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EDITED by CHAPMAN COHEN

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

Views and Opinions

Secular Education

DR. F. H. HAYWARD is a retired L.C.C. Inspector of Schools. I know little about this gentleman, but judging from a four-page leaflet written by him, and which I saw for the first time a few days ago, I fancy that his opinion on education is not of great moment. His leaflet is entitled, *Schools, Religion, Democracy*, and I am concerned now with one paragraph, although there is some phrasing in the leaflet that leads one to imagine that Dr. Hayward has no particular objection to religion being taught in the schools, provided it is the kind of religion in which he believes. Concerning the Cowper Temple compromise of 1870, he says it has produced its natural result in a "paganized nation." An Inspector of Schools should have known better. "Pagan" and "Paganized" are words much in the mouths of Christians of all classes, and usually stand for much that is bad, low, degraded, etc. That, by the way, should be suggestive to those who are bitten with the stupid notion that real Christianity, by which they should mean original Christianity, rests upon very high ethical conceptions. "Pagan" originally meant nothing more than a villager, and it was left for the Christian Church to turn it into a synonym for all that is wicked and vile, and this for no other reason than that anything opposed to the Christian mythology was of necessity *religiously* and morally vile. As a professed educationalist Dr. Hayward should know better than to slip into such unwarranted and quite misleading language.

I agree that the Cowper Temple clause was bad, and that it was a step in the wrong direction. But that was not the fault of Secularists, against whom Dr. Hayward appears to have a peculiar prejudice. When the complete break-down of the Churches as educational institutions forced the Government to take action (we were then behind many of the European States) the Nonconformists stood for the policy of Secular Education. They, and others, fully expected that if reli-

gion was taught in State-schools it would be the State-religion. It was only when it looked as though religion of every kind would be banished from the State schools that an arrangement was made which permitted a religious teaching to be established, provided all Christians agreed on it. Non-Christians did not matter, although they were permitted to withdraw children from religious instruction. As Sir William Harcourt said during the debate on the Bill, the Government compensated a man for making him pay for a dinner he didn't want, by not compelling him to eat a dinner he didn't like.

Dr. Hayward says there was a good excuse for the compromise in 1870. He should look up his history. There was less excuse then than at any time. Nonconformists as a body, non-Christians as a body, many Churchmen even, were prepared for a policy of secular education in the schools. Had they remained firm, the strong likelihood is that the schools would have been wholly secular in character. Nonconformists sold the pass, and denied the first principle of their position in doing so.

* * *

An Old Cry

What I am really concerned with in Dr. Hayward's leaflet is his criticism of "Secularists and Rationalists" by which grouping he includes, apparently, all those who adopt the policy of "secular education." He says they have "absolutely nothing to show for themselves in the schools. . . . They can simply chant 'secular education.'" This reminds one of the silly Christian chant, "What will you put in its place?" a form of criticism with which one may presume Dr. Hayward has considerable sympathy. I take it that Dr. Hayward does not mean that Freethinkers, as Freethinkers, have contributed nothing to an understanding of education, and the development of educational methods; that would be too monstrous a statement for anyone to make. His complaint is that the advocates of the policy of Secular Education do not mix their advocacy of "Secular Education" with a programme of educational instruction in general. And that is as justifiable as to complain of their silence concerning the relative value of bombing planes and battleships in times of war. Dr. Hayward says to these benighted Secularists that he has no use for them, "You don't even know enough psychology to realize that men's motives are rooted in emotion not reason, or enough world-history to realize that evolution has left behind a heritage of animalism which has to be met by moral and other education." After that outburst one feels inclined to congratulate the L.C.C. that Dr. Hayward is no longer one of its Inspectors. Even Cardinal Hinsley could not easily pack more ill-temper and either deliberate misstatement, or sheer ignorance, in a few words than is done here. After that outburst it is rather pleasing to learn that Dr. Hayward has no use for Secularists. He would prob-

ably wish to use them only to misuse a policy of secular education.

* * *

What is Secular Policy ?

What is it that Dr. Hayward understands by the policy of Secular Education? Apparently he believes that it should embrace a system of education as a whole, or at least some definite scheme of moral instruction, or civic instruction. Any of these schemes may be good or they may be bad, and quite candidly I have some very strong opinions concerning most that I have come across. Many of them seem to aim at the exploitation of children in the interests of this or that theory, and I have a very strong objection to helping load a child's mind with set ideas on moral subjects as well as upon religious ones. In fact a great many of those who are advocating this or that scheme of moral instruction appear to me to be anxious to provide a substitute for religion, whereas it is not a substitute for religion that is required but its elimination. One doesn't run round to find a substitute for a carbuncle; it is enough to restore the body to a healthy condition. If we are going to bring children up with convictions concerning the set and immovable value of a particular scheme of ethics, or drown their intelligence, and weaken their capacity for criticism by floods of "celebrational" emotion, it will not be difficult to lead multitudes back to a perfect orgie of emotional animalism. Hitler has discovered that, although I do not think he owes anything to Dr. Hayward for his methods. It is a very old practice of the Church. On this aspect of education Dr. Hayward is too old-fashioned. He is at least seventy years behind the times.

But this, by the way. What is the policy of Secular Education? As an ex-Inspector Dr. Hayward should be well aware that it means no more than confining the education given in State-supported schools to that kind of instruction which is already enforced during the whole of the school time, with the exception of the brief space of time at the beginning and end of the educational day. As an Inspector it was part of Dr. Hayward's duty to see that all but less than an hour a day should be devoted to Secular subjects. The Code does not dictate exactly what kind of lesson shall be given, it confines itself to saying that during the times specified only the kinds of lesson that are classified as "secular" shall be given. And even with regard to the religious lesson it does not say what kind shall be; it says it shall not be of a kind that is peculiar to a particular sect. Dr. Hayward says he prefers the Churches to the Secularists because they "do make some attempt to give moral guidance." Can it be possible that an ex-Inspector of Education is actually labouring under the completely out-of-date idea that "moral guidance" consists in the chanting of moral commandments? If that is the case, and I will not assume it to be the case unless I have his plain confession to that end, then the L.C.C. is again to be congratulated on his retirement.

* * *

A Plain Policy

But what I wish to make clear is the indisputable fact that when the Secularist asks for education to be restricted, in State-supported schools, to such subjects as are described as "secular," they are concerned, so far as that portion of their propaganda goes, with a specific issue, and the importance of which is shown by the bitter religious opposition to it, and to the fact that many teachers, and even Inspectors, who are in favour of that policy hesitate publicly to avow their opinion for fear of reprisals. There are probably a larger number of conflicting opinions regarding methods of education, and subjects that should be

taught than there is among those who believe in religious education. Every Freethinker works as he will in this direction, although he does not raise his party flag as a rallying point. The object of those who agitate for a policy of secular education is to restrict the State to its proper domain, and to leave those who wish for religious instruction to give it in their own way, in their own time, and at their own expense. They are cleansing the ground, not bringing home the harvest.

Which sets one wondering whether Dr. Hayward does or does not believe that the State should restrict its patronage and its activities to purely secular activities. Of course, if he does not believe in this policy he has a right to speak as he does, and to insist upon the untruthful weariness of a newly-fledged curate that the advocates of Secular Education have nothing to show for their work, and they "will get no attention at all from educationalists." A very apt retort to this is that professional educationalists have often enough had to be instructed by mere philosophers, sociologists and psychologists, without whom they would have made a very poor show indeed. I am afraid that our Inspector, although retired, still retains the not too wide views of the Victorian official.

Perhaps one day it may dawn upon the mind of Dr. Hayward that the fight for the secularization of social life is a very important one, and also that complete victory means the exclusion of religious considerations from the control of political and social life. He may also awaken to the significance of the fact that the real interest of the clergy, as clergy, is to instil into the minds of children specific religious doctrines which have no educational value whatever—unless we enlarge the word "education" to cover the instruction from that received in a thieves kitchen onward. Notoriously, the clergy have sought to restrict the quality of education that is given to the people, and in the interest of their own sectarian schools. With these and other things in mind it would seem anything but a matter of small importance for men and women to band together with the intention of keeping the State to its legitimate task. Dr. Hayward is entitled to believe that one can disarm the Churches by feeding the clergy on cream tarts, but with greater experience and better judgment he may discover that foolish though the stated beliefs of the clergy may be, the parsonry are not foolish where their own interests are concerned. They may even be acute enough to encourage Dr. Hayward to misrepresent the secular education policy, and to try to move religion from the schools with a series of moral lessons that were—substantially—given by the churches generations before Dr. Hayward was. I commend him to a remark by Herbert Spencer that as preaching from the pulpit has not made people better, let us try preaching morality from the platform. But perhaps Dr. Hayward does not rate Herbert Spencer very highly, and might say to him as he says to the advocates of Secular Education, "I have no use for you." That would indeed be severe, although Spencer might counter by dwelling upon the fact that the position of a school inspector does not carry with it a guarantee that he is an authority on either education, as such, or on a question of social justice.

CHAPMAN COHEN

Doubt is the beginning of wisdom. It means caution, independence, honesty and veracity. Faith means negligence, serfdom, insincerity and deception. The man that never doubts, never thinks. He is like a straw in the wind, or a waif on the sea. He is one of the helpless, docile, unquestioning millions who keep the world in a state of stagnation, and serve as a fulcrum for the lever of despotism.—G. W. Foote.

Robbing Peter to pay Paul

Front seldom tell truth. To know occupants of house, always look in backyard.—*Charlie Chan.*

A SIDELIGHT on the commercial activity of the numerous Christian Churches has been shown by the vigorous protest of the Croydon Chamber of Commerce against the holding of church bazaars and sales which, they allege, compete unfairly with local tradesmen. As the letter of protest was addressed to no less than sixty-three local churches and chapels, it will be seen that there was considerable cause for complaint, more especially as the asking of traders for contributions in kind is neither more nor less than a very polite form of blackmail.

The evil is actually spreading. The extent to which ordinary commercial means have displaced voluntary contributions so long in vogue in connexion with Christian congregations is very significant. The old-fashioned method of collecting money during divine service is no longer considered adequate. Even the amateur sale of work and jumble sale are being superseded by more-up-to-date and efficient substitutes. Bazaars, conducted on a large scale, and on a strictly business basis, are held for the reduction of church debts and the erection of church halls and costly places of worship. Missionary and other propagandist societies owe a large proportion of their considerable incomes to sales of goods, so-called exhibitions, and many thousands of pounds are raised annually in this manner for religious interests. At a bazaar held at Lincoln over £1,000 was realized, and a week's missionary exhibition at a seaside town brought £200 clear profit. A sale of work in South London produced £250, and a dozen bazaars realized over £2,000.

Imagine the many similar bazaars and sales held annually throughout the country for the various religious organizations, Bible and Missionary Societies. Add to these the 13,000 parish churches, and 10,000 chapels, mission-halls, and tin tabernacles, all of which now look to bazaars, exhibitions, sales, cinema shows and dramatic performances, as an easy and legitimate means of raising money, and we begin to realize the extent of the practice. The most flagrant example is seen in the vast trading organization of the Salvation Army, which sells regularly among its members, tea, articles of clothing, children's toys, books, musical instruments, and all manner of requisites, and uses the profits for its religious propaganda. This "Army" touts for emigrants at the usual charges, and insurance business is also encouraged by means of house-to-house visitation.

Indeed, the blatant advertisements of such bodies as the Young Men's Christian Association, the Church and Salvation Armies, besides the very numerous appeals of other religious bodies for cash, remind us that more and more the Christian Religion is becoming commercialized. Missions and meetings are advertised in precisely the same way as patent medicines, cinema productions, or musical comedies. Preachers and revivalists adopt similar methods to circus proprietors, herbalists, and quack doctors, presumably with the same satisfactory financial results.

There is one consequence, entirely unforeseen, which would have shocked the sober Christians of the Ages of Faith. Fear was the motive that then prompted men and women to go to church; dread of hell, and even fear of the consequences of the infidelity, which meant death by burning at the stake. All this is changed in a changing world. The priestly desire to keep religion financially profitable has led to the soft-

ening of the worst barbaric features of the old faith. The preaching of hell is relegated to the missionaries, the Romanists, the Salvation Army, and side-street sects. Sermons are shorter, and more topical. Painful Sabbaths are replaced by so-called Pleasant Sunday Afternoons. String bands and soloists enliven the programme. Tame Socialists, and other publicists, share the platform or pulpit with reformed burglars and converted policemen. Religion was always a very profitable profession, but it is rapidly becoming an amusement-fair with no false modesty in the transformation.

Why should there be all this additional commercial activity associated with the numerous Christian churches? If they were engaged in selling soap, instead of the "bread of life," their methods could not be more entirely business-like. Is not the answer to this that religion is a trade, just as the making and selling of soap is a trade, and business is not too good? Christians are enjoined by their own creed to rely on the power of prayer. "Ask and ye shall receive." But they do not rely solely on divine assistance. They call on tradesmen and cadge goods from them in the name of religion, and then sell the goods to the unfortunate men's own customers. The crooks of Chicago never thought of a better method than that, and it is perfectly safe because the racket is done in the name of Christ, instead of Dick Turpin.

Church bazaars, although quite numerous, form only one of the minor forms of commercial activity used by Christians on behalf of their creed. The large religious organizations venture into really big business with as complete success as would command the admiration of the Stock Exchange itself. The Ecclesiastical Commissioners, of the so-called Church of England, deal with ground-rents, tithe-redemption, coal-royalties, and the hundred-and-one complexities of a business concern, employing a large staff, and extending their activities in many directions. The Commissioners are high in the list of big landlords in the country, and the moneys they handle run into millions, and would suffice for the income of a small State. They are hard task-masters, too, as the farmers can testify with regard to tithe, one of the most iniquitous taxes ever imposed on a basic industry, and from which the clergy have drawn untold wealth during the centuries.

Indeed, this constant association of cash and cassock is passing wonderful. Preaching a gospel of poverty; worshipping a deity who, it is alleged, had not where to lay his head; pretending that their interests are "spiritual," and not material; the clergy possess enormous wealth. It is not only a contradiction in terms, but it is a convincing proof that religion itself is, in the last analysis, nothing but a trade, and a mischievous trade too. The mere existence of huge organized bodies, whose sole interest is bound up with reaction, is a continued menace to the victory of reason and intelligence over blind custom and sheer prejudice. Their activities must be restricted if we are to preserve the future from the clutch of Caliban. Let us be honest in this matter. The Labour-Socialist Party's record, in its dealings with Priestcraft, has been none too progressive, and it was easily surpassed by the stalwart Radicals of a generation ago, who would have been astounded at the mere suggestion that so-called Labour Members of Parliament should be so mealy-mouthed in dealing with the most determined enemy of Democracy. We wonder if the presence of so many ex-Free-Church ministers in the ranks of Socialist members has anything to do with the matter. For, to quote again, "it is a strange mouse that takes refuge in the cat's ear."

The Enigma of the Basques

THE Basques residing in France and Spain are an interesting and enigmatical people. Their habitat embraces an area of nearly 4,000 square miles, one sixth of which is in the French Pyrenees. Their dwelling places are composed of passes, eminences, plateaus, gorges and valleys. On the whole this landscape presents a smiling appearance. The heights are mantled with oaks, chestnuts, firs and beeches, with occasional crops of wheat and maize. Dotted here and there are pleasant homesteads with invitingly open doors adjoining an apple orchard, for the native cider is famous. Still, husbandry remains primitive, especially in Basque Spain, where the plough is frequently the *laya*, a rude two-pronged fork surviving from long-past centuries.

The Basque population in Spain was estimated at 811,400 in 1925. It increases slowly owing to the constant stream of emigration, mainly to South America, where nearly a quarter of a million Basques have settled in Argentina alone. The ethnology of this quaint race has proved a vexed problem to the anthropologists. At one time attention was chiefly directed to their remarkable language, so archaic in character. But more recently, scientists have studied the people themselves, and earlier romance has been superseded by a closer approach to practical certainty. Still much continues obscure, even if the main problem has been largely elucidated.

It has been suggested that the Basques are the lineal descendants of the primitive Cro-Magnon people, whose cave paintings and other artistic achievements so justly merit admiration. For only a couple of hundred miles from the habitat of the prehistoric artists reside the Basques, whose speech appears the most archaic of all the languages of Europe. Moreover, the Cro-Magnon race was distinguished by a disharmonic skull, and this singular feature is shared by the Basques. But unfortunately, as Professor Ripley points out in *The Races of Europe*: "In the Basque the head is broad and the face narrow; in the Cro-Magnon it is the head which is narrow, while the face is broad. In view of this flat contradiction, the hypothesis of the Basque as a direct and pure descendant of the most primitive prehistoric population of Europe becomes completely untenable."

The conservative character of the Basques is illustrated by the fact that both in France and Spain they zealously maintained their peculiar political system in spite of the unceasing efforts of the sovereigns to compel their submission. For their form of government was democratic, which was naturally offensive to a despotic State. Ripley notes that: "In Vizcaya (Biscay), for example, sovereignty was vested in a biennial assembly of chosen deputies, who sat on stone benches in the open air under an ancestral oak in the village of Guernica. This tree was the emblem of their liberties. A scion of the old tree was always kept growing nearby, in case the parent tree should die. These Basques acknowledged no political sovereign; they insisted on complete personal independence for every man; they were all absolutely equal before their own law; they upheld one another in exercising the right of self-defence against any outside authority, ecclesiastical, political or other." They were legally entitled to travel armed throughout Spain, and paid only those taxes essential to local requirements. They were exempt from military service abroad, and were even accorded the status of *hidalgos*.

Even now, the Basques enjoy a modicum of autonomy. But what the future has in store, time alone can tell. In departed days their domestic customs

were singular. Strabo asserts that the quaint *couvade* observance, during which the father retires to bed when the mother gives birth to a child was habitual with the Basques. This statement lacks positive proof, but another ancient writer, Diodorus Siculus met with the custom in Corsica in early Christian times. Certainly, this curious custom, so common in lowly communities was more likely to linger among the Basques than elsewhere in Europe. Also a Basque's house was sacred, and in his *Review of the Basque Provinces*, Herbert assures us that: "No magistrate can violate that sanctuary; no execution can be put into it, nor can arms nor horse be seized; he cannot be arrested for debt, or subjected to imprisonment without a previous summons to appear under the old oak in Guernica."

The Basques practised a form of primitive communism, and in some districts woman's rights were extensive. Customs varied, but occasionally the eldest daughter inherited the family property, which seems to indicate a survival from an early matriarchate system. It is alleged that the Basque week was limited to three days only. Much of the folk-lore and many of the native observances have been abandoned as a consequence of priestly intimidation, for the people as a whole bow to the authority of the sacerdotal caste.

The language is not inflectional but agglutinative and is exceedingly archaic. As Ripley remarks: "The principle of abstraction or generalization is but slightly developed." For instance, there are no such terms as *plant* or *animal*. Every species of floral or faunal life has its separate name. There is no word which expresses *father* in general. It is always the father of a certain son or daughter. This rudimentary tongue recalls "Spencer's instance of the Cherokee Indians who have as many as thirteen distinct words to signify the washing of as many different parts of the body, but none for the simple idea of 'washing,' by itself. The primitive mind finds it difficult to conceive of the act or attribute absolved from all connexion with the material objects themselves."

The uniqueness of the Basque dialects arrested attention in Roman times. The Jewish historian, Josephus, classified the Basques as the descendants of Tubal Cain, while in subsequent medieval centuries the ancestry of these strange people was traced to every leading scriptural personality on record. As inquiry increased, speculation ran riot, and the Basques were connected with American Indians or the ancient Etruscans, while Bury de St. Vincent acclaimed them as a stranded remnant of the inhabitants of the submerged Continent of Atlantis.

Although the Basque language is receding in Spain it holds its own in France. Its wider extension in both States in past times is indicated by the Basque names of mountains, rivers and village settlements. So long as the Basques retained their political autonomy they treasured and preserved their native tongue, but now that Spanish has become the official language in the Iberian Pyrenees the former is retreating.

Language is no test of race, and we are assured that skulls are harder than consonants. In any case, modern anthropological measurements reveal two forms of crania in the Basque population. Broca and Virchow found the heads of the Spanish Basques of dolichocephalic or long-skull character. But Pruner Bey and other scientists who measured the crania of the Basques dwelling on the French slopes of the mountains met with a distinctly brachycephalic or broad-headed type. These discordant discoveries led to an acrimonious controversy, each set of disputants denying the claims of its opponents, until it was definitely proved that the conflicting observers were each correct in their conclusions. Contrary to all expect-

tation, "the people on the opposite slopes of the Pyrenees, both alike speaking the same language so distinct from all others in Europe were radically different, in respect to this most fundamental characteristic."

The belief in a pure Basque race was shattered with the discovery that these peculiar people were an ethnic blending of the long-headed Mediterranean race with a stock of Alpine character. But, although of composite origin, why did they display such singular features? This problem bristles with difficulties. The most attractive solution is Dr. Collignon's, which contravenes no known historical fact. According to this view, during the Roman occupation of Spain, several Iberian tribes, endowed with the same autonomous tendencies which distinguish their descendants, enjoyed a similar independence in Northern Spain. One of these tribes—the Vascons—settled in the upper regions of the Ebro in what is now Navarra. With the fall of Rome, the barbarians ravaged Gaul but, when these Visigoths were driven from Aquitaine by the even fiercer Franks they probably migrated to Spain and expelled the Vascons from their fertile territories. The details of the conflict have not come down to us, but the Vascons were overthrown and many escaped to the Pyrenees. Some straggled through the mountains into France, where the country had been ravaged and depopulated by the barbarian invaders. This settlement occurred in 587 A.D., according to Gregory of Tours.

Then came the Saracen invasion and conquest of Southern Spain, when many of the Spaniards sought shelter in the North. To some extent the Vascons vacated the Pyrenees and migrated into France, where they preserved their political independence under Frankish sovereignty. Here they dwelt in peace, save only during the incursion of the Arabian, Abder-Rahman. Thus, it is inferred they retained their curious customs and physical features in a state of relative purity, while in Spain itself intermixture with alien types has modified their ancestral character to a larger extent.

Ripley and other anthropologists regard Dr. Collignon's hypothesis with considerable favour. This stresses the importance of isolation and social selection in evolving the peculiar features of the Basques. It is urged that prolonged isolation and constant inbreeding of a sub-species of the Mediterranean race explains the existence of these unique people. Thus heredity and special social factors have acted as determinants. Yet, the derivation of the Basques from the dolichocephalic Mediterranean stock seems inconsistent with the fact that the Basques are *relatively* broad-headed. So Dr. Collignon summons variation to explain this apparent anomaly. Variation, he holds, has been stimulated and accentuated by the prolonged isolation of the Basque tribes. Moreover, in stature and general physical proportions they approximate more closely to the Mediterranean than to the Alpine peoples of France.

That persistent adherence to fashion and custom which forms a factor in social selection perhaps plays a more decisive part in evolution than is usually admitted. To provide the completest opportunity for this aspect of social evolution, freedom from external influences seems imperative. As Ripley aptly concludes: "A primary requisite is isolation—material, social, political, linguistic, and at last ethnic. No other population in Europe ever enjoyed all these more than the Basques. If such a phenomenon could ever come to pass, no more favourable place to seek its realization could be found than here in the uttermost part of Europe."

T. F. PALMER

Nazism, Fascism and the Papacy

THE parallelism between Hitler and Jahweh has already been dealt with in the *Freethinker*, and we have to add to the group of separatist, tyrannous, aggressive and retrogressive totalitarians the Pope and his Church.

Most or all Freethinkers will have seen newspaper or other reports of the crowning of the new Pope as "Ruler of the World," and probably also the evidently derogatory and contemptuous reference of the Primate of Spain to "lay legislation."

How far this priest expects to dominate the government of Spain, is perhaps only known to himself and his ecclesiastical colleagues. But there is no doubt that they believe that sooner or later they will become dominant over all State Governments (if these then exist) in the sense that when there is any variance between the two the views and policy of the Pope and his henchmen must prevail.

Such essentials of "Catholic philosophy" are known to Freethinkers, but probably not to Protestants in general. But at least that just mentioned has not escaped ex-Dean Inge. In an article he deals with organized religion, based on dogma and authority, as follows: "Institutionalism is totalitarianism in religion. Hitler dislikes and persecutes the Roman Catholic Church because it is a rival corporation to his own dictatorship. There is no room for two God-States in the same country. Until the appearance of new dictatorships the Papacy was the sole survivor of the absolute type of State. The laws of the theocratic State are dogmas, theological propositions promulgated by authority. They are responsible for our unhappy divisions, just as dictatorships promote international strife."

Dr. Inge, who is a notorious case of a professional advocate of Christianity who has relinquished most if not all Christian (and, of course, other) theological beliefs, quotes some interesting passages from well known writers: from Canon Barry—"The one really formidable argument against the truth of the Christian religion is the record of the Christian Church"; from Nietzsche—"These Christians must show that they have been redeemed before I can believe in their Redeemer"; from Swinburne—"I could believe in the Crucified if he came to me without his leprous bride the Church."

Arguing for "the religion of the Spirit" as opposed to the institutional kind, Inge writes: "On the one side there has been an increased tendency to rely on authority, whether the authority chosen be that of the Roman Church or the neo-Calvinist fundamentalism of Karl Barth"; and he has arrived tentatively at the conclusion that "every human institution, even the Church, ends by strangling the ideas it was founded to protect."

This view, however, is obviously incorrect. The truth is that in the sphere of organized religion a spurious kind of evolution occurs, and may proceed in almost any direction, owing to the absence of any basis in real, observed, agreed, "public" knowledge. But, on the other hand, institutions which possess that basis, such as State Government, law and justice and education—especially when freed from ecclesiastical control—on the whole proceed on essentially continuous lines, the last-mentioned on the principles largely laid down by Plato twenty-four centuries ago. Of course we recognize that checks—relatively static and retrogressive periods—occur, owing mainly to the influence of tradition and to the various interests that become involved; but these checks are not world-wide, as is shown by the not inconsiderable progress made during the Dark and Middle Ages in the near East and

Spain (by the Moslems), in India, in China and even in the pre-Christian semi-civilizations of America.

In the article there is a welcome reminder of Romanist obscurantism in the statement that "Since 1835 (not earlier) Catholics have been allowed to believe that the earth moves round the sun"; and also that the slogan, "Outside the Church there is no Salvation" has "drenched Europe with blood and poisoned men's minds with fanatical hatred."

The chief topic, however, one dealt with in a book referred to, is that of a needed "New Reformation," which would unite, not churches, but all "real Christians." But, as is surmised, there is little if any hope of this consummation. A preliminary difficulty would obviously be to decide who are real Christians. That problem would probably be as difficult to solve as the famous old one. How many angels can stand on the point of a needle?

J. REEVES

Rejuvenation

"I warmed both hands before the fire of life. It sinks; and I am ready to depart." *Schoolboy commentator*: "Silly ass. Why didn't he poke it?"

The glands concerned in rejuvenation are the testes and the ovaries. Their degeneracy accompanies age, and if they can be kept active it is claimed that senility can be considerably retarded. The testes present a much simpler problem than the ovaries, and there is far more exact knowledge of their anatomical and physiological nature. It is to them we turn our attention.

In the previous article on glands we spoke of endocrines and exocrines, the former of internal, the latter of external, secretion. The testes are both. Their exocrine function consists of secretion of the sperm-cells through the *vas deferens* and the urethra. Steinach also found endocrine activity, according to the *Encyclopædia of Sexual Knowledge*, edited by Dr. Norman Haire, from which we proceed to quote.

"A microscopic section of a testicle shows the seminal cells all communicating with a common canal; it also shows in the surrounding tissue a large collection of smaller cells . . . proved to be endocrine. The testicles therefore not only produce sperm-cells, but also a substance which enters the circulation."

Practical conclusions and experiments on rats followed this discovery. Brown-Séquard had experimented even in the nineteenth century with injections of an extract of dogs' testicles, and had claimed to produce in aged humans, a renewal of muscular, mental and particularly sexual activity. Steinach took up and perfected his methods. He first chose rats. "These animals were particularly suited to his purpose because their lease of life ranges from 27 to 30 months, so that in about 2½ years it is possible to follow the life of a whole generation . . . Steinach first operated on a male rat, which had all the symptoms of senility, fatigue, weakness, baldness, and sexual anæsthesia. He grafted into his subject's abdominal muscles testes removed from a young rat, and a surprising result followed: the patient recovered his quick movements and his furry coat, and impregnated a female who produced a healthy litter. To test this result, Steinach reversed the process and castrated young rats. They soon showed signs of senile decay, loss of appetite, fatty degeneration, sexual asthenia. When grafted with new testes they rapidly regained their youth." (*Ib.*) It is claimed that each subsequent key test has proved that testicle-grafting can rejuvenate the organism.

"Yet another triumph crowned Steinach's experiments. The average life . . . of a grafted rat became extended to 38 or 39 months; rejuvenation carried with it a new lease of life." (*Ib.*)

* * *

From the lower animal we proceed to man. But here there is an obvious difficulty, that of obtaining testes. Sound glands removed from hospital patients were insufficient. "Voronoff attempted to make good this deficiency by using monkeys glands," (*Ib.*), and in his *Study of Senility and of Rejuvenation by Grafting*, he describes his success. His experiments started with old men in Algiers and Tunis. His first patient was 73; "hard work and privations" had made him "decrepit and bent, unsteady in gait, with all the external signs symptomatic of exhaustion and stupor, and characteristic emaciation resulting from physiological misery. The graft was performed on March 5, 1924, at the Public Hospital of Algiers . . . in the presence of the Prefect and a number of medical men. . . . The monkey used for the graft was a tall, tailless specimen of the 'Macaque' species. . . . A year later, on April 7, 1925 . . . our expectations were more than fulfilled: only a comparison of photographs taken before and after the graft can convey any idea of the change in our patient. . . . From being a pale and feeble creature with a wondering look and hollow cheeks he had become a happy looking fellow with pink cheeks, who was in obviously buoyant health. Three months after being grafted he had obtained a position. . . ." His employer, a chemist, reported that he "was spending his days washing bottles, raking the garden paths and looking after the poultry . . . being all the while happy and contented. The psychological improvement was also manifest; he answered questions promptly and brightly, in marked contrast to his faulty enunciation and difficulty of expression before his operation. With regard to sexual vigour he stated that it was developing satisfactorily after having been non-existent for years. . . . Examination of the scrotum . . . revealed two large grafted glandular bodies which could obviously establish not only ultimate vascular connexions, and thereby insure their future existence, but also nervous ones, since they were definitely sensitive to touch" (*Ib.*). This suggests they had become part of the whole organism, and reinforces (were that needed), man's kinship with animals. It joins such arguments as the consanguinity of man and ape, and in this respect is a useful discovery quite irrespective of any ethical or scientific objections to grafting.

Voronoff's method is to cut into sections, like an orange, the testicle taken from a young monkey. One or more of the sections is inserted in the patient's gland and stitched. Dr. Haire, however, remarks (*Encyclopædia*) that the grafts from a different species do not live long in the tissues of the new host, so that testicular transplantation from one human to another is better, and preferably from a donor whose blood grouping is compatible with that of the patient.

Distinct differences are observed in the gland of a rejuvenated animal. There is a decrease of the tissue which normally produces the sperm-cells, and a shrinking of the ejaculatory ducts. Nature being prone to dispense with useless parts, the excretory function is atrophied. Normally both endocrine and exocrine, testes once inserted in a muscle lose their exocrine function, while the endocrine displays increase in the size and activity of the cells, and it is these which are apparently endowed with rejuvenating properties. An important departure follows.

¹ *Study of Senility*, etc. (Voronoff).

What Steinach termed "puberty glands" have been isolated by Bonin and Ancel under the name "interstitials." "Once science had found that the secretions from the puberty glands were the rejuvenating element, the obvious conclusion was that senility arises in consequence of the reduced activity of these glands. Steinach then propounded the question, Is there a means of stimulating the activity of these glands in aged people without having recourse to testes from another individual? We have seen how an implanted gland loses its twin function and becomes solely an endocrine. If, then, one can operate so as to block the *vas deferens* and thus curtail the excretory function, the corresponding glands will atrophy, thereby benefiting the puberty glands. This change of equilibrium will rejuvenate the whole organism through the subsequent fresh supply of certain elements to the blood. This is the principle on which Steinach founded his rejuvenation method known as vaso-ligature. (The sperm cells travel from the testes to the prostate along a duct called the *vas deferens*. Steinach closed this by the simple process of ligaturing it close to the testicle; as expected the production of sperm-cells soon stopped, while the puberty glands became hyper-active). "Steinach's theory has been confirmed by the Czech, Ruzicka, whose studies bore on the physiological causes of senility. He has established that the secretions in an old organism are quite distinct from those in a young one; he can actually calculate the age of an individual by examining his endocrine secretions. Steinach sent to Ruzicka secretions from old, young and rejuvenated subjects. Ruzicka found that young and rejuvenated secretions were identical. This proves that vaso-ligature can rejuvenate the whole system." (*Ib.*)

To remove a possible misunderstanding, it should be added that vaso-ligature is not in effect equal to castration. The vigour characteristically abolished by the latter is not impaired. The fact that sperm-cells are no longer produced is irrelevant. In aged men, on the contrary, the secretions of the puberty glands are a nerve tonic and sexual stimulant.

Nor does vaso-ligature mean that ejaculation is impossible. The seminal fluid "has only 7 to 8 per cent of testicular matter, the rest being supplied by other glands like the seminal vesicle and the prostate, which are unaffected by the ligature." (*Ib.*) The only drawback which the layman can conceive is that "double ligature means sterility, since the spermatozoa are produced in the testicles." (*Ib.*)

Drs. Benjamin (New York), Haire (London), Schmidt (Berlin) and others prefer vaso-ligature to grafting for rejuvenating purposes, and "report favourable results in a large majority of cases," without ill-effects on health, and with a revival of virility.

It is important to note, however, that rejuvenation fights senility, *not disease*. If the subject is already destined to die of heart disease, cancer, etc., such trouble is not overcome by the operation, though he might conceivably be made to bear his affliction more lightly. And since deaths from senility are at present of negligible proportions, rejuvenation has no ultimate value for longevity.

So far as the female is concerned, the ovaries as yet present a too complex problem. Voronoff has, however, successfully practised a graft of monkey's ovaries. Steinach (see *Ibid*) applies an electrical method which does not require a surgical operation, and is often very satisfactory.

G. H. TAYLOR

Yes, religion bred the first fratricide, and since then it has borne on its forehead the sign of blood.—*Heine*.

Acid Drops

Hitler gave his speech in reply to the Prime Minister behind bullet-proof glass. The man is evidently a coward as well as a bully. Any man may take reasonable precautions against danger, but for a man in his position, one with any sense of self-respect, and who has bragged of the unity of the German people behind him, and of their love for him, must be of a very poor type of character to fear speaking to his people face to face. We take it that any man would have risked attack, surrounded as he is by cohorts of armed men on these occasions, rather than give such an exhibition of sheer cowardice. We wonder how those poor fools in this country who have been taken in by the newspaper talk of the love and loyalty of the German people for Hitler, feel in the face of this exposure.

Meanwhile it looks as though the odds are in favour of no-war, and that peace will not be purchased by any further appeasement after the pattern of Munich. But what has occurred, and the altered tone of Hitler in the face of the announcement of a policy of collective security—a policy which the Baldwin and Chamberlain Governments did so much to destroy—forces even the dullest to the conclusion that "peace" might have been secured much easier last September, when Hitler had to face a British-French-Russian Alliance, with all the small States helping and Czechoslovakia holding the pass. The world has paid heavily for Munich.

Well worth keeping on record against the commendation of that "Christian gentleman," Franco, is a letter signed, G. W. J. Cole, from Hove, Sussex, published by a contemporary. The writer quotes *The English Churchman*, of May 27, 1937, wherein, on p. 263, appears a report of an address by Mr. Arnold Lunn in Dublin. Mr. Lunn said:—

Our Lady wants Spaniards under Franco to have as many rifles as possible, and to shoot as straight as possible. . . . In that case . . . the rifle is a holy weapon, very properly consecrated to our Lady.

Mr. (or Mrs. or Miss) Cole then quotes the French Roman Catholic newspaper *L'Aube*, reporting Cardinal Gomá, the Primate of Spain, as making the following statements to the Spanish-speaking delegates at the Eucharistic Congress in Budapest:—

The war must be ended *without compromise or reconciliation*. . . . There can be *no pacification but that made with arms*. It is necessary . . . to *extirpate all the putrefaction of lay legislature*. A regime of perfect accord between the Church and the State must be established, since *the former must intervene* on many issues.

I am happy to be able to tell you that up to now we are in complete agreement with the Nationalist Government, which, on the other hand, *never takes a step without consulting me and obeying me*.

Our italics emphasize the service acceptable to "holy church" from anyone so long as he offers humble submission to its authority.

We see the *Daily Herald* reports that one of the readers of that paper asked the editor's assistance to do what it could to get Shaw's "Pygmalion" taken off the screen, because the author makes one of the characters "utter the vilest expression I ever heard in a public meeting." Probably the reference is to the famous "bloody," which millions of English people use quite casually. Still, if that very sensitive reader is able to show that a crusade to get Shaw's play condemned—unless it is expurgated—would greatly increase the circulation of the paper, the editor is very likely to adopt the proposal.

If there existed a decoration for sheer sloppy foolishness we would back Mr. Beverley Nichols against the world. "Jimmy" Douglas used to play the "mother" card very assiduously, and there is a section always open for that kind of sentimental nonsense. But here is a gem that

one cannot let pass. It ought to be preserved somewhere, and it may easily be forgotten. In the *Sunday Chronicle* for April 2 (one day late) Mr. Beverley Nichols writes in displayed capitals, "A man's mother is the wisest woman he'll ever meet." If the mother of Beverley Nichols is alive, and if she reads that sentence she must wonder what kind of a character she has for a son. Where on earth do all the foolish women who become mothers get to? And Mr. Nichols writes, "I try to forget all the parrot phrases that have become part of me."

What centuries of valuable and other forms of life have been wasted over far-fetched explanations of Bible yarns. We have just been reading a long-winded attempt to add verisimilitude to that fearfully bald and unconvincing narrative—the story of Methuselah. It is by Dr. Richmond, Editor of the *Christian Advocate* (U.S.A.). If Methuselah was as the Bible says 969 years old when he died, he must have died at the time of Noah's Flood. It seems a perfectly rotten bit of luck to live so long only to be drowned in God's revengeful flood! Dr. Richmond assures us that the (very) elderly gentleman died of pneumonia on the actual date the flood was due to begin. After all he was a relative of Noah, although hardly of the same "generation." Dr. Richmond even suggests that he died through catching a cold owing to the wet weather then threatening the approaching deluge.

The bachelor vicar of St. James', Benwell, Newcastle-on-Tyne, the Rev. D. H. S. Mould, is to open a "Lovers' Advisory Bureau." He used to give "friendly talks" to young couples when vicar of Hunslet, Leeds, and works "on the experiences of his married friends and parishioners!" Illimitable is the stupidity of the clerical mind. Here's a vicar *vicariously* acting for his "God," his church, and his job, presuming to participate *vicariously* in the love affairs and marriage plans of any youths and maidens who will accept his impertinent intrusion. Anyhow, that's *their* business, if they so lack delicacy or dignity.

We wonder what sort of definition the B.B.C. give when deciding what is "controversial" and what is not. Sunday, March 26, on the "National," Father Vincent McNabb, O.P., talked on the Catholic idea of what the "Passion" is all about. It looks as if a "listener" (who has no alternative programme to listen to) is allowed to hear the official Episcopalian version in which the Church of England is said to believe, and then he may also hear the opposition doctrine of the Romanists. That's all. Any other theory is taboo. Now, if the Government controlled B.B.C. ventured to give listeners a scientific account of the origin and significance of these exceedingly primitive beliefs, then there would be a display on the part of the religious world that would indicate "passion" of another kind. As it is, the B.B.C. is a most valuable instrument for fooling its listeners—at least where religion is concerned.

Dr. A. C. Headlam, Bishop of Gloucester, in his diocesan magazine, refers to the "old days when the vicarage, with its pleasant garden, was looked upon as a great asset." He says, "it would be so now if the incomes of the clergy were sufficient for keeping the gardens up." For what, or for whom?—Selected parties of croquet or tennis players, and such county people as could be induced to take tea with the vicar? Old Hodge and Giles have never found the vicar's garden an "asset" at any time. And where are the gardeners who got £3 a week out of a parson? Let the Bishop recommend his charges to do a bit of honest delving and digging themselves, and *that* would do them all the good in the world and profit their minds.

The new Pope has made a flying start in his career. He is sixty-two years of age, and according to the *Spectator*, "in the full vigour of life." And as we may just as well join in the fun, no doubt he is looking forward to vigorous middle age at the age of ninety. The ordinary wear and tear of life does not apply to Popes apparently, or perhaps the writer had to write something original. The

flying start, however, deserves recording. It is a telegram addressed to "that gallant Christian gentleman," and reads as follows:—

Praying for new successes in conformity with your glorious Catholic traditions and blessing our cordially beloved Spain, we thank you for your devout message and invoke for your Excellency Divine assistance."

Invoking Divine assistance fits up nicely with Catholic strategy; in the last Great War, Catholicism waited long enough to be on the winning side, and in both cases Divine assistance was superfluous.

The Mayor of Gillingham, Councillor J. L. Newnham, advised the Council that on the receipt of an invitation for the Council to attend a Baptist Church service he circularized each member, and, as the response was inadequate, he had declined the invitation:—

He added that on the last occasion that the Council accepted unanimously an invitation to go to church, only five members attended the service.

"I am not going to a church parade with five members of the Council," said the Mayor.

So continues the rush "back to religion," and only the sound of Gabriel's trump will be enough to recall some.

Although more than 70 local authorities have offered the highest possible financial grant, 75 per cent of the total cost of the new Catholic Senior Schools, Catholics are by no means satisfied. It appears that "in some areas a condition is attached which renders, they say, this aid useless, namely, that the number of reserved teachers be limited to 75 per cent of the staff." This is claimed to be contrary to the spirit of the Act, and Catholics find it impossible to accept reorganization under it. They are also angry that some local authorities refuse to incur the expense of conveying pupils, in some instances, to the schools. All this, combined with great dissatisfaction as to the working of the new Act in other directions which have to do with the teaching of religion in the schools, has led to a tremendous waste of time and to interminable discussions. Yet the one simple and easy solution is Secular Education in all State-supported schools, and it is incredible that such a solution which must be adopted one day as the only key to the problem is still being shelved.

Miss Swainson, who is Lecturer at Lincoln Training College examined three thousand children in the Lincoln district, ranging from seven to fourteen years of age. She contributed an article to the same review giving the result of this analysis, which was to see what were the personal ideas of God among these children and the result must certainly have astonished her. A number of the thirteen-fourteen age group of boys showed unmistakable signs of unbelief. In fact, one boy wrote: "I have no idea of God because nobody has proved there is one." She also found that the thought of God as Father very rarely occurred; and we have an idea that among those children who "believed" the belief was just as vague as it is with most people nowadays, and was merely an acquiescence to the belief of their elders.

Fifty Years Ago

COL. INGERSOLL, one of a committee to raise money for the benefit of the Confederate Soldiers' Home at Austin, Texas, has himself subscribed a large cheque. A Christian named G. D. Mackay sent the following letter to the committee: "I would feel my sympathies drawn to an object so worthy as this, but the promoters must be blind to the plainest sign of the times when from the Christian people of New York they expect contributions to this cause—and they will get little help from any other—while heading their enterprise with the greatest enemy of Jesus Christ this country has ever seen, namely, Col. Robert G. Ingersoll. Nothing will be blessed by his touch, and it is regretted that the work is to be even coloured by his assistance, far more, begun and directed. Very respectfully."

The Freethinker, April 14, 1889

THE FREETHINKER

FOUNDED BY G. W. FOOTE

61 Farringdon Street, London, E.C.4

Telephone No.: CENTRAL 2412.

TO CORRESPONDENTS.

W. T. NICHOLAS (New York) writes: "There is no paper, no magazine I enjoy so much as the *Freethinker*. I regret not having discovered it many years ago." We expect there are thousands of others who would feel much the same. The job is to get into touch with them.

F. POLLOCK—Thanks for pamphlet.

C. WALTERS.—We would welcome a reasoned criticism of Mr. Cohen's *Freethought and the Child*. It is a situation that needs clarifying. One cannot expect all who have been brought up as Christians rejecting religious methods, and even completely ridding themselves of all traces of religious ideas. *Freethought and the Child* was written mainly with an eye on Freethinkers.

H. BROWN, L. WOODHEAD.—Thanks for addresses of likely new readers; paper being sent for four weeks.

J. ANDERSON.—Sorry, but it did not come from this office. Why not pass it on?

S. R. GAINS (Boston, Mass.).—Pleased to hear from you. The protest showed at least that common human sympathy may override the tricks of politicians. We fancy that America would have found a voice if Ingersoll had been alive now.

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

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

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

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Sugar Plums

Mr. Cohen's audience at Birmingham on Sunday did not seem quite up to the usual—in point of numbers, although in a smaller hall it would have been counted a fine gathering. But a hall that seats between 2,500 and 3,000 requires some filling for an ordinary lecture, and there was nothing to complain about concerning the interest and the enjoyment of the lecture. Applause and laughter were both frequent. One excited Christian lady at the close of the lecture threw a couple of bombs from the gallery, but they were in the form of the lecturer's last two *Pamphlets for the People*, and as she had paid for them she had a legal right to do as she pleased with her own property. And for a while at least she had more logic in her hands than she had in her head.

The two new numbers in the "*Pamphlets for the People*" series are selling steadily. *Thou Shalt not Suffer a Witch to Live* throws a vivid light on the influence of the Christian Church in reviving and perpetuating one of the most primitive and one of the most disastrous of primitive superstitions, and *Freethought and the Child* is likely to give rise to much discussion among Freethinkers. It states a point of view not common among even them, and one the importance of which cannot easily be exaggerated.

A little time back the Birkenhead Branch N.S.S. applied for the use of the Town Hall for a lecture by Mr. Cohen. The application was refused, although a previous meeting addressed by him was well-attended, and gave no room or reason for complaint. At any rate in the absence of the large Town Hall, Mr. Cohen, although he has been trying to ease off on lecturing, has arranged to hold a meeting on Wednesday, April 19, in the smaller Beachcroft Hall. We advise all who wish to attend to be there in good time. The chair will be taken at 7.30.

We note with interest that the recent (and present) crisis in international affairs has revived the never dead influence of Thomas Paine in the United States. A Chicago paper improves on Wordsworth's fine call to John Milton with a paraphrase: "Tom Paine, thou shouldst be living in this hour." There is also an American movement, having as its aim the institution and support of numerous Thomas Paine Forums in American cities, for the purpose of affording centres where free discussion would be always provided for. Until we see the details and know more about the promoters we cannot of course do more than approve of all opportunities for free discussion. The mere establishing of a number of new associations is nothing unless there is in every case a nucleus of keen working supporters, and we know only too well that there are at present many excellent (or at least usable) centres neglected by the very individuals who cry aloud for such opportunities.

Miss Marjorie Bowen will deliver the Thirtieth Conway Memorial Lecture on Wednesday, April 19, at 7 p.m., at Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, W.C.1. The subject is "Ethics in Modern Art." Admission will be free.

From far Japan comes an unconscious lesson of the way to deal with dictators. For many years Japan has had an agreement with Russia, which gave her the right to fish in certain Russian "areas" on payment of a rental. Some time ago Russia gave notice to Japan that the fishing rights would not be renewed, save with a restriction of the number of areas—forty was the number suggested—and there were to be increased payments. Japan blustered and complained, but Russia remained unimpressed. Then Japan played its trump card—either inspired or advised by Hitler—it threatened that if the old fishing rights were not restored, to send a fishing fleet to the usual waters with Japanese battleships for protection. But Moscow was not Munich, and no policy of appeasement operated. Russia remained quiet, but firm. As bluster did not produce the desired effect, the next move on the part of Japan was to agree to twenty-seven of the fishing areas being closed to them (forty was the original number suggested by Russia) but with increased rentals for what was left. This may check any faith Japan had in Hitler's method being as successful elsewhere as it has been in Europe.

For more than a thousand years the Church had, to a great extent, the control of the civilized world, and what has been the result? Are the Christian nations patterns of charity and forbearance? On the contrary, their principal business is to destroy each other. Millions of Christians are trained, educated, and drilled to murder their fellow-Christians. Every nation is groaning under a vast debt incurred in carrying on war against other Christians, or defending itself from Christian assault. The world is covered with forts to protect Christians from Christians, and every sea is covered with iron monsters ready to blow Christian brains into eternal froth. Millions upon millions are annually expended in the effort to construct still more deadly and terrible engines of death. Industry is crippled, honest toil is robbed, and even beggary is taxed to defray the expenses of Christian warfare. There must be some other way to reform the world. We have tried creed, and dogma and fable, and they have failed. . . . We need men with moral courage to speak and write their real thoughts, and to stand by their convictions, even to the very death.—*Ingersoll*.

Flashbacks on Tyneside

(Concluded from page 203)

R. H. WHARRIER of Bedlington was, indeed, a Free-thought warrior. The first time I met him was in his own house. Thomas Burt had to address his constituents in that town and, as he had practically given up, for physical reasons, public speaking, J. M. Robertson had agreed to deputise for him, and before the meeting we had had tea with Wharrier. Before that occasion I knew well Wharrier (as an old Bradlaugh-ite) by repute; all Freethinkers did. What struck me at this first meeting was the touching solicitude shown him by his son and daughter. It was when returning afterwards to the Manors Station at Newcastle that Burt gave us a few incidents about the man whose hospitality we had enjoyed. He told us that Wharrier had been instrumental in having installed at his Colliery the very first "endless chain" plant. On the day it was set in operation many interested parties were present, and Wharrier, excusably a little excited by the occasion, made a false step and became entangled in the moving chain. To the horror of all he was carried onwards and upwards towards a chasm so small that to be dragged through it seemed to signify certain death. There were a few seconds to elapse, however, before that point was reached and Wharrier was observed to huddle round the moving rope, obviously preparing for the hideous ordeal in front of him. When he disappeared the sickened observers moved reluctantly to the other side, where they knew a platform was bound to have intercepted his progress. To their amazement they found nothing there. On enquiry they learnt that a running figure had been seen to leave the pit-head. They were to know afterwards that Wharrier had picked himself up from the platform, run home, and dropped into a chair, a bloody and dishevelled figure. He said to his wife: Go and tell the doctor, lass, I've a nice job for him—and then he lost consciousness. When asked afterwards what had made him act as he did he said, "I knew some of you fellows would go and alarm the missus, so I thought I would get there first."

History was almost to repeat itself. He was once lowered, with two others, into a preliminary shaft where coal was anticipated, to fix and fire a number of fuses. They fired all save two of these and then returned to the cradle. Then, Wharrier remembered he had left some tools behind. He turned aside for them, but, alas! the signal had already been given for ascent, and, when he returned, the cradle was on its way to the light of day. Wharrier looked at his watch, drew out his knife, and began a race with time. He had cut five of the seven fuses when he estimated he had risked enough. He retired behind the largest of the loose boulders and hoped for the best. His coolness and quick-wittedness again won the day.

What follows is painful writing. He spent months in bed in a critical condition, but competent medical attention, and the loving nursing of his wife, saved him. The day came when he thought he was well enough to toddle down to the colliery (assisted by a couple of sticks) and exchange courtesies with his colleagues. When he returned from this happy interlude he found his wife suffering from "a slight cold." She was worn out by her assiduous efforts; was unable to put up much resistance, and, sad to relate, was dead in a few days.

More than that had Burt to say. Once the miners of Northumberland had tackled the enterprise of a Co-operative Bank. Into this, Wharrier entered with enthusiasm, and entrusted to its care, all his savings. It was a failure and his savings were lost. And (said Burt), although it meant restarting a life of thrift and

penury, none ever heard him utter a word of criticism against those who handled the undertaking.

From any other lips than those of Thomas Burt, one would have thought that friendliness had overpainted the picture. I was assured recently by both Thomas and William Robson of Cramlington, that it is a relation of fact. The name of Wharrier, I was also told, is still honoured in the neighbourhood. The value of his work for the Bedlington Colliery itself was of such a character that its mark is plain and distinct (in the opinion of the present management) even unto this day.

It was Wharrier who arranged for Joseph Symes to lecture at Bedlington when the Newcastle Branch of the N.S.S. arranged to commemorate his thirty years work for Free thought.

Joseph Symes had once been a Nonconformist minister in a Northumbrian town, but had thrown up his pulpit when he found the error of his ways and joined the National Secular Society. In 1876 he had given his first Free thought lecture in Newcastle, but soon elected to go to Australia on a work of evangelization. After three decades he re-visited his native country, and the Newcastle Branch thought it fitting to commemorate the event. We held a meeting in the Palace Theatre, with Martin Weatherburn presiding, when he lectured on "My Thirty Years of Storm and Struggle." Previous to this, we had held a gathering of friends to welcome him. I remember Elijah Copland on that occasion saying how in 1876 he had been induced to go and hear a parson who had whittled away the Glorious Gospel to the irreducible minimum. He had expressed himself, when coming away from the Chapel, with "Mark my words; that man won't be long in that pulpit." "And," he continued, "In this, Elijah proved himself a true prophet."

When he returned to London Symes wrote to George William Foote:—

I was, and am, vastly more gratified than words can express by the treatment I met with amongst my Tyneside friends on my recent visit there. The number of friends, old and new, who turned up on Sunday afternoon, and the hearty reception they gave, quite unmanned me. That visit was, in itself, ample compensation for the thirty years of storm and stress through which I have passed. I wish to thank our friends for the pains they took to make the anniversary a success. I would mention names, but I should be sure to forget some, and that would appear invidious. At Bedlington, Hetton, and Spennymoor the hearty welcome was repeated. The entire visit was one I cannot possibly forget as long as memory continues.

This was probably the last letter that Symes ever wrote. The fact was that after twenty-three years acclimatization in Australia he should never have ventured returning to England. On the draughty platform of the Palace Theatre he had contracted a cold, and Tyneside friends were horrified to learn that, after two or three days in London, he had died. They had to be content with the gratifying thought that the laurel-leaf had first been placed in position. Symes was a fine creation; he hated lies and superstition, and a more direct speaker it would be difficult to name.

Another man brave enough to leave the pulpit was John T. Lloyd. He had been stationed in a Gateshead Presbyterian Church, had migrated to South Africa, and when there had been recognized as the best preacher and lecturer in that country. Then he had become convinced of the falsity of his message, and left that country and the Presbyterian pulpit, and came to England, where to the end of his life he spoke and wrote for the National Secular Society. Lloyd was a close friend of Olive Schreiner and her husband, and those who wish to know the esteem in which they held

him should read the official *Life and Letters* of Olive Schreiner. When the Newcastle Branch first heard Lloyd lecture at Gateshead, there were present many members of his old flock, and he had to withstand the ordeal of questioning and opposition from them. The circumstances were obviously trying to him, but the impression he made was profound.

One would have liked to deal at some length with some of the other activities of the Branch at that time. Mr. Cohen spoke regularly on the Town Moor on the Sunday prior to Race Week and the Temperance Festival, and his audiences were huge. These meetings were "gala" days. Reminiscences of Mr. Foote as well can await another occasion. But two particular activities I will single out for remark—one a failure; the other, perhaps, the Branch's biggest success. The failure was in connexion with a meeting to protest against the murder of Francisco Ferrer, in Spain. We had hoped much from this meeting, but the Lord sent a gale and a rain-storm that night, such as he had previously given a sample of in the case of the Spanish Armada. Thomas Dixon, *filis* (new to the Branch then, but destined to become an active and valuable worker), was in the chair, and Alfred Howson moved a resolution. The meeting was a huge disappointment, for only about fifty braved the elements to hear William Heaford tell the story of the brave Spanish Freethinker who had dedicated and given his life to the cause of popular education.

The other meeting is pleasant to record. In 1907 a Town's meeting was called in the Newcastle Town Hall, as an outcome of the *Message to the Nation*, by the Archbishop of Canterbury, and other religious chieftains, in furtherance of a crusted Sabbatarianism. A committee was got together representing all the bodies who desired a free Sunday, and Alfred Howson was deputed to visit the religious committee, and outline the conditions on which they would refrain from publicly opposing the religious resolution at the Town's Meeting. Faced with the likelihood of their meeting being a fiasco, the religious conveners accepted every one of our conditions, with the result that this Meeting turned out to be an *Anti-Sabbatarian Meeting*. I need only quote what the *Newcastle Daily Journal* said, the morning after:—

When the Archbishops of Canterbury and of Westminster and the appointed representatives of Nonconformity set a-going the movement for the preservation of the English Sunday, it is not for a moment to be believed that they ever intended it should take the turn that it took in the Newcastle Town Hall on Monday evening. The Socialists, who make Sunday their head meeting-day for political agitation, the Sunday Lecture men, the Sunday Park-music men, the Sunday excursionist men—the very people who, in fact, are the most opposed to the historical and traditional English Sunday, had the meeting in hand. It was their resolution that was moved, their way of keeping Sunday that was in evidence. It was like the meeting in the fable—the sheep-dog's meeting that was taken possession of by the wolves.

Exactly so. This was the end of the ecclesiastical *Message to the Nation*, and not only in Newcastle. On this note of triumph, we shall end.

Still, another word must be said. Any of the fine old fighters still alive, who notice what they may consider strange omissions in names and events, will realize, I am sure, the share one's memory takes in these reminiscences. A *catalogue* I could have made and then any sins of omission due to memory would have appeared still more glaring. It is inevitable that one's closest personal friends come back quicker to the mind, for the furrows they have made on the tablets are deeper. But the intention of these notes is not personal. It is sufficient for me to have demon-

strated the cause that actuated them to be a cause of no mean dynamic. That cause gave inspiration to brave men and brave women. I hope it will be agreed that they form a fair gallery. *Gone are the once familiar faces.* A spiritual re-existence could never replace them for

Can a ghost laugh, or shake his gaunt sides, when you are pleasant with him?

T. H. ELSTON

Some Abodes of Genius

(Concluded from page 213)

MANY years ago I spent a summer holiday at Mapledurham House (the house among the maple-trees) a fine Elizabethan mansion by the Thames, near Reading. The house, untouched save by time, had ornamented chimney-shafts and, like the Maybush Inn described by Dickens in *Barnaby Rudge*, "more gables than a lazy man would care to count on a sunny day." For many generations Mapledurham has been the home of the Blounts, a Catholic family, and it was there that Pope passed much of his time flirting platonically with the Misses Theresa and Maria Blount and composing his pungent epistles. Pope was also of the old profession, and wrote the well-known lines:—

Where London's Column, pointing to the skies
Like a tall bully, lifts its head and lies,

to vindicate his co-religionists from the charge of having been responsible for the Great Fire in 1666. London's Column being the Monument, which was erected in commemoration of that visitation.

The inscription which angered Pope, ran as follows:—

This pillar was set up in perpetual remembrance of that most dreadful burning of this Protestant city, begun and carried on by ye treachery and malice of ye Popish faction in ye beginning of Septem., in ye year of Our Lord 1666, in order to ye carrying on their horrid plot for extirpating the Protestant Religion and old English liberty, and the introducing popery and slavery.

It was obliterated in the reign of James II., but recut in the reign of William III., and erased by the Common Council on January 26, 1831.

I was told that my room was that once tenanted by the poet, as was the great four-post bed. I used to fancy him climbing into its vast expanse and, after a cup of caudle, curling up till nothing but a night-cap was visible, for he was a frail little creature and went to rest like the birds.

A Georgian house at Twickenham I remember with regret, for it was long ago swept away by the tide of so-called improvement; it had panelled rooms, dormer windows, and a delightful garden in which stood an ancient mulberry tree which had:—

shadow'd many a group
Of beauties, that were born
In teacup-times of hood and hoop,
Or while the patch was worn—

and Lady Mary Wortley Montague lived there in 1718.

There was a powdering-closet in one of the bedrooms and in this, and in some of the cupboards, there lingered a faint perfume of musk and lavender.

In the parlour there were capacious window-seats, and in these recesses one could visualize Lady Mary and Pope, who often came from his riverside villa, seated tête-à-tête, taking a dish of tea and discussing the frailties of their friends and neighbours.

Lady Mary was celebrated for beauty and wit, and she wrote clever *vers de société*, gay trifles, such as the invitation to Congreve:—

But when the long hours of public are past,
And we meet with champagne and a chicken at last,
May every fond pleasure the moment endear!
Be banish'd afar both discretion and fear!"

—and the lines on Walpole's portrait.

Pope and her ladyship "at first were friends, but soon a pique began." It was said that Pope proposed marriage to his fair friend, and that the ludicrous description which she gave of the affair deeply wounded the sensitive little poet.

What dire offence from amorous causes springs! Pope's love to hatred turned, and he proceeded to retaliate by writing some very caustic verses reflecting on the character of Lady Mary; the curious may find them in the *Imitations of Horace*, and the references to Sappho in the *Dunciad* and the *Epilogue to the Satires*.

One of the old Brighton houses near the Norfolk Hotel was said by its tenant, an old lady with whom my mother and I lodged, to have been occupied by Charles Dickens, when he was writing *Oliver Twist*.

I could never ascertain if this house (No. 147 King's Road) had indeed been the novelist's residence when Oliver, Mr. Bumble, Nancy and Bill Sikes were taking their places in the tragic story of the parish-boy, but, as Dickens was a frequent visitor to Brighton, I am content to believe it was so.

It will be remembered that it was at the nearby Bedford Hotel, where Dickens was often a visitor, that Mr. Toots put up, after he had soared into freedom with his ring on, and there too Major Bagstock "rough and tough old J.B." dined with Mr. Dombey, partaking so freely of the various dainties provided that his inflammatory tendencies were much aggravated in consequence.

And it was in the old Brighton of Kemp-Town, still unchanged, that Dickens located Dr. Blimber's academy; "a mighty fine house facing the sea, where all the boys blew before their time and mental green-peas were produced at Christmas." And it must have been on the then fashionable Marine Parade that Miss Blimber went for a "constitutional," to the surprise of Paul, who wondered why, as it was a wet day, "she did not send the footman to get it."

These abodes where genius dwelt are, with the exception of Lady Mary's Twickenham home and Byron's birth-place, of which no vestige remains, but little changed. May their present owners have a reverend care of them.

EDGAR SYERS

THE CALENDAR IS OUT OF DATE

The bulk of international support has gone to the World Calendar, a 12-month scheme that would remove most of the faults of the present system, without drastically upsetting established customs. The year would consist of equal quarters, each having a month of 31 days followed by two months of 30 days. Every quarter would have 13 even weeks, and would begin on Sunday and end on Saturday.

The World Calendar has already been endorsed by the representatives of 14 nations; and favourable action by the United States may be inferred from the friendly attitude of our Central Statistical Board, which is composed of four cabinet members. France and England have postponed action, pending ecclesiastical agreement on the position of Easter.

From "The American Mercury."

Passion's Slaves

"THE fault, dear Brutus, is not in our stars: but in ourselves that we are underlings!"

Most numerous of underlings are those who are unable to control their sexual desires.

Can you not picture the seductive Josephine Beauharnais, using every tiniest ounce of her fascinations upon Napoleon? Greatly shaken as she feels her power over her masterful husband slipping away—he has realized the hopelessness of expecting her to give him an heir—she is beginning to realize that her ascendancy is on the wane. How that amazing Creole crumbles in self-esteem, as her consort slips away to bed, with a cold wave of the hand.

"Not to-night, Josephine!"

Equally easy is to picture Nell Gwynn (Mistress, not Queen) giving way to that wild rage which only red-haired women of ardent temperament know. She has faced the pleasure-loving Charles II. with some impossible demand or other; and he looks at her with quiet disdain.

"No, Nellie, I cannot agree!"

How she loathes that pale superiority in her regal lover!

Here are two of women's weapons—the lure of the siren, the angry rebellion of the social underling, who yet knows herself the stronger in will power, all other things being equal. Of such weapons women have an unlimited armoury—the smile, the frown, the tear—but every one of these weapons, both of offence and defence, are powerless against man's surest shield of self-control.

One thing they dread—a quiet masculine self-sufficiency. "Hell holds no fury like a woman scorned!"

To make a woman mad, to bring her to those hysterics (even to-day there are hysterical women!) which is her final weapon, nothing is more adamant than that granite-like coldness of contempt. When a woman's eyes dart from left to right of her lover's face, seeking to probe beneath the surface, and she fretfully sighs: "I am never sure of you. Never do I seem to know what you are thinking," the "mere man" can at least take unction to his soul that he is not quite "passion's slave."

Listen to wise old Burton, in his *Anatomy of Melancholy*, upon the subject of Love and Lust. He is writing over three centuries ago:—

Love indeed (I may not deny) first united provinces, built cities, and by a perpetual generation makes and preserves mankind. But if it rage, it is no more love, but burning lust, a disease, frenzy, madness, hell. . . It subverts kingdoms, overthrows cities, towns, families; mars, corrupts, and makes a massacre of men! Thunder and lightning, wars, fires, plagues, have not done that mischief to mankind as this burning lust, this brutish passion!

Poor Eve! Heart-rending for a woman to read that she is responsible for so much—but, do you know (see the gleam in her bright eye!) most awfully fascinating!

Lover, beware! She is fooling thee!

Ah me! there are not enough of such stern Burdett lighthouses among mortal men to shed a sufficiency of light over those tempestuous seas of the "way of a man with a maid!" (Rather might we not say the "way of a maid with a man"?—for my half-century of sexual potency has taught me that woman is the pursuer, man the pursued!) Waiting for the tempest of passionate desire (male *versus* female) to abate, how many, many "ships that pass in the night" have met that wreck on the rocks of an insensate Desire?

In North London, spread over the pavement every Friday, is a strange spot known as Caledonian Market.

I bought an Egyptian Mummy there once for fifteen shillings. Smuggling it to the hotel in a taxi, I unwashed the millenium-old brown folds of linen. It was the mummy of a woman—priestess or prostitute—princess or plebian? Who knew! But the romance of that hour is inexpressible. Once, long, long ago, this bundle of dried-up matter, resembling nothing on earth so much as smoke-darkened stockfish, had known Romance. She was beloved, within the star-dappled streets of ancient Karnack; and through this empty skull crept beautiful girlish thoughts of Love and Life. She sat many evenings beside the Nile, a sistrum on her knee, wearing a lovely pleated skirt of white linen, while her proud young breasts were touched with the moonlight and the dew. . . .

How true that—

Everything created
In bounds of earth and sky
Hath longings to be mated:
Must couple or must die!

There is an inexorableness about that "must couple" which makes woman as a sex the greatest force in creation. To every mortal mind must come that aspiration—to love and to be loved! What is sweeter or nobler? But . . . query? With what aim and ambition, and to what goal? If it be for the ephemeral sensation of delight alone, and not for a complete identity of being (with the eager desire for children as the crown of its joys) then is it only to be labelled Lust!

Wrote the cynical Byron:—

What men call gallantry and the gods adultery
Is much more common where the climate's sultry!

I am penning these lines in Nigeria, where the sun eternally soaks one's blood-stream with a yearning for affection. If the Testament is to be taken *au sérieux* (Romans viii. 6)—

To be carnally minded is *death*,

then are we all foresworn to extinction: Since the lure of the tropics is undeniable in the way of philandering and love-making. Rather to be carnally minded is *life*—for has not Nigeria's population grown to over twenty millions of mortals under White Man's Rule, inside a brief four decades? From something below half that figure we have increased and multiplied!

One of our popular Nigerian journals had the happy thought, a few Christmases ago, to publish in its annual a simple photograph of a nude little negress. She is seated beside an equally nude little negro. Both are below the adolescent age. Her arm is about his neck; his hand is upon her baby-apple breast. They look deep into the eyes of each other.

The text below ((Yoruba) is so "broad" that I dare not give any other translation than the age-old rhyme:—

In for a penny, in for a pound,
'Tis Love that makes the world go round!

But, let me add, for the sake of that "natural" photograph alone, tens of thousands of unlettered Africans bought the Annual; and that study of child-life is regarded in their homes with the reverence accorded, in the cottage of the famous Russian peasant, to his *ikon*.

C'est l'amour, l'amour qui fait le monde au ronde!

Oh, the number of love's protestations that have come my way (and must have come yours!) since first I knew the difference between male and female! There are men and women, thank whatever powers there be, in this beloved Nigeria of ours, who refuse to fit into any class distinction. They are the only real and perdurable people in a realm of ephemeral shadows. I care not whether their complexion be white or brown or yellow or red or black, so long as they be human! In rank, they may be prince or poet

or pimp or prostitute or pedler or priest; artist or artisan! To me it is a matter of indifference how they are clad, so long as they have a sufficiency of pride in their bodies to remain clean and wholesome!

These are the lovers that count! They do not clutter up their existence with a lot of useless conceits; but they exhale their soul as the rose exhales its scent. They give themselves as the sun or the wind gives; and, like the rain, "they fall on just and unjust alike."

It is glorious to live among people who can still be *natural* to the extent that they retain, as a birthright, this unselfconscious respect for the decencies. These decencies have been alienated from most mortals by their own hypocrisy and self-seeking!

These "naturals" are the people who count. *These* are the true lovers! To such we can cry:—

The wide wide world could not enclose thee—
For thou art the world, the world to me!

. . . "In ourselves," then, lies hidden the failure or the success, the fault or the ornament. He who is master of his own fate, is master of the world. She who is the owner of her own body need never fear disdain from any man!

Let us live and love in a realm where death rounds all with sleep as its fitting end (my pitiful Egyptian mummy!), rather than hope for some impossible paradise where love is not! "In heaven is neither marriage nor giving in marriage!"

For me, for you, let this visible earth exist.

Nigeria.

J. M. STUART-YOUNG

Red

GONE are those halcyon days when one could select a colour for the very sound reason that it appealed to one's particular taste. In these times one has to exercise more caution on such a matter, for colours have developed a political significance.

Easily the most sinister of all the hues which have, so to speak, been politically adopted is red. It is a fact well known, of course, that red is almost always associated with sinister influences. Satan, for example, is generally depicted in habiliments of red; then there is the proverbial red rag with its stimulating effect on nearby bulls. Also worthy of mention are red noses, said to be the incriminating stigma of the none-too-moderate imbibers of alcohol, and by no means least in importance is the ultra-sinister red tape.

Red, in the realm of politics, is the colour choice of Socialists and Communists. But, it has become a fashion with people, whose outlook is blurred by an almost pathetic reliance on large-circulation newspapers, to term anyone a red whose ideas are at variance with the viewpoint expressed by these journals. Opposition to the *status quo* no matter how slight is unhesitatingly indicted as the outcome of "red" propaganda. Nor does this misuse of terms end here. "Red" has become synonymous with anarchy, incendiarism, and bloody revolution. It has evolved into a term of opprobrium to designate all that is abhorrent and repugnant in human behaviour when roused to the pitch of fanaticism by political bigotry and hatred. Under the cover of the word "red" the blame for the introduction of violence, terrorism, and riotousness into politics is laid at Socialism's door. So well has the hypnotic influence of repetition worked that people who ought to know better talk glibly of the "red terror" or the "red menace" chiefly because they frequently encounter these phrases, and by using them they get the impression that they are thereby keeping abreast with the times.

If only they would pause awhile to review recent happenings in the world they would not perpetuate the folly. It was not a wicked red, but a treacherous Spaniard, who had sworn allegiance to the elected Government, that plunged Spain into war. It was not a red terror which

caused the massacre of the inhabitants of Guernica, and laid the town in ruins. Neither were "reds" responsible for the atrocities witnessed by a Scottish nurse in Spain, and vouched for by the Duke of Atholl in a letter published in the *News-Chronicle* on February 21; the facts being confirmed from another source on February 24, in the same journal. Here is an extract:—

The Fascists drop from planes pretty little chocolate boxes, and the poor little mites of children run to pick up what they take to be the much-looked-for sweets.

They feverishly start to open the boxes, when suddenly the bomb concealed inside goes off, and they are left without hands, and their little faces charred and burned beyond recognition.

Time and time again it has been urged against the leaders of the Russian Revolution, who, of course, were reds of the deepest dye and the Spanish Government, which at the time, was more Radical than Socialist, that they deliberately ordered the burning of Churches, connived at the shooting of priests and nuns, and generally instituted an orgy of religious persecution. Little or no attempt has been made by those who assume the role of accusers to assess the part played by both churches prior to and during the conflicts. Both possessed power and wealth; both stood serenely by while the masses were enduring poverty and hardship. Indeed they made it their business to keep the people illiterate and submissive to their rulers. Then, when danger threatened them, both allied themselves against the working people's cause.

Granted, innocent priests and nuns lost their lives or suffered torment. These happenings are to be deplored, but they cannot be avoided. The passions which inflame people in revolt, or in defence of something prized, cannot allow delay in order to discriminate between friend and foe. They set in motion a veritable human hurricane which destroys and devastates everything that bars its path.

Even so, however, the partly religious persecution of the Jews in Germany, which is not a red crusade, is a mere monstrous, more fiendishly cruel episode in human history than anything the "reds" have perpetrated. Nor will the reasons advanced to explain it withstand close scrutiny.

Any attempt to discredit the "reds" is really a subtle method of exposing the working class as irresponsible and, on the whole, callous ruffians. For if there is any colour which may be symbolical of the toilers of the nation that colour is assuredly red.

Red is emblematic of the blood that has been the purchase price of that hard-won liberty we enjoy to-day. Red stands for life. And life means little else than bare subsistence unless it moves amidst pleasant environs, has opportunities for pursuit of knowledge, and the arts, the free expression of opinion, and for development of innate talent. Most of the so-called crimes attributed to the "reds" have been committed in the name of human liberty.

C. MCKELVIE

Correspondence

MIRACLE OF THE SACRED FLAME

TO THE EDITOR OF THE "FREETHINKER"

SIR,—Being a well known Freethinker at St. Mary's (Portsea), the vicar (Canon Robins) wrote and informed me that there would be no debate, but asked me to attend in order to give another padre a good audience, the subject being "Miracle."

However, I thought my time would be better occupied in the interest of "Freethought," by referring to a back copy of the *Portsmouth Evening News* of April 29, 1938, and sending extracts from an article written by a local man concerning his experience in the "Holy Sepulchre," Jerusalem.

During Easter, 1920, Mr. R. Adamson as a member of the military police was in charge of fifty Indian troops, and practically lived inside the Church for two weeks, during the "Feast of the Holy Fire."

Everybody who went inside were searched for firearms, including the Patriarch himself. He states that the actual ceremony of the "Holy Fire" is trickery, though the Copts will not have it so.

They maintain it is "Divine Fire," but as he supervised that part of the service he knew different.

After the Easter festivals he was placed in charge of the Jaffa Gate, he had to search everybody, he had the delicate task of searching higher class Mohammedan women at the point of the revolver, they will not allow men to touch them.

Out of a total collection of 672, firearms, knives, etc., 409 were found on women. The Arab had placed too great a faith on the untouchability of his womenfolk. Martial law recognized no such freedom.

Mr. Adamson states after the Coptic festival some American and Australian tourists asked him to show them the Tomb "and the Fire Pillar." The place where the "Holy Fire" is supposed to emerge is a large blackened hole in a marble pillar, whereupon one member of the party exclaimed: "Won't it light; it's just like one of our cigarette lighters?"

This article only confirms what already has been written about Miracles in the *Freethinker*.

A. W. SCOTT

CHRISTIAN ARROGANCE

SIR,—Cowed by the Bishop of Hull, the Rector of Bridlington, and the Freechurch Council, the Bridlington Town Council, sitting on March 22 as the general purposes committee, refused, without discussion, permission for Bridlington Cinemas to open on Sundays.

Mr. Jack Batt, as reported in the *Daily Herald* of March 23, said: "If this decision is confirmed by the Council it means they have deliberately flaunted public opinion and disregarded the wishes of those who put them in office. They have ignored the plebiscite, we took of every house in the borough, which showed 7,500 in favour of opening and only 1,500 against."

C. CLAYTON DOVE

BRAILLE

SIR,—My husband has just become a borrower from the National Library for the Blind, 35 Great Smith Street, and on perusing the catalogue, I was pleased to find titles of the works of well known Freethinkers, including your own book, *The Other Side of Death*.

LOUISE M. BURY

SUNDAY LECTURE NOTICES, Etc.

LONDON

OUTDOOR

KINGSTON-ON-THAMES BRANCH N.S.S. (Market Place): 7.30, Mrs. N. B. Buxton.

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

WEST LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (Hyde Park): 3.30, Sunday, Messrs. Bryant, Barnes, Collins and Mrs. N. Buxton. Weather permitting.

COUNTRY

OUTDOOR

BIRTLEY (Welfare Hall): 7.30, Thursday. A Debate—"Is Moral Re-armament the Answer?" Affir.: Mr. T. Harwood. Neg.: Mr. J. T. Brighton.

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

EDINBURGH BRANCH N.S.S. (Mound): 7.0, Mrs. Muriel Whitefield (Glasgow). A lecture.

MANCHESTER BRANCH N.S.S. (Eccles Market): 7.30, Friday. Bury Market, 8.0, Saturday. Stevenson Square, 7.0, Sunday. Mr. W. A. Atkinson will speak at these meetings.

MIDDLESBROUGH (Davison Street): 7.0, Wednesday. Mr. J. T. Brighton.

STOCKTON-ON-TEES (Jubilee Hall): 7.15, Sunday, Mr. J. T. Brighton.

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

The liability of members is limited to £1, in case the Society should ever be wound up.

All who join the Society participate in the control of its business and the trusteeship of its resources. It is expressly provided in the Articles of Association that no member, as such, shall derive any sort of profit from the Society, either by way of dividend, bonus, or interest.

The Society's affairs are managed by an elected Board of Directors, one-third of whom retire (by ballot), each year, but are eligible for re-election.

Friends desiring to benefit the Society are invited to make donations, or to insert a bequest in the Society's favour in their wills. The now historic decision of the House of Lords in *re Bowman and Others v. the Secular Society Limited*, in 1917, a verbatim report of which may be obtained from its publishers, the Pioneer Press, or from the Secretary, makes it quite impossible to set aside such bequests.

A Form of Bequest.—The following is a sufficient form of bequest for insertion in the wills of testators :—

I give and bequeath to the Secular Society, Limited, the sum of £ free from Legacy Duty, and I direct that a receipt signed by two members of the Board of the said Society and the Secretary thereof shall be a good discharge to my Executors for the said Legacy.

It is advisable, but not necessary, that the Secretary should be formally notified of such bequests, as wills sometimes get lost or mislaid. A form of membership, with full particulars, will be sent on application to the Secretary, R. H. ROSETTI, 68 Farringdon Street, London, E.C.4.

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G. W. FOOTE

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