

THE FREETHINKER

• EDITED by CHAPMAN COHEN •

— Founded 1881 —

Vol. LIX.—No. 18

SUNDAY, APRIL 30, 1939

PRICE THREEPENCE

PRINCIPAL CONTENTS

	Page
<i>Germany and the World—The Editor</i> - - - -	273
<i>Taras Shevchenko—Jack Lindsay</i> - - - -	275
<i>The "Re-Armament" of Religion—G. Bedborough</i> - - - -	276
<i>Voltaire's Debt to England—H. Cutner</i> - - - -	277
<i>The Sense Organs—G. H. Taylor</i> - - - -	282
<i>Tom Paine's Message to Our Day—Bayard Simmons</i> - - - -	283
<i>N.S.S. Agenda</i> - - - -	284
<i>Byron—W. Kent</i> - - - -	285

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

Views and Opinions

Germany and the World

THIS country is being rapidly organized for war—mainly because none of the conquering countries was fitted to organize for peace when the last war closed. But if war comes, and unless our statesmen display more courage—in both speech and action—than they have hitherto shown, it will come, then there is no war we have had that will be more justifiable than this one. I do not mean by this that the hands of this country are spotless; on the contrary, there are some very nasty spots on our hands, and these spots will not easily be erased. After all, it was Britain that in modern times set the standard of national greatness as consisting mainly in vast "possessions" in all parts of the globe, and so ultimately made it necessary for other powers to break the peace of Europe if they were to become "great" powers also. That we gave to other powers—with whom we were at peace—the freedom of the seas, and freedom of trade does not affect the issue. No man is at ease when he may walk down what should be a public road only by permission of a resident land-owner. To say that we managed these great possessions better than other people would have done is beside the point. It was neither mental nor moral greatness that we had in view, but the power to take and to hold, the power to permit and to prohibit, that was set as a standard of national greatness. The standard was set, and there is the same craving to be in the fashion in international affairs as there is in the matter of dress.

For these reasons we protested at the outset of the last war, and right through the war against the foolish fashion of blaming Germany for the war. Writing in October, 1914, we said—and the *Freethinker* was almost alone in saying it:—

Let us be fair even to Germany. Her sin lies not in the fact of her ideals being of a kind unknown to, and unhonoured by, the rest of Christian Europe. Her sin lies in her having allowed these ideals to govern

her more completely than has been the case elsewhere. She has a severe attack of a general disease. . . . We are seeing in the Germany of to-day the influence of a teaching and of ideals that has never ceased to exert a commanding influence on the Christian world. In that world wealth and brute force have always been worshipped with a more or less whole-hearted devotion. The worship has usually been disguised, but it has been there. German Junkerism simply shows the hideous thing stripped of all disguise.

And again, at a later date, when the victors were insisting that Germany should admit its war-guilt:—

With one country after another roving the earth on what were fundamentally piratical enterprises, taking by treaty what it could, by force or trickery where it could not, and each of them building larger armies and navies, it is quite evident that war, sooner or later, was certain. The only question was who was to commence? When men go all over the world scattering trains of powder it does not seem very important to fix on the person who actually dropped the match that caused the explosion. The whole policy of Europe meant war sooner or later.

* * *

Against Humanity

It cannot be because Hitler wishes to possess colonies, or to have a powerful army, or a navy that can sail the seas at its own will, that reasonable men and women are condemning the new Germany. In desiring these things Germany is following the example of others, and in using armed force to press its claims and to uphold its ideas of greatness and independence it is following an example that we have often set. There is no nation in existence that can afford to throw stones at others on account of the way they have acquired possessions or express their ideas of national greatness. Certainly our own hands are not sufficiently clean to hold them up in horror at either mere annexations or the use of force.

The antipathy to the existing German regime rests on other grounds. Germany has substantially declared war on civilization. It has openly avowed that if it makes a treaty it will adhere to it so long as it finds it to its advantage to do so. Both Hitler and Mussolini have laid it down in precise language that they will lie as often as it serves their purposes. Mussolini commenced his career with the assassination of a leading politician. Hitler inaugurated his by burning down the German House of Parliament so that he might accuse his political opponents of the crime. Since the rise of the Nazis to power science has been prostituted, the best brains of the country have been driven into exile or left to rot in concentration camps, with intervals of torture. Deliberately German Nazism has perpetrated a cold-blooded brutality towards old men, women and children, has robbed and murdered on a scale and with a careful

premeditation such as the world has never before experienced. It has done these things, not in the delirium of a great triumph or in the semi-insanity of religious frenzy, but in cold forethought. The deliberate aim has been to make the people of Germany ashamed of all in which they should take pride, and proud of everything of which they should be ashamed. Nothing like the policy of the present German Government has ever before darkened the human horizon. To call its members criminals is to insult the legally branded criminal class in every country in the world. And shocked as the vast majority of British people have been by what they know, they are but imperfectly informed of the outrages of which the German Government has been guilty.

* * *

The Fifth Column

The Spanish Civil War brought into common use a significant phrase—"the fifth column." The term covered those who, while doing what they could to further the Italian-German invasion of Spain, professed loyalty to the Republican Government. Apparently we have something approaching a "fifth column" in this country. It is made up of a negligible handful who have persuaded themselves that some form of Fascism would be good for the country, a larger body who believe that if the gangsters will confine their efforts to the territory they now control the German people will ultimately pull down Hitlerism from within, another section that is always opposed to advanced ideas of any kind, and, lastly, big financial interests, which in the present state of Christian civilization is the only thing that is thoroughly international. This is an interest that is vigilant, powerful, well organized, and knows of no barrier of creed, colour or nationality. It does not believe in the brotherhood of man, but it has a profound faith in the kinship of dollars, marks, francs, pounds, or any other form of currency. Added to this there is the religious (mainly Roman Catholic) interest which would rather see civilization wrecked than join hands with Russia in an effort to keep Fascism within prescribed limits. Between them these forces have given us the tragedy of Munich, and they have placed Hitler in a position stronger than he could have dreamed of achieving for many years without the assistance of our composite "fifth column."

It is the influence of this column that is wholly responsible for the way in which a military alliance with Russia, which offers a definite bar to German aggression, has hitherto been prevented. The Government has been warned by Conservatives such as Churchill, Lord Baldwin and Eden, by papers such as the *Observer*, a journal that for long enough protested against any close association with Russia, and by clerics such as the Archbishop of Canterbury, that it is only with the help of Russia that this country can count on a moderately speedy end to any armed conflict with Germany, now that the Chamberlain policy has given her control of Central and South-Eastern Europe. The Government is warned by the *Catholic Times* of April 21 (and Catholic papers are always under the guidance of authority) which screams that the "Catholics of Britain will not fight as allies of the Atheist Dictatorship," and in the United States the Roman Catholic Bishop of Buffalo says that if America forms an alliance with Russia, he will advise the 20,000,000 Catholics in the United States not to fight, and the *Catholic Times* gives the same advice to Roman Catholics of the British Empire. Lord Hastings publicly protests against the Archbishop of Canterbury sanctioning an alliance with Russia, and it will be remembered that one of the reasons given for the surrender of Munich was that Russia was not in a position to assist if the situation ended in war.

This was stated by Lord Winterton, a member of the Government, and the falsity of the statement was such that he was compelled to make a prompt apology. It is a ragged sort of army this "fifth column" of ours, but it works, and it has influence, the greater because it works so much underground.

* * *

Keeping it Dark

Here are other indications. A film, "Professor Manlock" has just been banned by the Film Censor. It tells the story of a German Jewish doctor of eminence, who is deprived of his post and who suffers the customary Nazi brutalities. The reason given for censoring the film is that it "is not suitable for exhibition in this country." It has been exhibited in the United States with great approval, but the British public may not see it. Why may not the film be shown? The truthfulness of the picture cannot be denied, and now, if at any time, the British people need reminding of what it is they are asked to arm against. Is it essential that our statesmen, and other public men shall still speak of a Government which Mr. Cummings, in the *News-Chronicle* truthfully describes as a "gang of murderous rascals," as though they were perfect gentlemen, "all honourable men"? Was it even necessary that Ministers should advise the King to send birthday greetings to Hitler, the chief of the gang? Neither America nor France offered congratulations. It only needed an expression of hope that Hitler might realize his ambitions to make the situation complete. The doctrine of "appeasement" has lost its public value, but it is evidently not dead.

Again, one part of the Nazi policy is to establish German organizations all over the world for the purpose of undermining the existing Governments, and to create a movement in favour of Germany and Nazism. These organizations are sent from Germany, they act under orders from Berlin, and they are financed from Berlin. A question was recently asked in the Commons whether Sir Samuel Hoare would appoint a Committee to enquire into the activities of these societies in this country. The reply was, No, and the excuse was that the Committee could not add to the information that Sir Samuel already had.

The answer is one that might have been expected from that source. The question was not what information Sir Samuel had, but what was its nature and what would be done about it. The reply was, nothing at all, in spite of the open avowal that one aim of these German societies in this country is political propaganda. One remembers that it was found impossible to maintain diplomatic relations with Soviet Russia so long as propaganda was carried on here. The difference of attitude in the two cases is striking. Nazi propaganda, with its war on learning, on freedom of thought and action, with its characteristic brutalities and barbarism may be permitted, but Soviet Russia must be treated, as far as is possible, as a pariah. Our fifth column is very alert.

* * *

A Vital Issue

There is much more to be said, but I must hasten to a close, and have space for but one more consideration. The present conflict, which may or may not end in war, is not a conflict between two nations or between two groups of nations. It is a fight for the maintenance of even the moderately decent level of life that has been achieved. If Fascism is to live it can only do so by forcing upon other people silence or co-operation. In the end the world must conquer Fascism or it must bend before it in servitude. So long as Nazism exists it must carry on a warfare against other nations. Nazism if it is to maintain its slave

state in the midst of nations that are relatively free must plot against their existence. The more a Fascist nation enlarges its borders the more it becomes subject to the liberal ideas around it. Admit these liberal ideas it dare not; it must kill them if it is itself to survive. To talk of Fascist nations living at peace with others is to talk arrant nonsense, and the intellectual level of our statesmen is indicated by their thinking of doing so. We can live at peace with Fascism only as a policeman lives at peace with a burglar. One might as well talk of a germ of a deadly disease living in harmony with the human organism. Tyranny is never so permanently attractive as liberty. A people who live in freedom may tolerate with comfort even a Fascist theory, as it may tolerate a distorted human being without any desire to perpetuate the type. But a tyranny can never afford to tolerate the germ of freedom. For that germ will bore through the web of oppression as an acid will burn through a silk dress. It is not, then, an accident that wherever Fascism goes it takes with it something of the Hitler terror. So long as a Fascist State exists it must, merely to preserve itself, make war against a free people and against democratic institutions. In order to live the tyrant's eye must be at every keyhole, the tyrant's foot on every neck. Our statesmen, in their fear of advanced ideas, and in their desire to guard vested interests, have borne testimony to the honesty of Mussolini and Hitler. In the hope of "appeasement" they have handed over to the Fascist Dictators, Spain, and the control of Middle and South-Eastern Europe. But appetite grows by what it feeds on, and having obtained so much their hunger craves for more. We do not fool Hitler by professions of our trust in his honesty, we merely pave the way for more lies. We do not satiate his appetite by giving more territory, we only whet his desire for more. It is not "Many happy returns" that should be upon the lips of our leaders, but the hope that he and his kind will disappear from the human arena they have done so much to disgrace and degrade.

CHAPMAN COHEN

Taras Shevchenko

THE Soviet Union is celebrating the 125th Anniversary of the birth of Taras Shevchenko, poet of the Ukraine. Naturally it has been in his native Ukraine that the main celebrations have occurred; for instance, at Kiev on March 6, a huge statue of him was unveiled before a gathering of 200,000 people. But all over the Union of Republics honour has been paid to the poet in various ways with that tremendous whole-hearted acclamation of the culture-bringer which is the special characteristic of Soviet society.

As Ukrainian culture, like all the regional cultures of the Tsarist Empire, was in pre-Soviet days proscribed and trampled on with all the energy of bureaucratic officialdom, the outer world may be excused for having known very little of Shevchenko. But now his work has been brought forward with the proper emphasis, and Shevchenko takes his place in the area of world-poetry. He doubly earned the hatred of the Tsarist regime. Not only did his work powerfully keep alive the Ukrainian line of culture; it also was an expression of direct revolt against all the forces of oppression, social, religious, and political. Shevchenko was a talented painter as well as great poet; especially in his drawings of landscape and peasant life does he kindle with a lively clarity of form. That quality, which is pleasantly present in those drawings, wakes, however, into profound power in his poetry. He belongs to the line of Theocritus and Burns. That

is, he takes up a folk-poetry and recreates it on a more compact intellectual level.

Here is a brief sketch of his life. Born in 1814 in a village of Kiev Gubernia, he came of serf parentage. Throughout his childhood he knew all the bitterness of a crushed serf-peasantry. In a poem shortly to be quoted, we will hear his description of those years. At nine he was left an orphan. He longed to study and to draw, but he had to work as water-drawer for a drunken deacon. Then he had a job as assistant to a house-painter. He drove horses for a priest, worked as shepherd, and finally as page-boy for the landlord, Engelhardt. In his spare time he used secretly to copy pictures which hung on his master's walls; and when found at this work was mercilessly flogged. But the master at least realized that the serf-boy had a genuine talent and decided to exploit it. He apprenticed him to a Pittsburg craftsman painter. The artist Soshenko, however, noticed the boy's work, and introduced him to other artists and poets. This circle decided that Shevchenko must be liberated. So an artist, Bryullov, painted a portrait of Shevchenko, and raffled the work to raise the money to buy the lad's freedom. Shevchenko was now enabled to study in earnest. Reading Homer, Goethe, Schiller, Scott and Pushkin, he began his verse-writing. In 1840 he published his poems in a book *Kobzar* (The Minstrel). Although mangled by the censor, the book had a great success. Shevchenko had now to face a great moral choice. He could have sold himself to the ruling-class, who were ready to take him up and patronize him. But in 1843 he visited the Ukraine again. His heart was filled with fierce hatred for the oppressors of his people, and he made his choice. He rejected his chance to be a "success," and threw his lot in with the oppressed. He began his directly revolutionary work, and in 1847 was arrested. He was condemned without trial to become a private soldier in the Orenburg Special Corps, where he was to be kept under continual watch. The Tsar personally added to the sentence, "To be kept under the strictest surveillance and forbidden to write or paint."

Shevchenko, however, at the risk of his life, continued to write poems and stories, and to paint and draw. After ten years of harried life in the army, he was released. But the police still kept on tormenting and humiliating him in every way. Shevchenko never hesitated in carrying on with the choice he had made. At the age of forty-seven, his health sapped by ceaseless brutality and persecution, he died.

I give here translations by myself of two of his poems, which, though inadequately showing his qualities of lyric vividness and purity of intonation, will serve perhaps to convey something of his verve and passion. (These translations, with four others, appear in the March number of *International Literature*, the editor of which gives me permission to print them here.) First, a sweeping song of his:—

When I am dead, bury me deep
 Within the funeral mound.
 Bury me out in the wide steppe,
 in Ukraine's beloved ground.
 Out where the boundless stretching fields
 forever may be seen,
 and the steep banks with the Dneiper
 roaring along between.

And when the Roarer from the Ukraine
 bears down to the blue sea
 the enemy's blood, those fields and mountains
 will see the last of me,
 for then I shall leave them all at last
 and soar up into the skies
 with a blessing for god—but now, meanwhile,
 no god I recognize.

Bury me deep, but yourselves rise up
 and break your chains in glee,

And with the oppressors' evil blood
sprinkle liberty,
and when that great new family's born,
the family of the free,
O have a kindly and peaceful word
with which to remember me.

It is pleasant to record that his people were able to carry out his wish with regard to the burial place. They buried him not far from the City of Kanev, near Kiev, on a high hill overlooking the Dneiper. And in their festivals of acclamation this year they, now part of "the family of the free," have had the "kindly and peaceful words" of remembrance for which he asked.

Freethinkers will note that Shevchenko's attack on the forces of oppression is four-square, including a repudiation of the religion which was part of his people's fetters. In the following poem he makes the direct attack on religion:—

If, gentlemen, you knew the ways
of folk whom endless sufferings craze,
you'd write no elegies again
nor praise your god—and praise in vain—
a mockery of our grievous days.

For forest-hut you strangely sigh
as "heaven of peace." Don't ask me why.
In such a hut despair I learned.
There down my cheeks the teardrops burned,
my first wild tears. O, it's no lie—
no evil things that god has made
but filled that log-hut in the glade . . .
for which as "heaven of peace" you sigh.

Heaven is not the name I'd give
that log-hut where I used to live
by the clear pond, at village-end.
There, swaddling me, my mother would bend
and as she swaddled, sing a song
pouring her tale of grief and wrong
into her child, and in that place,
that forest-hut, no heaven of grace
I saw but hell. Dark slavery.
and ceaseless toil. No one was free
to pause and praise this god you praise.
There my good mother, aged by days
of toil and misery, while still young,
into the grave of the poor was flung.
There my father sat with us weeping—
a small bare lot, our store all spent—
under so cruel a fate he bent
and died, his master's profits heaping,
and we among the folk went creeping
like little mice.

To school I went—
yes, water for the pupils I drew.
As labourers my brothers existed
awhile; then, beaten, they enlisted.
My sisters . . . sisters, woe for you,
My darling young ones—what to say?
For whom are you living on earth? for whom?
In stranger houses you stayed, and stay,
hirelings, you'll meet the hireling's doom.

At the mere thought my memory cowers . . .
that hut at village-end . . . I shrink.
Such are the deeds to which we sink,
my god, within this "heaven" of ours
set on an earth you've blessed so well.
In that heaven we created hell.
While for the "home aloft" we pray,
so peaceful with our brothers we're found
we use them to plough up the ground
and water it with their tears all day.

Maybe there's more. No, I can't say . . .
Only I can't help feeling rather
(since by your will, you god, alone,
in this our ragged heaven we groan)
that you maybe, yes, you, our father,
sit in the skies and mock us folk,
plotting with masters to fit the yoke
and rule the world.

Turn here your gaze
Here a green forest bends and sways,
and further onward you can see,
like a strip of linen, a small pond
with pussywillows draped beyond,
dipping in the water quietly
their green branches. A heaven, true.
But look at it, take a closer view.

What stirs in that heaven? Answer me.
Nothing but joy and praise appears.
On you the only saint men call,
praising your wonders down the years?
Don't think it! Praise from none at all!
Only blood, and curses, and tears.
Curses, curses! What do they tell?
Nothing sacred on earth can be.
I think that you yourself as well
are damned by men eternally.

JACK LINDSAY

The "Re-Armament" of Religion

"MORAL RE-ARMAMENT" is the title of a booklet issued at sixpence, edited by H. W. Austin, and apparently having the same aim as the Archbishop of Canterbury's luckless and witless "Recall to Religion." It is said to be the biggest seller of the day. The words "Moral Re-armament" are stated to have been a slogan invented by Lord Baldwin. The booklet consists of a bunch of letters, etc., reprinted from various newspapers.

There is some internal evidence that the "Oxford" Group inspired the letters—anyhow it fits into the "group's" methods, and is quite consistent with the general shiftiness of the Group's ways of working. This is not to be taken as indicating any reflection on Mr. Austin's sincerity. We only wonder why Dr. Buchman's contribution is placed last amongst the Letters, although it is quoted from an address he delivered four months before this sudden onrush of celebrities to express similar pious hopes in public newspapers.

These letters are only remarkable if they lead people to believe in their spontaneity. It is impossible that all these writers—many of them not having written anything for publication in their lives till now—suddenly and spontaneously sought each other's co-operation to issue a letter which happened fortuitously to express the views of all who signed it.

Of course there seems nothing incongruous in a number of clergymen assuring the public, unitedly as well as each from his own pulpit, that God exists, and that the old Gospel of "Save-his-soul-alive-oh" is still the way of salvation, even in a world where collective defence against persecution and aggressive injustice is so obviously and urgently essential.

But why should "thirty-six of the best-known sporting personalities in the country" (pp. 7, 22-24) join in an appeal which reads exactly like a sermon by Dr. Buchman, expressing Dr. Buchman's own ideals? The Master of the Beaufort Hunt, the Winner of the Davis Cup, the Flyweight Boxing Champion of the World, and even the Manager of Arsenal F.C. can properly say what we all believe to be true, that "Sport lies close to every British heart." But must we believe (as all these and other amicable favourites of our leisure hours are said to believe) that "the principles of sport" should "become dominant in the life of the nation?" We prefer, of course, the "spirit of sport" to the "Spirit of God." A team of "spiritually minded sportsmen," however, would be nothing but a spiritual "sport."

The first letter in this series appeared in most daily papers on September 1, 1938. It was signed by 33 M.P.'s! What an insignificant number of insignifi-

cant persons! Probably more than half the present House of Commons would gladly have added numbers—without weight—to so pious a screed. In this original letter the "Oxford" Group is specifically advertised without stating, of course, that the whole idea was a Group stunt. They recommended (in words quoted from Lord Halifax) "the subjection of every part of our being to the service of God's will."

A letter appeared in the *Times* a week later, signed by Lord Baldwin and sixteen other famous persons, Field Marshals, Admirals, and similar big-wigs, endorsing the first letter and making the queer suggestion: "Were we together with our fellow-men everywhere, to put into this task the energy and resourcefulness that we now find ourselves obliged to expend on national defence, the peace of the world would be assured." (p. 10). It was like saying that when everybody joins the Oxford Group nobody will oppose it!

On September 16, Mr. Austin kept the ball rolling by writing individually to the *Times*, quoting Herr Hitler with approval, but suggesting that "the guidance of God" was desirable.

A few days later seventeen "Labour Leaders" were simultaneously inspired to write to the press in favour of "God's great plan for mankind." The "Leaders" did not include Attlee, Morrison, Clynes, Snell . . . but the omissions are too numerous to name. The Labour men who signed are also local preachers or Church members. They would naturally sign any document advertising their own sect, but ignoring the Socialist or Labour policy which they were elected to advocate. In America these people are called "pi-labourites."

The same month, the Mayor, Deputy-Mayor, and Councillors of East Ham suddenly felt impelled to write to the *Daily Herald* about it. Then came "Leaders of the London Co-operative Society," whose vagueness on the subject under discussion is atoned for by their assurance that Britain would do well to support "the fundamental moral principles of the Co-operative and Labour movements." Liverpool's Lord Mayor, Bishop and Catholic Archbishop followed East Ham's example. A St. Andrew's Day Manifesto signed by fourteen Scots (thirteen are titled personages) demanded that "obedience to God must replace self-will."

Perhaps the gem of the collection is found in the letter signed by Newspaper Bosses, led off appropriately by Mr. Christ (of Allied Newspapers), seconded by R. D. Blumenfeld (*Daily Express*), and H. B. Grotrian (Provincial Newspapers Ltd.) These worthies who can so easily control the evil tendencies and antagonism to free expression in their own papers might well begin with personal "moral re-arming." We wonder what these press leaders mean by their reference to "the discipline of expression . . . which we expect from a Minister of the Crown, however he may be provoked." It looks like an attack on Mr. Eden for daring to criticize Hitler.

Quotations follow from foreign journals, including laudations from Germany and Italy. The Italian comment approves as "an inspired and impassioned" proof that the "English people is beginning to recognize the existence of evil forces ever more actively at work for the overthrow of civilization." And the same paper (the Milan *Italia*) sees, behind all this talk about "Moral Re-arming," evidence that "these English Catholics and Protestants have united to combat Atheism." In this last sentence the *Italia* has let the cat out of the black-coat's bag.

The pretence that religion aims at a superior morality is historically proven to be sheer hypocrisy. Human morality is just so much "filthy rags" to those who "seek first the kingdom of heaven." Here

are three typical samples of Christian admissions that Christianity is more concerned with what happens after death than with the welfare of the living:—

From the *Tablet* (Editorial October 31, 1936):—

From the use made of the word Christianity to-day an ignorant man would imagine that the New Testament is the record of a campaign for social services in Palestine, for health, for education, for a higher standard of living, for things which in fact appear throughout as secondary, trivial or indifferent . . . remember that the Christian religion is a religion incomparably more interested in what happens to men after death than in conditions during earthly life.

From the *British Weekly* (Prof. J. A. Findlay, December 26, 1935):—

We have gone as far along the road of progress engineered by man as we can. Unless we get back to God all our striving for the perfection of human life will land us in the desert of illusion.

From the *Christian World* (E. H. Jeffs, December 12, 1935):—

Our own faith must die if we grow accustomed to thinking of Christianity as a good religion among other good religions. Christianity must be the one possible religion for all men in all ages. . . . If it is just a lofty system of ethics it is nothing.

GEORGE BEDBOROUGH

Voltaire's Debt to England

I.

It is a fact, sometimes forgotten, that Voltaire, though always a bitter enemy of revealed religion, never became an Atheist like Diderot and D'Holbach, but remained to the end a Theist. That his Theism was very often sadly shaken can be seen in some of his works, notably in the poem he published on the earthquake which took place in his lifetime at Lisbon. But he always refused to take the step his two famous contemporaries took when they definitely and boldly declared their Atheism; a God of sorts was necessary for his philosophy, however much this God was not responsible for the religious Voltaire took such delight in exposing.

The truth is that Voltaire was never, with all his genius, able to rid himself of his Jesuit training. In his extremely interesting volume, *The Young Voltaire*, the author, Mr. C. B. Chase, quotes from Lanson's *Vie de Voltaire*:—

For more than thirty years, up to the heated hours of the encyclopedist battle, Voltaire's relations with the Jesuits were never broken. The latter were slow to give up the idea of winning over to their cause a man of such outstanding wit and ability; his disrepute among the Jansenists, to their minds, was greatly in his favour. And he on his side felt deeply indebted to such masters . . . so strong was their hold that he could never free himself from it.

In addition, Voltaire owed a tremendous debt to the early English Deists. He had exceptional opportunities to study their work at first hand, and it can be truly said that the two or three years he spent in England did more to form his subsequent opinions, than anything else in his life. Whatever he wrote thereafter was coloured by the views he learnt from Locke, Newton, and the other great men he actually met in England, or had read about, and studied.

As is the case even now, it was difficult to get into "high society" in France in Voltaire's day, particularly if one belonged to a tradesman's family. But

young Arouet, as he was then known, early realized his literary gifts, and at seventeen, when he left school he had determined upon a literary career, despite the opposition of his father, who wished him to become a lawyer. He also made up his mind that he would enter society if at all possible, because only in that way would he reach financial success. Not for him were the poverty and hunger almost always associated with art and literature. Like some of his aristocratic friends he wished to be always surrounded with wealth and the good things life had to offer. However, the will of his father was too strong for the boy, and he was obliged to take up work in a lawyer's office, later coming under the influence of the Marquis de Saint-Ange, a distinguished lawyer, and an exceptionally well-read man. And from such a teacher Voltaire imbibed a great deal of miscellaneous information which he was able to use later in his literary work. At the same time, he was probably given some of his first introductions to the society he yearned for.

The death of Louis XIV. in 1715 gave him his chance at writing poetry for various Parisian salons where his great gifts in this direction were soon recognized. Unfortunately, Voltaire was blamed for a scurrilous libel on the Regent, and though he was quite innocent, he was sent to the Bastille for nearly a year. Here he finished his first play *Œdipe*, a remarkable production for a young man, especially when, as he himself asserts, he commenced it at eighteen. He also worked hard at his *Henriade*, his great epic poem on the life of Henry IV. of France. And he returned to his beloved society on his release, more popular than ever.

Voltaire had by this time dropped his plebian name of Arouet, added the aristocratic *de*, and, with the successful production of *Œdipe*, became famous. Moreover he knew how to advertise himself; indeed Chase thinks he would have learnt nothing in this direction even from the most modern masters of the art. At all events, he made plenty of money from his play, and managed to keep himself well in the foreground in the highest circles in Paris.

During the next few years Voltaire continued writing and made his plays the vehicle of his ideas on religion, politics, and philosophy. He had, of course, to be very careful as there was a strict censor, and the Roman Catholic Church was all powerful. But though he certainly attacked many old ideas and existing situations, he was then by no means the terrible enemy of "Pinfame," he subsequently became; for that, he had to pass through the fire of other and greater experiences than those he found in the aristocratic salons of France in the 1720's. One of his great qualities, however, even then, was to the fore. "No one," declares Chase, "reading his writings of this period can doubt that Voltaire was a Pacifist. His dislike for the suffering of war, his disgust at its utter uselessness, his hatred for its fanaticism, are strikingly apparent each time he gets a chance to mention the subject. And of all forms of war religious warfare was by far the most detestable to his tolerant spirit." Readers of *Candide* and his historical works will know that he never changed his attitude on this question.

By 1726 Voltaire had achieved a great deal of his ambition, for he was fairly wealthy, his literary genius was recognized in the most critical circles, and he was definitely "in society." Unluckily he offended the more or less worthless son of a duke, the Chevalier de Rohan, who retaliated by having Voltaire beaten by his lackeys—a beating which, when it became known, almost destroyed his reputation. Paris laughed at the idea of a poet, sprung from the "common" people, protesting at being flogged by the servants of a nobleman, and refused to do anything

about it. Voltaire was even refused the honour of a duel, and eventually found himself again in the Bastille. He was, however, very well treated there, and after a little time asked to be allowed to go to England, a request which was immediately granted.

Voltaire chose England because he wished to publish his *Henriade* there, and because he had already met Bolingbroke and other eminent Englishmen in Paris. Bolingbroke spoke French like a native, and Voltaire found in him, as he himself tells us, "all the erudition of his own country and all the politeness of ours. This man who has been immersed the whole of his life in pleasures and in business, has yet found means to learn everything and to remember everything." Bolingbroke rated the *Henriade* very highly, and Voltaire wanted particularly to bring out a sumptuous edition of it in England to achieve fame as well as to make money.

It should not be forgotten that England then was almost an unknown country on the continent. France was the centre of all culture, just as the French language was the language of diplomacy. Of course France had produced some very great artists and writers, and Paris was the Mecca of everyone with a claim to learning, taste and distinction. Almost all that was known of England in the cultivated circles of the French court and salons was that it was inhabited by boors, and was subject to fogs and unpleasant rains. One or two continental writers had endeavoured to enlighten their public with some facts about the English, but little attention was paid to them. England at the time of Voltaire's visit was actually a far greater country than we even at this time give her credit for, and, as Chase points out in his book, "In point of fact, seldom if ever in the history of our Christian civilization has there been such intellectual freedom in any country as there was at this time in England. A combination of political and economic causes had brought about in society a condition of balance and sobriety. . . . This combination of circumstances resulted in an unheard-of state of freedom and tolerance. Religious and political persecutions were almost unknown. Quakers kept their hats on before the officers of the crown, even before the King himself, and Swift, who had a living from the State Church, wrote most virulent attacks upon the Government." All this is in the main true—even if, later on, the increasing freedom of expression led to a tightening of the Blasphemy Laws and an augmenting of prosecutions.

It was the opposite in France at the same period for—to quote Chase again—"No book could be published in France without grave danger, unless it had the express permission of an official of the King, and the most trivial excuse was used for the refusal of this permission. . . . personal liberty was a myth in France." England was indeed in comparison with France "a land of the free." No wonder Voltaire became rapturous in admiration of the country—it was here he would have liked to live "with the sole intention," as he said, "of learning to think."

H. CUTNER

KINGDON CLIFFORD

Yet, in this brief space [he died when thirty-four], he had not only won a reputation as a mathematician of the first order, but had made a real mark on his time, both by the substance of his speculations in science, religion, and ethics, and by the curious audacity with which he proclaimed at the pitch of his voice on the housetops, religious opinions that had hitherto been kept among the family secrets of the *domus Socratica*.—John Morley.

Acid Drops

The *Observer* has turned a complete roundabout face. Mr. Chamberlain has had but one policy, that of "appeasement." There is no shirking the fact that if ever a policy was calculated to play into the hands of Hitler it was this, and the *Observer*, once its heartiest supporter, and who was ready to "appease" Hitler with anything so long as it kept Russia out of the scene, is now firmly on the other side. The garrulous Garvin writes in the issue of April 23:—

There may yet be an eirenicon at Rome. There will never be a second Munich.

Well suppose there is another eirenicon at Rome, is it possible for anyone to be fool enough to imagine that it will stop Hitler and Mussolini promising and lying and plotting just as they are doing now? It is possible that if the anti-Hitler powers are firm, Hitler will retreat again. But the plotting will continue, the spying will continue, and the democracies will have to remain fully armed, groaning under an almost intolerable burden, not merely financial, but moral and intellectual, with the national morale being eaten into by an almost undiluted militaristic atmosphere. Mr. Chamberlain has complained that Hitler lied to him. That is not the case. Hitler told the world what were his aims, and he has lived up to them. We know what Hitler's intentions are far better than we know those of Mr. Chamberlain.

All but a pack of fools and rogues must know that one can no more trust the word of the Bandits of Berlin than one can trust a hungry fox not to raid the chicken run. And a period of armed peace will act in another way. It will enable the "fifth column" to plot and plan so that the opposition to Hitlerism will become enfeebled, and we shall enter on another period of appeasement, which will mean the further strangulation of liberal thought and free institutions. The *Observer* says with truth that Hitler has never changed. He is now what he has always been. That is perfectly true. But that also means that the only real protection is to make it quite clear that no mere verbal agreement with Hitler will do. So long as he and his gang rule Germany and the States we have helped him to acquire, so long must we take measures that will prevent his ever again threatening world-civilization. And there seems no other course than a close alliance between the democratic powers, incorporating as many of the small States as possible, and guaranteeing the independence of these small States against aggression of any kind whatsoever. If we must live armed to the teeth, let us at least use that power with wisdom and for the maintenance of peace. One final comment. The protest against an abnormal control of large areas of the earth by Britain and France is a justifiable one, and with a civilized Germany would offer a legitimate subject for "appeasement." But to hand over bodies of people to the present government of Germany would be an outrage on humanity.

We note elsewhere the furious attack made by the *Catholic Times* on an alliance between Russia and this country. The issue of that paper for April 21 is besprinkled with fulminations against such an alliance, and appears quite ready to see Hitler get his own way with the world rather than approve any military alliance between "atheistic" Russia and, we presume, "godly" Britain. The *C.T.* says that in the event of an alliance its advice to Roman Catholics in this country not to serve in the army is mere sound. Any such advice in a time of war, or even to-day, would be a legal offence, and can be ruled out as mere bluster. Besides, why not advocate the suspension of trade with Russia? Evidently the *Catholic Times* is not ready to sacrifice the profits made by Roman Catholics out of that traffic. But we can assure the *Catholic Times* that if the alliance with Russia is concluded it will not be because the present Government is enraptured with the idea, but because the sheer pressure of public opinion is compelling it to take a step which, had it been taken earlier, would have saved Europe from Munich and all that followed.

Peace, shrieks the *Catholic Times*, cannot be built on an alliance with Atheism. That is a characteristically Roman Catholic lie worthy of even Cardinal Hinsley. The British Government is not forming an alliance with Atheism—its members have not yet reached that stage of mental clarity and moral strength. It is an alliance with a power which in a contest with one of the greatest menaces to civilization we have known may prove decisive. The *Church Times* evidently desires to keep Hitler where he is for the reason that others have wished to keep him in being, to prevent Communistic and Freethinking ideas gaining strength in this country. But no one says that we are adopting Mohammedanism because we form an alliance with Turkey. And even Lord Baldwin, who, with Mr. Chamberlain, is not without responsibility for the present strength of the Fascists in Europe, has just warned the world that the great menace is not "Bolshevism" but Nazism, which would wipe out civilization altogether, and he presses for the Russian alliance.

As ever the Roman Church is afraid of the clash of conflicting ideas, because it knows that in an open conflict, and under fair conditions, Roman Catholicism can never hold its own. But we have given space to this foolish, malicious and lying outburst by the *Catholic Times* because it means that in case of war with Germany it is probable that Roman Catholics may prove an addition to Hitler's fifth column in this country. We must bear in mind two things. First, the Papacy has given its blessing and its thanks to Franco, and Franco, as everyone who thinks knows, whether they admit it or not, is a mere pawn in the hands of Germany and Italy. To support Franco is, therefore, to support Hitler. And that may easily be brought within the compass of Roman Catholic policy.

It must be remembered, as we have so often pointed out, that the Roman Church has no special economic or political theory as a first principle. It may be Conservative or Radical, Communistic or Capitalistic, as it suits its game. Hitler is a profoundly religious man, and has never even renounced his Roman Catholic ideas. It is, therefore, always open to the papacy to make a deal with Nazism, which would guarantee the security of the Roman Church in Germany, and tolerate the persecution of the Jews, Communists, Freethinkers, Socialists, and Anti-Hitlerites as matters of internal political management with which it has no concern. It must also be borne in mind that the late Pope's criticism of Nazism, was delivered ex-cathedra, and is therefore not binding on Roman Catholics. We think there is every likelihood, in the event of war, of an addition to that "fifth column" to which we make reference in "Views and Opinions." The Roman Church will fight the demand for the right of everyone to think as he or she pleases; it will fight advanced ideas in any direction as it has always done, and it will oppose the equality of all religious creeds as heartily, and if needs be as savagely, as Hitler and his criminal gang.

By the way Lord Baldwin, in the speech we have cited, referred to the danger of the "coalition of Paganism and machinery." Lord Baldwin is not on the cultural level of Mr. Chamberlain, and therefore must know better than the remark indicates. Hitler is a very religious man. He believes that God called him to his post, and that God works with him all the time. It is the combination of religion and Nazism working on a people who have been brought up in a society saturated with Christian ideas, and therefore averse to giving proper consideration to new ideas, and unfamiliar with genuine freedom of thought, that gives Nazism its strength. "Paganism" is just cant—cheap religious cant, and there was no necessity for Lord Baldwin spoiling an otherwise good speech by mouthing it.

We "listened-in," the other day to an address by Dr. Soper. It was good enough, save that it had no more to do with essential Christianity than it had to do with the eclipse of the sun. Dr. Soper strings together a number of purely humanitarian ideas, most of which have

achieved a certain stage of actuality in the teeth of Christian opposition, and then calls that Christianity. It is an old dodge, but "God help" Dr. Soper if he ever engages in debate with one who understands Christianity and Freethought, if he takes up the position in the address to which we listened. For example, Dr. Soper based his discourse on the ideal of the family. Unfortunately for him the family is practically ignored by the New Testament. It figures in the Old Bible, not in its best form, but not in the New. Certainly the early Christians never imagined that Christianity was based on family life.

Dr. Soper's aim in his address was to prove that Christianity "works." Of course it does, or it would not be here. A thing must work to exist, which is true of anything: from a flea to a man, from a burglar to an honest person, from a man of honour to a professional politician, and from a conscientious individual to a leader-writer on the yellow press. The question is not whether Christianity works, but where does it work, and what is the real consequence of its working. We wonder whether Dr. Soper would deal with that aspect of the question, and in conditions where it would be possible to at once analyse and test the relevancy and truthfulness of his statements. We do not think he would. That kind of a thing is not a parson's job.

One day, perhaps, our broadcasting service may develop a sense of justice sufficiently strong to permit listeners to hear the "other side" of religion. At present there is once a week an orgy of religious preaching and singing, with presentations of history and sociology, all devised to secure belief in Christianity, or if it cannot do that to produce in the muddled minds of many listeners the feeling that while they do not know where and how Christianity has done, or is doing, good, still it must be doing good somewhere since so many parsons are constantly commending it. A more wide-awake public would reflect that a system or religion that needs so much advocating, and is afraid to permit the other side to be heard, must have something rotten about it. Hitlerism in religion is in no way more commendable than Hitlerism in social life.

It is said that the popular name to-day for taking "Holy Communion" is "cocktail party." A worse description might have been given. We shall not be surprised if some parson, anxious to bring religion up to date, announces that a "Manhattan oyster," or "Bloomsbury Buster" will be served to all communicants. It might attract people.

The Recorder of Margate regrets the abolition of flogging. He believes the "cat" produces "both physical and mental torture." We think we ought to underline "torture." To a psychologist Mr. Gordon is saying more than he is aware of.

A Catholic Truth Society pamphlet on *What Catholics Must Believe*, explains that the Pope is infallible only when he is telling Catholics what they must believe in matter of doctrine, and what they must do in matters of morals. That doesn't appear to leave much for one to decide for oneself, particularly when what Catholics may do can be stretched to cover almost everything. It all sums up in the statement that Roman Catholicism is an excellent religion for those without intelligence or to those who are afraid to use what intelligence they possess. The tract also explains that a Pope *might* do wrong (we appreciate the qualified admission), but not when he is speaking as the head of the Church. What a pity it is that God cannot keep an eye on his representative all the time.

The *Sunday Times* in advocating the fixed date for Easter, explains that if this were done Christians would keep Easter "very near the actual date of the resurrection." We congratulate the *Sunday Times* on knowing

the "actual date" of God's resurrection. No one else is quite certain, and indeed the very date on which Jesus made his appearance in the world was not fixed for centuries after he is supposed to have been born. But the modern newspaper will spare neither trouble nor expense to place before its readers the exact truth.

The Rev. James Campbell has compiled a book of testimonials to the Psalms. He says that no other book has ever taken such a hold on Christendom. Maybe, but if we *are* a Christian, we would not boast about it. For instance, that mixture of hates and curses, "A Communion" is still part of the Book of Common Prayer, which has such an influence that no parson, however much he may feel like indulging in an orgy of "cussing," has the courage to recite from the pulpit. It is based on Psalm 109. If readers wish to get a stomach full of "cussing" they cannot do better than read this psalm. It would almost satisfy Hitler.

The Rev. Leonard Spiller, of St. Martin's Church, Acton, asks his parishioners to drink less. But this is not a protest against "boozing" generally, only against drinking too much of the wine when taking communion. He explains in his parish magazine, that he has had to replenish the wine chalice on many occasions, owing to communicants drinking too heartily. On one day when they prepared wine enough for thirty communicants, the first one drank nearly all of it. He, therefore begs of folk that they will take only a "tiny sip," not a good hearty "swig." It really looks as though there were a chance for a repetition of the trick worked at the marriage feast of Cana. Or we may see some parsons who are anxious to draw big congregations, advertising Holy Communion at ten, "Those who attend are invited to drink heartily of the consecrated wine. 'Warranted of first quality.'"

Mr. George Shuster—for many years editor of the *Commonweal* (U.S.A.)—writes in the picture paper: "Look" about the new Pope. Shuster may still be a Roman Catholic, but he happens also to be a decided enemy of Fascism. He shows no sympathy with the papal indifference to democracy. He posits ten major problems the new Pope has to face and suggests pretty plainly that his holiness will run away from them or support the oppressor. The article is fully illustrated. The pictures show Hitler bending low before the late Pope's representative, General Franco is photographed on his knees, Mussolini with clasped hands and eyes piously downcast while the Pope signs the treaty of 1929. The other pictures include some illustrations of Fascist and Nazi brutalities and of the fatuous Father Coughlin, whose ghastly Radio talks seek to rally gangs of Fascist rioters in "the land of the free"! We doubt if any English popular journal dare risk its circulation by publishing so bold an exposure.

Fifty Years Ago

THE world has gained some little experience since the early days of Christianity. Christ has been expected again and again, but always failed to put in any appearance. Geology and astronomy have expanded man's notions of the universe and somewhat diminished his conceit. Science rebukes the arrogance of the race and the egotism of the individual. It is not quite so easy as it was to suppose that the Maker of the universe came to die for so puny a creature as man, or that the New Jerusalem will descend from heaven to one little satellite of a tenth-rate sun. The world is discovering too that morality is separate from religion, that it arose independently, and can exist apart from it. It is finding that the belief in another life only fosters an other-worldliness which means a selfish subordination of the duties of the present life.

THE FREETHINKER

FOUNDED BY G. W. FOOTE

61 Farringdon Street, London, E.C.4

Telephone No. : CENTRAL 2412.

TO CORRESPONDENTS.

- J. PLIMMER (Smethwick).—Exodus, xxii. 18.
- H. RATHBONE.—Pleased to know you found the Birkenhead lecture so interesting. But listening should be no more than an introduction to reading.
- D. FISHER.—Thanks for note. There is a very real difference between writing "in favour of war" and claiming that there are circumstances where war is less shameful than purchasing "peace" by the sacrifice of one's dignity and self-respect. War can always be avoided if one is prepared to pay the price for it and we have never disguised our opinion that war is, at best, a bad thing, but there are situations where it is a matter of choosing between "bad" and "worse."
- P. N. PATERSON (Chicago).—Thanks for cutting, but we have already dealt at length with Dr. Cronin's very foolish, and untruthful article on "God." The untruthfulness of the article is clear on the writer's own showing, and its foolishness is apparent in almost every paragraph. Our criticism of Dr. Cronin was published in the *Freethinker* for November 27, 1938.
- H. V. MORTON, E. COOTS, AND J. ARNOT.—Letters received. Will appear next week. Crowded out of this issue.
- 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. Rosetti, giving as long notice as possible.*
- Orders for literature should be sent to the Business Manager of the Pioneer Press, 61 Farringdon Street, London E.C.4, and not to the Editor.*
- All Cheques and Postal Orders should be made payable to "The Pioneer Press," and crossed "Midland Bank, Ltd., Clerkenwell Branch."*
- The "Freethinker" will be forwarded direct from the Publishing Office at the following rates (Home and Abroad):— One year, 15/-; half year, 7/6; three months, 3/9.*
- The offices of the National Secular Society and the Secular Society Limited, are now at 68 Farringdon Street, London E.C.4. Telephone: Central 1367.*
- Lecture notices must reach 61 Farringdon Street, London, E.C.4 by the first post on Tuesday, or they will not be inserted.*

Sugar Plums

Now that many non-Christians are joining the forces in the "great round-up," it should be borne in mind that in answer to the question "What religion?" it is the legal right of the recruit to have entered his own description in reply. The recruiting officer has no power to refuse. We have heard of cases where attempts have been made to convert "non-religion" into Agnostic, and so forth. Such action is quite unwarranted. If a man is not to be trusted to describe what his attitude is concerning religion he should not be trusted with a rifle and uniform. It is also the legal right of the recruit to refuse the oath and to take affirmation. This also should be insisted on. If any difficulties are experienced we shall be glad to have particulars and will at once take up the matter with the War Office. We did this at the commencement of the last war, and prompt instructions were issued to all recruiting officers to amend their ways.

There was quite a good audience at Birkenhead on April 19, to listen to Mr. Cohen's address, but week-night meetings seldom draw such a large attendance as do Sunday ones. But the hall was comfortably filled, and the lecture listened to with great apparent interest. Mr. Thompson, of Liverpool, took the chair, and carried out his duties in an able manner.

In another part of this issue we publish the Agenda for the Annual Conference at Bradford on Whit-Sunday. We hope to see there a good attendance of delegates of Branches and members in general. Those coming from a distance will require accommodation over the Saturday and Sunday evenings, and if they will write the General Secretary, N.S.S., 68 Farringdon Street, E.C.4, stating their requirements, he will do what he can to fix them up. Fuller particulars of the Conference will appear later.

The following is part of a letter written by one whose name is well known to Freethinkers, and who has been in touch with our movement for very many years. He refers to Mr. Cohen's recent pamphlet, *Freethought and the Child* :—

Your pamphlet is a very valuable one, and because it is valuable the more likely to rouse some dissent. It is a most important declaration on Education ever made from the Secular platform. The present critical times should secure a wide reading for your courageous and clear utterance of what I hope will in the end prevail over our present vague and hesitating conception of parental duty in the education of the child. But to those who agree with you, or who are convinced by your arguments it is a tower of strength in the coming fight against the dictation of ideas to adults.

We refrain from giving the name, at least, for the moment. It is the opinion that matters.

And here is an excerpt from a lengthy letter from another ardent supporter of the Freethought cause. Again, I withhold the name of the writer :—

Freethought and the Child adds considerably to the indebtedness of the Freethought World to yourself. It is really an essay in first principles expressed in a style you have made your own. I am afraid you are right when you say that many of us have carried into life, sentiments and attitudes derived from our own religious training. I will not trouble you with praise; I am writing merely to express my thankfulness for the pamphlet, and to suggest to other Freethinkers that if they will take *Freethought and the Child*, and No. 10 of this series of pamphlets, *The Church's Fight for the Child*, they will have a complete presentation of a case that has some very important sociological implications. I am doing some useful propagandist work with them.

We record elsewhere the death of H. S. Salt. The cremation took place at Brighton, and the following confession of faith was read during the ceremony :—

I wholly disbelieve in the present established religion, but I have a very firm religious faith of my own. Creed of kinship I call it—a belief that in years yet to come there will be a recognition of the brotherhood between man and man, between nation and nation, and between human and sub-human, which will transform the state of semi-savagery as we have it into one of civilization.

FOR THE CHILDREN

But listen now—listen to the tremendous, the horrible uproar of millions and millions of tormented creatures mad with the fury of Hell. Oh, the screams of fear, the groanings of horror, the yells of rage, the cries of pain, the shouts of agony, the shrieks of despair from millions on millions. There you hear them roaring like lions, hissing like serpents, howling like dogs, and wailing like dragons. There you hear the gnashing of teeth and the fearful blasphemies of the devils. Above all, you hear the roaring of the thunders of God's anger, which shakes Hell to its foundations.

Father Furniss, "Sight of Hell."

The Sense Organs

PSYCHOLOGY is the study of man's reactions to his environment. And because his physiological make-up decides how the environment shall hit him, no psychology is complete without the sister science of physiology. Further, the discovery that the traditional Aristotelian five senses (sight, hearing, touch, taste and smell) are only a few of the gateways to the external world, renders much of what has passed for psychology, including all post-Kantian tendencies, pre-scientific.

"Modern psychology, by which is meant scientific psychology, has resulted from the application to the human of that method of study which has proved so notably useful in physics, chemistry, biology and the other natural sciences." (Butler and Karwoski *Human Psychology*, 1937).

The function of the sense organs, or "receptors," is to select agents from the outer world, and to transform and transmit the energy thus given. In simpler language, the eye changes light-waves into nerve-waves and the ear does the same with sound-waves. This is because each is fitted, or attuned, to a definite stimulus. Light waves stimulate the eye but do not affect the ear. On the other hand, sound waves excite neural loops in the brain only *via* the ear; they have no effect on the sense cells of the retina of the eye. Each sense has specialized cells with a selective function.

Of the many forces which play upon the body, light and sound waves are two of those which gain entrance. Radio waves, however, may instance those which beat against the body without finding a receiving terminal. It is an obvious remark that a highly evolved body which was fully informed of all that happened in the outer world would yield a mind different from our known type.

Our sensory experience, then, is classified in terms of the particular neural loops called into action; those excited through the optical nerve give visual experiences, those through the olfactory nerve yield experiences of smell, and so on.

The receptors, it may be added, are also able to distinguish intensities and qualities. They tell whether a sound is loud or weak, for example, or whether the voice is Brown's or Robinson's: the differences of colour are also distinguishable (unless, as in colour-blindness, the eyes are limited to rod vision). If two singers, Brown and Robinson, strike the same note, with the same intensity and pitch, there are still differences of timbre which enable us to tell without looking which voice belongs to Brown and which to Robinson. This is because the ear can also deal with what are called "overtones," which are less intense than the fundamental, predominating tone.

It is worth adding, here, that an explanation of musical effect, sometimes demanded triumphantly by the anti-materialist, is well on the way. Music is made up of smooth mathematical effects.

* * *

We are now ready to enumerate the various kinds of receptor elements so far localized. They fall into three types. Some receive stimuli from the outer world, some from inside the body, and some have their terminal cells buried in the skeleton of the body, in the muscles, joints and tendons, giving e.g., the sense of balance and orientation. Some authorities combine the second and third classes.

The first sort, *exteroceptors*, may be sub-divided into those which give notice of immediate stimulation by contact ("skin receptors") and those which give notice of distant stimuli ("distance receptors").

Skin receptors will probably analyse down to no more than four, giving (1) touch, (2) pain, (3) cold, (4) warmth. The terminals are in each case in the skin. If we confine ourselves to, say, a square inch of skin we can get to work with a horselair mounted on a stick, a warm stylus (say 95°F.), a cold one (75°F.) and a needle. The first instrument will test for touch, the second for warmth, the third for cold, and the last for pain. We shall then discover "touch spots," "warmth spots," "cold spots" and "pain spots" within the given area. At each there will be the particular receptor, which will not reach to the others. That is, the warm stylus might make several attacks giving, perhaps, only touch, but at a "warmth spot" it, and no other, will give warmth. The needle, again, might explore several spots before giving pain (if pressed more than moderately it might in any case cross a pain nerve even though not originally directed thereat.)

These, then, are the four cutaneous receptors, and out of these elementals come compounds such as tickle, itch, softness, hardness, smoothness, roughness, wetness, dryness and "hotness." Variety from one receptor gives tickle, patterns from the one type give smoothness, etc., mixed sensations give wetness. "Hot" is a compound of warmth and cold sensations, with pain.

It has been estimated that pain spots, e.g., average 188 per square cm. on the back of the hand, 50 on the sole of the foot, 44 on the nose end, 228 on each side of the "Adam's Apple" (all to the sq. cm.). Whether warmth or cold spots are stimulated naturally depends on the temperature at the particular part of the body surface. Dallenbach has established a "physiological zero." If the back of the hand is 87°F., a piece of metal at 89°F. will be felt as warm. If the hand were at 91°F. the metal would be felt as cold.

Next, Distance Receptors include (5) eye, (6) ear, (7) nose.

In the second category, *interoceptors*, are (8) taste, (9) thirst, (10) hunger and (11) "organic sense," which has several receptors—for cramps, nausea, etc. Liquid chemical substances are the stimulus for taste, just as dissolved chemical substance in air is the stimulation for smell. "Taste buds" containing sense cells are on the tongue and at the back of the mouth. Some respond to sweet, some to sour; some to salt, some to bitter: some respond to all four.

Qualities, again, are superadded. The taste of cold or hot, raw or mashed, potatoes is the same. Other senses, like touch and temperature, account for the differences; the gustatory (taste) sensation is constant. Taste actually is feeble in man without the help of adjacent receptors. The evolutionary advantage of taste is that of a final censor as to what may be taken for food, smell being a preliminary censor and selector.

Analysis of the fundamental elements of smell presents insuperable difficulty on account of the secluded position of the olfactory organs. Henning, however, believes in six elemental odours (flower, spice, fruit, resin, burn, foul) from which others are compounds.

The *proprioceptors*, the third category, include (at least) (12) sense of balance, a function of the labyrinthine, (13) a sense of dizziness, also related to the inner ear, (14) muscle sense, (15) tendonous sense.¹

This listing is not final for all time, it is needless to say. The probability is of an extension.

Kinæsthetic sense (Gr. = "sense of movement") refers to the receptors of the muscles, joints and tendons. J. B. Watson, the behaviorist, has demonstrated, though rather cruelly, the importance of

¹ Based on *Human Psychology*.

kinæsthesia. A rat was taught to find its way through a maze to the location of food. That location became thus fixed in its "mind." It was then deprived of the use of its eyes, inner ears and olfactories. Its whiskers were cut off and its feet pads anaesthetized. Blind, deaf, osmatic, without use of vibrissa and pads, the rat succeeded in finding its way to the food. If we add to the creature's discomforts the sense of enforced hunger (to provide motive), certain ethical questions must arise, it may be admitted.

Physiological investigation has disclosed muscle spindles with their sensory fibres in the muscles, and other terminal organs in tendons and joints. Without kinæsthetic sense the cat would fail to land on all fours, the homing pigeon would get lost and the human being would actually have to look for the position of his limbs. With eyes closed and skin anaesthetized a joint movement through an arc of 1° can be noticed.

On the principle of Galileo using his own pulse, body rhythms give the clue to the perception of long intervals. As Hogben has said, the human body is a clock from whose tickings we cannot normally escape.

Whatever the physicist has to say, the "one in three" of space, time and movement has a special significance for the psychologist. While one thousandth part of a second may have a useful meaning for the mathematician and physicist, "psychological time" starts with 2 sigma^2 as the minimum separation at which auditory stimuli can be heard as successive and not as simultaneous. Touch needs 25 sigma , vision 50 sigma .

We may conclude by observing that sensations are never pure. What we get are perceptions, the product of association—even at birth—and learned unconsciously. Sensations are convenient abstractions. While the sound waves are sensed it is, nevertheless, the clock that is heard. Perceptions are sense data understood, i.e., associated.

G. H. TAYLOR

² A sigma = $1/1000$ sec.

Tom Paine's Message to Our Day

(Concluded from page 267)

DEGRELLE in Belgium has as the slogan of his Fascists *Christus Rex*—Christ the King, hence the name *Rexists*. The late Premier of Rumania, Myron Cristea, who died a few weeks ago, was the Patriarch of the Rumanian Church. Under his auspices the Iron Guard leaders were humped off in the forest—"shot while trying to escape."

In our own country the Established Church is so powerful that it forced the abdication of the most popular King that England has had for generations. And the Archbishop (by the bye) kicked him when he was down. None of the political parties here dare look sideways at the Catholic Church, although this is supposed to be a Protestant country. Our Foreign Office is lousy with Roman Catholics—the Tyrells of Avon, the Howards of Penrith, the Ogilvie-Forbes, the G. W. Rendels, the Michael Palaires, etc. All three film censors in this country were and are Catholics—O'Connor, Shortt, and Tyrell. A director of the *Daily Herald*, I have reason to believe, is a Catholic. Nothing against that Church appears in that paper—which calls itself the "organ of labour." It is an organ that plays Psalms and Anthems.

Finally, the new Pope, Pius XII., whose coronation was broadcast for hours recently by our B.B.C. in all regional wave-lengths, sends this message to General

Franco, the newest of the Dictators and the Butcher of the Workers in the Bull Ring at Badajos:—

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. [My italics.]

His Holiness is on a safe thing in "praying for new successes." It is a safe bet that what Hitler and Chamberlain, Bonnet and Mussolini are unitedly backing is likely to romp home first past the post. The whole shabby Spanish conspiracy is beamed on by the lamblike and pious Halifax, who as Minister for Education, when in the Commons as Lord Irwin, continually strained the Education Acts, in favour of the Roman Church. Even Communists, normally Atheistic, are continually "sucking up" to the Church, as students of French politics will know. Witness the French Communist leader Thorez, and his recent speech in which he held out the hand (*la main tendu*) to the Catholics of France, asking them to join the Popular Front!

So much for the reactionary attitude of the leaders of organized religion. I hope my little list may start some of you along the line of my recent thought, namely, that while politicians in the lump are bad, the priest-politician is the very devil. There remains to be considered the much wider question as to the effect of religion itself on progress. This is far too big a subject for me to tack on at the end. I must content myself with indicating two outstanding cases in which religious belief in itself (quite apart from its professional ministers) operates to put the brake on progress. The first is the division of people in the same country needlessly caused by rival religions. The division of the Indian and the Irish peoples into two religions has kept back progress in both countries for decades. The dispute between Muslim and Hindoo in India, and Protestant and Catholic in Ireland is undoubtedly forwarded by the paramount power. The organization of the workers in Belfast and Bombay into trade unions to protect their rights as workers has encountered many difficulties because of religion. The "yellow," or Christian trade unions, all through Europe are a thorn in the flesh of the working-class in their struggle for betterment of their conditions.

My second case is the nullification of progressive effort by the religious idea of a future life. If one is promised, as the saying is, "pie in the sky, when you die," one may be content to forego an actual pie in this life. The many mansions of the Heavenly Father may be more attractive than those provided by, say, the Hendon Borough Council. Such notions as these must have a real effect on the efforts of the reformer to improve our world, which the pious regard as only a Vale of Tears.

I hope I have succeeded in making out a *prima facie* case that Tom Paine was right in attacking the Christian Church as being a drag on the wheel of progress. Of course, as I have already written, Paine did not attack what he would doubtless have called "pure religion." He was not an Atheist like myself. He was genuinely concerned to promote a religion of humanity. For my part, as a Hundred Per Cent Atheist, I regard all religions as likely to become breeding-grounds for Reaction, and, as such, I hold that it is better to abolish them. But that, of course, is a matter into which I cannot here enter.

Finally, to come back to what I was saying on the subject of reading the life of this saint as a cure for dejection. Paine, during his life-time, lived to see the triumph of one of his causes, the establishment of the United States of America. In this cause he played a decisive part. For most men this would have been the end of their altruistic endeavours; they would

have turned to personal and profitable ends. Not so Tom Paine. Here are some of the things he advocated. He advocated, nearly a century before they got it, freedom for negroes, in other words, the abolition of slavery. He was a Republican, describing monarchy and hereditary titles as anachronisms; he denounced cruelty to animals; he exposed the crime of poverty in States calling themselves civilized; he advocated old age pensions and showed how the money for this could be raised. He was in favour of international arbitration for the avoidance of wars. He was a feminist advocating easier divorce. A recent biographer of Paine, Mr. Hesketh Pearson, has written thus of Paine's attitude to women: "He was probably the first person to display an entirely civilized attitude towards women, and the movement for female emancipation may be said to have begun with his words: "When they are not beloved they are nothing; and when they are, they are tormented. They have almost equal cause to be afraid of indifference and love. Over three-quarters of the globe Nature has placed them between contempt and misery."

After Paine's death scores of people in this country were fined or imprisoned for selling his works, or even for recommending that they be read. This was in that terrible period of reaction, the score of years after the Napoleonic Wars. But that period passed, and many of Tom Paine's clear-sighted suggestions have been realized in this and other countries. In this country we are passing through a similar period of repression and reaction, but our umbrella politicians will not last for ever. They will disappear the quicker, if we face them with the courage and resolution of that great citizen of the world and friend of mankind, Thomas Paine.

BAYARD SIMMONS

The National Secular Society

ANNUAL CONFERENCE

MAY 28, 1939

AGENDA

1. Minutes of last Conference.
2. Executive's Annual Report.
3. Financial Report.
4. Election of President.
Motion by South London, West London, Manchester, Liverpool, West Ham, Chester-le-Street and North London Branches:—
"That Mr. Chapman Cohen be re-elected President of the N.S.S."
5. Election of Secretary.
Motion by the Executive:—
"That Mr. R. H. Rosetti be appointed Secretary."
6. Election of Treasurer.
Motion by West London and North London Branches:—
"That Mr. H. R. Clifton be re-elected Treasurer."
7. Election of Auditor.
Mr. H. L. Theobald is eligible and offers himself for re-election.
8. Nominations for Executive.
SCOTLAND.—Mr. F. A. Hornibrook and Mrs. H. B. Grant, nominated by Glasgow Branch.
WALES.—Mr. T. Gorniot and Mr. A. C. Rosetti, nominated by Swansea Branch.
N.E. GROUP.—Miss K. B. Kough and Mr. T. H. Elstob, nominated by Sunderland, North Shields, Newcastle and Chester-le-Street Branches.
N.W. GROUP.—Mr. E. Bryant and Mrs. E. Venton, nominated by Liverpool, Blackburn, Bolton, Chester and Burnley Branches.

- S.W. GROUP.—Mr. G. H. Wood, nominated by Plymouth Branch.
- MIDLAND GROUP.—Mrs. C. G. Quinton (Jnr.) nominated by Birmingham Branch.
- SOUTH LONDON.—Mr. H. Preece and Mr. J. Seibert, nominated by South London and Kingston Branches.
- NORTH LONDON.—Mr. L. Ebury, nominated by North London Branch.
- EAST LONDON.—Mr. H. Silvester, nominated by Bethnal Green and West Ham Branches.
- WEST LONDON.—Mr. G. Bedborough and Mr. J. Horowitz, nominated by West London Branches.
9. Motion by Executive:—
"That this Conference, learning that its President, Mr. Chapman Cohen, will very shortly complete fifty years Freethought advocacy on the platform and in the press, desires to place on record its recognition of the invaluable services he has rendered to the movement, extends to him its high appreciation of his leadership, and of his unerring judgment in all matters of principle and policy connected with the advancement of the Society's aims, and fervently hopes that he may have health and strength to enable him to work for the best of causes for many years to come."
 10. Motion by Liverpool Branch:—
"That in order to secure a direct representation of Provincial Branches the Executive meetings be held on Saturdays."
 11. Motion by Executive:—
"That this Conference noting the bitter persecution Freethinkers are subjected to in many parts of the Continent, hereby expresses its deepest sympathy with them in the ordeal through which they are passing, promises them all help that lies within its power, and looks forward to a time when they will be able to openly pursue under more favourable conditions their work in the interests of freedom and humanity."
 12. Motion by Edinburgh Branch:—
"That in all cases where Branches apply for speakers, and the application is granted, the expenses of such lecturers be the responsibility of the Executive."
 13. Motion by Birkenhead and Liverpool Branches:—
"That Section 2 of Rule 4 be put into operation."
 14. Motion by Liverpool Branch:—
"That the Executive take steps to secure publicity for the National Secular Society by advertising and other means."
 15. Motion by North and South London Branches:—
"This Conference is of opinion that the law concerning abortion needs revision so that medical practitioners may have greater liberty of action, and further that as opinion on the subject has been formed mainly under the distorting influence of Christian theology, and particularly of the Roman Catholic Church, it is urgent that the whole question be reconsidered in the light of modern thought and human sentiment."
 16. Motion by F. Smithies:—
"That resolutions submitted to the Annual Conference be altered only when they conflict with the Principles and Objects of the N.S.S."
 17. Motion by Glasgow and West London Branches:—
(a) "That this Conference expresses its unqualified condemnation of the malignant propaganda of Anti-Semitism as unscientific and anti-social, and in flagrant opposition to the teaching of Freethought in this country, and in direct contradiction to the basic principles of the National Secular Society."
(b) "That this Conference considers that an advocacy of Anti-Semitism is not consonant with membership of the National Secular Society."
 18. Motion by Burnley, Chorley, Liverpool, Birkenhead and Manchester Branches:—
"That the Branches, comprising the North West Area Group be recognized as a Federation within the National Secular Society."
 19. Motion by Mrs. Grant:—
"That this Conference viewing with the greatest

concern the attempted domination of Europe by Totalitarian powers, and the supreme danger therefrom to all that is best in our civilization, urges the creation of a world union of Peoples as offering the only possibility of checking the rule of brute force and the realization of the ideal of Thomas Paine of a Universal Brotherhood of Man."

20. Motion by Mr. G. Bedborough :—

"That this Conference recalling the close association of the Freethought Movement with the reform of the criminal law, ever since the epoch-making work of the Italian Freethinker Beccaria, welcomes the Criminal Justice Bill, now before the country, and in particular the proposal to abolish flogging. It congratulates the Government on the measure, and hopes for the possibility of further reform to come."

21. Motion by Mr. Collins :—

"That this Conference while willing to co-operate with outside organizations for the achievement of any specific object, the realization of which falls within the Objects and Principles of the N.S.S., reaffirms its dissociation from all political parties."

22. Motion by South London Branch :—

"This Conference views with the deepest concern the inroads that have been made on the civil liberties of the subject, and trusts that Freethinkers all over the country will do whatever lies within their power to arouse public opinion so as to prevent the whittling away of liberties so dearly won by our predecessors."

23. Motion by Glasgow Branch :—

"That leaflets suitable for distribution among cinema queues and to political gatherings be issued by the Society."

24. Motion by Executive :—

"That in the interests of efficient education, social justice and religious equality, this Conference protests against the endowment of sectarian schools by the Government, which now extends to seventy-five per cent of the building costs; this Conference also protests against the injustice to teachers in these sectarian schools, and further calls upon Freethinkers to urge upon all Parliamentary and Municipal candidates the need for confining the education given in State-supported schools to subjects defined as 'Secular' in the Education Code."

25. Motion by West London Branch :—

"That the Executive consider the possibility of inaugurating a caravan crusade with special reference to rural areas."

The Conference will sit in the Bradford Mechanics' Institute, Town Hall Square, Bradford, Morning Session, 10.30 to 12.30; Afternoon Session, 2.30 to 4.30. Delegates will be required to produce their credentials at the door; Members, the current card of membership. Only Members of the Society are entitled to be present. A Luncheon for delegates and visitors at 1 p.m., price 3s. 6d., will be provided in the Great Northern Victoria Hotel. There will be a reception of Members and Delegates at 7 o'clock, on Saturday evening, May 27 in the Great Northern Victoria Hotel; and a Public Demonstration on Sunday evening at 7, in the Bradford Mechanics' Institute, Town Hall Square, Bradford.

By order of the Executive,

CHAPMAN COHEN, *President.*

R. H. ROSETTI, *Secretary.*

Byron

I HAVE much enjoyed Mr. Edgar Syers' articles on "Abodes of Genius." I am dealing with many in a book, now in the press, entitled *London Worthies*. Mr. H. Cutner, a regular contributor to the *Freethinker*, has designed the jacket, and there are articles on Bradlaugh, Richard Carlile, Hetherington, etc.

Under the head of Byron I refer to memorials not noticed by Mr. Syers :—

In 1887 Sir John Tollemache Sinclair placed a beautiful medallion of Byron over the entrance of No. 85 Fleet Street (until demolition in 1936 the offices of the Press Association), and underneath Shelley's phrase "The Pilgrim of Eternity." In the entrance hall were a number of tablets, giving extraordinary statistical information about the poet's works, together with another medallion surrounded by a laurel wreath.

I had much trouble to discover the fate of these memorials. It now appears that the outside medallion was damaged; the other has gone to Byron's old school at Aberdeen.

I was interested to know that in 1924 an attempt was made to introduce a memorial of Byron into Westminster Abbey. Was it made by the Byron Society? I doubt very much whether Byron's religious heresies had anything to do with its rejection in view of the fact that in that building, since his death, graves had been found for Charles Darwin and Thomas Hardy, and a memorial erected to Matthew Arnold. Moreover, Freethinkers should know that Byron was by no means so definite in his repudiation of Christianity, though his attitude to most things conventional was a general kick all round. "In his earlier years," says Joseph McCabe (*A Biographical Dictionary of Modern Rationalists*) "he was very scornful about Christianity and a future life. His feelings moderated in later years, but he remained a Deist, and to the end rejected the idea of personal immortality." The late J. M. Robertson (*History of Freethought in the Nineteenth Century*), refers to Dr. Kennedy's conversations with the dying poet, in which he evinced himself "a believer in God and willing to be convinced of the truth of Christianity," and Medwin's statement that "if he were occasionally sceptical . . . yet his wavering never amounted to a disbelief in the divine Founder of Christianity," and concludes "The sayings cited indicate only an unwillingness to take up a definitely negative position."

In another passage Robertson wrote :—

It makes a quaint impression, ethically speaking, to read that Moore and others of Byron's friends were disquieted by a fear that Shelley in Italy would have a bad influence on him by undermining his religious opinions. About his morals they seem to have been undisturbed.

The last sentence suggests that Robertson was himself not prepared to be complacent about them. If so, I am with him, and I suggest strongly that on this ground the Abbey authorities rejected the memorial. I know what may be said: "Look at the others." Indeed Dean Stanley said, "If Byron was turned from our doors, many a one as questionable as Byron has been admitted," and then cited Congreve and "the epicurean St. Evremond." Stanley, however, did not suggest admitting Byron on those grounds. Other times, other morals. Who is going to propose that because some feet of earth in the Abbey have been lavished upon worthless men, this is to go on still?

I know the special pleading this will bring. Byron died for Greece. I am not impressed. I have read Harold Nicolson's *Byron: the last Journey*. This did not give me the idea of a Sydney Carton, atoning for a life of selfish dissipation by a sacrificial death. Byron was an outlaw from English society who was at home only on the continent. He never contemplated taking the field. He was not very eager to go so far as Greece, but took sufficient steps to make it difficult for him to retreat. This was the idea Nicolson's book conveyed to my mind, and Andre Maurois complete (and most admirable) biography confirmed it.

I know few Christians so convinced of the splendour of the rooms in their Father's house, as to be happier when their friends are called to those mansions, than they would have been if the Queen had sent for them to live at Court: nor has the Church's most ardent "desire to depart, and be with Christ," ever cured it of the singular habit of putting on mourning for every person summoned to such departure.—*Ruskin.*

It was Maurois, too, who made me feel nauseated by the story of Byron's relations with women, and French writers are not squeamish. In the case of Shelley, it was different. He was considerably more restrained, and about his attitude to sex there was something simply foolishly Utopian. Byron seems to have had no views; he was just a wanton, out for his own pleasure. I am little concerned with the illicit side of the business. If a man and a woman, without legal ties and with no wrong to a third party, can live happily together, they do not call for my censure. Byron, however, by his selfishness must have left a trail of misery behind him. I have just been reading for a publisher a book on Mayfair. The writer says:—

Somehow, quite apart from Byron's position as a poet, one cannot help feeling that as a man he was something of what one may call a cad in his relations with women. Look at the list; Lady Caroline Lamb, Lady Frances Webster, Annabella Milbanke, whom he married and tortured. Then the tragic Claire Clairmont, Margharita Cogni, and the Segati, to say nothing of the Countess Guiccioli and that extraordinary character, Lady Melbourne.

I feel the same.

I am, however, willing to listen patiently to the best that Byron's partisans can say. Only let them not harp upon the strength of his kicking; I like a little moral fibre in my kickers. Let them point out his positive good qualities. We must not be accused of whitewashing any man's character so long as he kicks with our team, and, as I have pointed out, it is doubtful if he did that with any consistency.

W. KENT

Obituary

HENRY STEPHENS SALT

It is with the very deepest regret that we record the death of Henry Stephens Salt, on April 19, a life-long Freethinker and humanitarian reformer. Mr. Salt was in his seventy-eighth year, despite ill-health which has prevented him of late taking an active part in reform movements. But during his long life no man has worked harder, or more unselfishly than he. In his early life he was assistant master at Eton, but the development of his ideas on life in general necessitated his retirement from the post. The loss was not his. Ever since 1884, his whole life has been devoted to humanitarian reforms. He founded the Humanitarian League and was its Secretary for many years. There is hardly a reform movement, particularly that of reform of the criminal law, which has not had his hearty support, and which has not benefited from it. His writings cover a wide area, including translations from Lucretius and others of the classics.

No man lived up to his ideals more loyally than did H. S. Salt. Our own acquaintance with him was by correspondence only, but his admiration for this journal was strongly expressed, and we valued highly praise from such a quarter. His own views were always clearly and decisively stated, and no man conducted controversy with greater grace, dignity, and force. But the man who mistook gentleness and consideration for others for weakness and indecision in the case of H. S. Salt soon discovered his mistake. His writings covered a very wide range, and included a life of James Thomson (B.V.), and a life of Richard Jeffries, both of which are of great value to Freethinkers. To the older generation of liberal thinkers the death of H. S. Salt will mark the passing of a brave and unselfish worker in the cause of humanitarianism, and one whose work has left its impress on the life of this country.

We offer our sincere condolence to his wife, who is herself just recovering from a severe illness.—C.C.

Among all forms of mistake, prophecy is the most gratuitous.—George Eliot.

Branch News

WEST LONDON BRANCH

THE Annual Dinner and Dance of the West London Branch held at Slater's Restaurant, High Holborn, on Saturday 22 was well attended by members and friends. The dinner was excellent. Dancing was kept up till 11.30, when the singing of Auld Lang Syne closed the proceedings.

The presentation of a silver cigarette case to Mr. Tuson, the retiring Secretary, marked the great appreciation of his services, which ill-health alone has caused him to relinquish.

Mr. E. C. Saphin presided and the toast of the evening was proposed by Mr. G. Bedborough in a humorous, poetical effusion. The reply was by Mr. Rosetti. "The visitors" was proposed by a comparatively new member, Mr. Carpenter, and was responded to by Mr. Jordan. Mr. Horowitz acted as M.C.

BIRKENHEAD (WIRRAL) BRANCH

THERE was a record attendance for the Annual Meeting held on the 16th instant. The reading of the Annual Report outlining the year's work and recording increased activity on practically every front was warmly applauded. Owing to the unavoidable resignations from active service of the President (Mr. R. H. S. Standfast) and the Secretary (Mr. W. Fletcher), there was a rather more drastic reshuffle of officers than usual. Mr. W. Fletcher was elected President, and the Secretaryship was filled by Mr. A. Fuller, of 18 Seymour Street, Birkenhead. Will Merseyside friends, and any others it may concern, please note Mr. Fuller's address.

SUNDAY LECTURE NOTICES, Etc.

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

LONDON

INDOOR

SOUTH PLACE ETHICAL SOCIETY (Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, W.C.1) : 11.0, Dr. Karl Mannheim—"The Psychological and Sociological Approach to the understanding of Man."

OUTDOOR

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

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

WEST LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (Hyde Park) : 7.30, Wednesday, Mrs. Buxton and Mr. Carpenter. Thursday, 7.30, Mr. Saphin. Friday, 7.30, Mr. Barnes. Sunday, 3.30, Messrs. Bryant, Barnes and Collins. Sunday, 7.30, Messrs. Bryant, Barnes, Tuson, Wood and Mrs. Buxton.

COUNTRY

INDOOR

TEES SIDE BRANCH N.S.S. Jubilee Hall, Leeds Street) : 7.15, A Lecture.

OUTDOOR

BRIERFIELD MARKET : 7.15, Tuesday, Mr. J. Clayton.
ACCRINGTON MARKET : 7.0, Sunday, Mr. J. Clayton.
FOULBRIDGE : 7.30, Friday, Mr. J. Clayton.
EDINBURGH BRANCH N.S.S. (Mound) : 7.0, Mr. F. Smithies—"Myths and Mysticism."

ADVERTISER having invented what seems *prima facie*, a most intriguing and fascinating game on the lines of chess, wants two partners. Either fun of the thing only, or would share outlay and profit and loss if desired. Resident near North London preferred.—"GAME," "Freethinker" Office, 61 Farringdon Street, E.C.4.

PAMPHLETS FOR THE PEOPLE

CHAPMAN COHEN

No. 13. Thou Shalt not Suffer a Witch to Live No. 14. Freethought and the Child

- No. 1. Did Jesus Christ Exist?
- 2. Morality Without God
- 3. What is the Use of Prayer?
- 4. Christianity and Woman
- 5. Must We Have a Religion?
- 6. The Devil

- No. 7. What is Freethought?
- 8. Gods and Their Makers
- 9. The Church's Fight for the Child
- 10. Giving 'em Hell
- 11. Deity and Design
- 12. What is the Use of a Future Life?

Each Pamphlet Contains Sixteen Pages

Price One Penny

Postage One Halfpenny

NATIONAL SECULAR SOCIETY.

President CHAPMAN COHEN

General Secretary - R. H. ROSETTI.

68 FARRINGDON STREET, LONDON, E.C. 4

PRINCIPLES AND OBJECTS.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

MEMBERSHIP

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

I desire to join the National Secular Society, and I pledge myself, if admitted as a member, to co-operate in promoting its objects.

Name

Address

Occupation

Dated this.....day of.....19...

This declaration should be transmitted to the Secretary with a subscription.

P.S.—Beyond a minimum of Two Shillings per year every member is left to fix his own subscription according to his means and interest in the cause.

Twelve Religions and Modern Life

By HAR DAYAL, M.A., Ph.D.

H. G. WELLS: "I find it a useful summary."

Public Opinion: "Humanism and its ideals form the keynote of Dr. Dayal's unusual work."

Price 2s. 6d. Post Free

MODERN CULTURE INSTITUTE, EDGWARE, MIDD.

MEAT EATING INVOLVES CRUELTY!

Why not try the Vegetarian Way?

Free Literature, including Recipes, from The Vegetarian Society, 57 Princess Street, Manchester, 2

FIFTH SERIES

ESSAYS IN FREETHINKING

CHAPMAN COHEN

ABOUT BOOKS
 THE DAMNED TRUTH
 MAETERLINCK ON IMMORTALITY
 ON SNOBS AND SNOBBERY
 JESUS AND THE B.B.C.
 MAN'S GREATEST ENEMY
 DEAN INGE AMONG THE ATHEISTS
 POLITICS AND RELIGION
 CHRISTIANITY ON TRIAL
 WOMAN AND CHRISTIANITY
 WHY?

MAN AND HIS ENVIRONMENT
 THE NEMESIS OF CHRISTIANITY
 GOOD GOD!
 GOD AND THE WEATHER
 WOMEN IN THE PULPIT
 ALL SORTS OF IDEAS
 ACCORDING TO PLAN
 A QUESTION OF HONOUR
 ARE WE CHRISTIAN?
 A STUDY IN FALLACY
 MEDICAL SCIENCE AND THE CHURCH

Price 2s. 6d.

Postage 3d.

1st, 2nd, 3rd and 4th Series, Two Shillings and Sixpence each Volume

Five Volumes post free 12s. 6d.

FASCISM & CHRISTIANITY PETER ANNET—1693-1769

Chapman Cohen

(Issued by the Secular Society, Ltd.)

This is a timely and appropriate propagandist pamphlet, and should be circulated as widely and as wisely as possible. Packets of Fifty copies will be sent post free for 4s. 6d.

ONE PENNY. By post Threehalfpence

220 pages of Wit and Wisdom

BIBLE ROMANCES

By G. W. Foote

The *Bible Romances* is an illustration of G. W. Foote at his best. It is profound without being dull, witty without being shallow; and is as indispensable to the Freethinker as is the *Bible Handbook*.

Price 2/6 Postage 3d.

Well printed and well bound.

THE PIONEER PRESS, 61 FARRINGTON STREET, E.C.4.

By ELLA TWYNAM

A sketch of the life and work of the bravest of eighteenth century Freethinkers. The only pamphlet available, and which should be in the possession of every Freethinker and as many Christians as possible.

Price post free 2½d.

Prayer : An Indictment

By G. BEDBOROUGH

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Prayer : The first Duty of Man ; Un-answered Prayer ; Answered Prayer ; Science is better than Prayer. 32 pages.

Price post free 2½d.