have more spare time than the present officials who need and would be grateful for a little more help. It has been said that "It is easier to die for the cause, than to be inconvenienced," yet we should bear in mind Chapman Cohen's words, "It is largely due to the humble worker in the movement, the park Chairman, the platform carrier, the seller of the *Freethinker*, who make it possible for the movement to carry on."

The Branch is active in Municipal Affairs. The questions of Secular Education and the Blasphemy Laws are continually kept to the fore, particularly at election times. The indoor meetings attract quite a few councillors who share our views, and must take the Freethought case into consideration in their decisions.

J. SEIBERT,

Hon Sec. (South London Branch)

Correspondence

STATE SUPPORT FOR DENOMINATIONALISM IN SCHOOLS

TO THE EDITOR OF THE "FREETHINKER"

SIR,—I would like to draw the attention of your readers to certain examples of the attitudes of the Board of Education to the provision of denominational elementary schools.

Last year, in the North of England, two appeals were sent to the Board of Education against proposals to provide new Roman Catholic elementary schools. The appeals were from ratepayers in accordance with the statutory requirements of the Education Act of 1921.

In the instance of South Shields the signatories' case against the proposed new Roman Catholic school was that it was unnecessary as there were already over 300 surplus seats in the Roman Catholic elementary schools of the Borough. And also that a new elementary school was being built by the Local Authority itself, in the actual area where the Roman Catholic Church was asking for still another one.

In Sunderland the appeal was against the provision of a new Roman Catholic school for 300 children, when there were already 610 vacant seats in the schools in the vicinity. In addition there were 200 vacancies in the Roman Catholic schools of the Borough.

In both instances the appeals asked for a public inquiry before any decision was reached.

In both instances the Board refused the public inquiry and rejected the appeals.

Another appeal from a representative body of ratepayers has just been dispatched to the Board of Education in connexion with a proposed new Roman Catholic school in the Houghton-le-Spring district of the County of Durham. Here, in the area concerned, 5,000 seats are vacant in the schools. In addition the Roman Catholic Church has in its own schools in Houghton-le-Spring itself 120 seats for which it has not scholars.

An examination of the facts of these three cases shows that the Roman Catholic section of the community had in each of the areas already its own schools, maintained by public funds, more than adequate for its needs. Also that the elementary schools, under the direct control of the Local Authorities were more than sufficient for the present or potential needs of the respective districts.

If one recalls the decision of the Board of Education in the Liverpool case, and adds to it the examples of Sunderland and South Shields, perhaps it is pertinent to ask whether it is the function of the Board of Education to direct and assist in the education of the children of the nation, or whether this aim is subsidiary to its real function of providing the Roman Catholic Church with elementary schools?

JACK WALTON

Obituary

JACK LANE

THE death of Jack Lane, which took place on February 24, in his 75th year, will come as a shock to the wide circle of friends who knew and admired him. His association with the Freethought, Socialist, and Trades' Union Movements, chiefly in West Ham, goes back many years, during which his sterling character impressed all who had any dealings with him. On retirement he took up residence at Ruislip, where his garden gave him an added interest, but he never left the atmosphere of the fight for freedom in all departments of social life. In later years he often expressed his opinion that the Freethought movement was the most important of those in which he had served. He was a member of the N.S.S., a regular reader of the *Freethinker*, and followed the fortunes of both with a keen desire for their progress. The cremation took place at Golders Green Crematorium, on Wednesday, March 1, where before an assembly of relatives and friends a Secular Service was conducted, and we gave an affectionate farewell to a valiant soldier in the army of human liberation.—R.H.R.

SUNDAY LECTURE NOTICES Etc

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

LONDON

OUTDOOR

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, Tuson and Mrs. N. Buxton. Weather permitting.

INDOOR

NORTH LONDON BRANCH (The Cricketers' Arms, Inverness Street, Camden Town, N.W.1) : 7.30, Ben Bradley (Colonial Information Bulletin)—"Peace and the Colonial Question, with special reference to India."

SOUTH LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (Alexandra Hotel, South Side, Clapham Common, S.W.4) : 7.30, Mr. G. H. Clark (Peace Pledge Union)—"Freethought and Pacifism."

SOUTH PLACE ETHICAL SOCIETY (Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, W.C.1) : 11.0, Professor T. H. Pear, M.A., B.Sc.—"The Social Psychology of Everyday Life."

WEST LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (The Laurie Arms, Crawford Place, Edgware Road, W.) : 7.30, Mr. R. H. Rosetti—"The Churches and the Threat to Civilization."

COUNTRY

INDOOR

BIRKENHEAD (Wirral) BRANCH N.S.S. (Beechcroft Settlement, Whetstone Lane) : 7.0, Mr. W. A. Atkinson (Manchester)—"The Eternal Struggle."

BIRMINGHAM BRANCH N.S.S. (Bristol Street Schools) : 7.0, Mr. Tom Millington—"The Aristocracy of Intellect."

BLACKBURN BRANCH N.S.S. (Jubilee Assembly Hall, Market Hall, Blackburn) : 7.30, Monday, March 13, Mr. J. Clayton. A Lecture. Literature for sale.

BRADFORD BRANCH N.S.S. (Laycock's Forum, Kirkgate) : 7.15, Debate—"That the Cinema has surpassed the Stage." Mr. Hicks. Pro. Mr. Corina, Con.

BLYTH (Poultain) : 7.0, Monday, March 13, Mr. J. T. Brighton.

EDINBURGH BRANCH N.S.S. (Free Gardeners' Hall, Picardy Place, Edinburgh) : 7.0, Mr. Hsin-Ti-Wang—"China Awakening."

LIVERPOOL BRANCH N.S.S. (Transport Hall, Islington, Liverpool, entrance in Christian Street) : 7.0, Mr. O. T. Owen (Liverpool)—"The Determination of Sex."

LEICESTER SECULAR SOCIETY (Secular Hall, Humberstone Gate) : 6.30, Mr. Joseph McCabe—"Some Bad Popes."

MIDDLESBROUGH (Labour Hall, Newport Road) : 7.0, Wednesday, March 15, Mr. J. T. Brighton.

(Continued on page 175)

ESSAYS IN FREETHINKING

FOURTH SERIES

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(Continued from page 174)

GLASGOW SECULAR SOCIETY (East Hall, McLellan Galleries, Sauchiehall Street, Glasgow): 7.0, Miss Hilda Pocock, Eugenic Society, London—"Heredity and Citizenship."

NORTH SHIELDS (Lord Nelson): 7.0, Tuesday, March 14, Mr. J. T. Brighton—"Spain, England and the Church."

NORTH WEST FEDERATION OF N.S.S. BRANCHES (King's Café, 41-65 Oxford Road, Manchester, near All Saints Church): Spring Conference. Business Session from 2.0 until 5.0. Tea will be provided at a cost of 1s. or 1s. 6d. per head in the Café. To be followed by a Demonstration of Freethought speeches at 7.0.

STOCKTON (Jubilee Hall): 7.0, Sunday, March 12, Mr. J. T. Brighton.

NATIONAL SECULAR SOCIETY.

President - - - CHAPMAN COHEN.

General Secretary - R. H. ROSETTI.

68 FARRINGDON STREET, LONDON, E.C. 4

PRINCIPLES AND OBJECTS.

SECULARISM affirms that this life is the only one of which we have any knowledge, and that human effort should be wholly directed towards its improvement: it asserts that supernaturalism is based upon ignorance, and assails it as the historic enemy of progress.

Secularism affirms that progress is only possible on the basis of equal freedom of speech and publication; it affirms that liberty belongs of right to all, and that the free criticism of institutions and ideas is essential to a civilized State.

Secularism affirms that morality is social in origin and application, and aims at promoting the happiness and well-being of mankind.

Secularism demands the complete secularization of the State, and the abolition of all privileges granted to religious organizations it seeks to spread education, to promote the fraternity of peoples as a means of advancing international peace, to further common cultural interests, and to develop the freedom and dignity of man.

The Funds of the National Secular Society are legally secured by Trust Deed. The Trustees are the President, Treasurer and Secretary of the Society, with two others appointed by the Executive. There is thus the fullest possible guarantee for the proper expenditure of whatever funds the Society has at its disposal.

The following is a quite sufficient form for anyone who desires to benefit the Society by legacy:—

I hereby give and bequeath (*Here insert particulars of legacy*), free of all death duties, to the Trustees of the National Secular Society for all or any of the purposes of the Trust Deed of the said Society.

THE National Secular Society was founded in 1865 by Charles Bradlaugh. He remained its President until shortly before his death, and the N.S.S. has never ceased to live up to the tradition of "Thorough" which Bradlaugh by his life so brilliantly exemplified.

The N.S.S. is the only organization of militant Freethinkers in this country. It aims to bring into one body all those who believe the religions of the world to be based on error, and to be a source of injury to the best interests of Society. It claims that all political laws and moral rules should be based upon purely secular considerations. It is without sectarian aims or party affiliations.

If you appreciate the work that Bradlaugh did, if you admire the ideals for which he lived and fought, it is not enough merely to admire. The need for action and combined effort is as great to-day as ever. You can best help by filling up the attached form and joining the Society founded by Bradlaugh.

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Any person is eligible as a member on signing the following declaration:—

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