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EDITED *by* CHAPMAN COHEN
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*Acid Drops, To Correspondents, Sugar Plums,
Letters to the Editor, etc.*

Views and Opinions

Our Critics

My weekly letter bag provides many interesting items and, properly looked at, instructive items. This includes the foolish as well as the wise communications. After all, fools are as much part of nature as philosophers, and an outlook that does not take in both is lacking in comprehension. Evolution is just as much concerned with nature's successes as nature's failures (readers will excuse the almost unavoidable anthropomorphism). As I have often pointed out the question of the origin of genius is, as a natural phenomenon, no more complex than the origin of idiocy. And whether a man's belief be true or false, intelligent or stupid, the material is always there for a genuinely scientific study. The scientific thinker has to deal with all varieties of his subject, and his generalizations are inadequate unless they do this. So, too, as I have often pointed out, the advantage of the position of the Freethinker over that taken up by the religious advocate, is that the Freethinker's philosophy has a place for religion, whereas the religious philosophy has no place for Atheism. Of course, the religious advocate, to some extent, recognizes this. He must, but it doesn't run well with his theory of things. So he is of necessity driven either to abuse or to misunderstanding. Both methods of dealing with Freethought meet with the applause of the religious world generally; and when a criticism does occur that is really worth noting, the result is more profit to the cause that is being attacked than to the one that is being defended.

This, I may point out, has occurred in two cases that have now become classical. These are that of Cudworth's *True Intellectual System* (late seventeenth century), and Bishop Butler's more widely known *The Analogy of Religion, Natural and Revealed, to the Constitution and Course of Nature* (1736). Cudworth set out to reply to Atheism, and began with a statement of Atheistic opinions. This was so carefully and so well done, that his replies were as obviously inadequate as are the criticisms of Atheism by modern Theists. He was charged with being an Atheist in his book and a Christian only in

the pulpit. Cudworth's work was never finished. Butler's book aimed at replying to Deism by an attempt to prove that if God was the author of the Bible and of nature, one would expect to find the same characteristics in both. It was useless rejecting the Bible as of God because of its injustice, brutality, etc., when the Deist had to admit the same faults in nature. One was logically bound to accept both, or reject both. The attack was devastating. No adequate reply was possible. As Burke (I think) said the logical outcome was to give up both the God of the Bible and the God of Nature.

* * *

On Discussions

One letter last week came to me from Mr. L. Fidge, Secretary of the "Kingsland Congregational Church of Strangers." He says that some business acquaintances have drawn his attention to the *Freethinker*, and he is informed that "I have publicly challenged men of high position in the Church to a debate on the subject you so readily attack." On that point I may say at once that I have never—so far as I can recall—challenged anybody to debate. I am not a professional pugilist seeking the bubble reputation of debate at the *Canon's* mouth, and as a matter of fact I have declined far more challenges to debate than I have accepted. The nearest I have come to offering a challenge in these columns to "eminent" parsons (the responsibility for their eminence I place wholly on the shoulders of the religious world) is when they have been criticized in these pages and I have offered them the opportunity of replying before the same audience that had read the attack. But almost invariably the opportunity has not been taken. It is so much easier, and safer, to reply in Church where no talking back is admitted, or in a newspaper where a direct attack on religion would be excluded.

This will probably be a rather discursive article, so I may point out that I had been on the Freethought platform but a few months when I had a first lesson in the unwisdom of accepting an invitation to debate with anyone who cared to "challenge." A debate was arranged on the subject of "Is Christianity True?" My opponent led off. He treated the audience to half an hour's speech on the mystical numbers of the Bible, and upon the esoteric significance of the different animals named from Genesis to Revelation. I listened in a state of wonder, and with all the interest that a naturalist might exhibit on coming across an hitherto unknown variety of animal life. I meekly suggested, when it came to my turn to speak, that with regard to the natural history part of his speech what was needed was a specialist in zoology, and I was a very poor amateur. I suggested that he should send on his speculations to Lewis Carroll with a request that he would take them as material for a new chapter of *Alice in Wonderland*. So I confined my three speeches to addresses on Christianity, as the world had known it, and my opponent went cheer-

fully on with his arithmetical nightmare and zoological extravaganza. But the one lesson was enough. Wild horses would not have dragged me into another debate with a gentleman of that kidney. Even at question time I have promptly given in to that kind of criticism.

* * *

The Science of Parsonry

Mr. Fidgen says:—

It is very hard to believe that no learned man would openly discuss Christianity with you or anybody else.

Well, some "learned religious" men have entered into discussion with me, but in the course of fifty years there have been very few of them. One was Canon Storr of Westminster, the other was Canon Lyttleton. The discussion with Canon Lyttleton, which ran for many weeks in the *Freethinker*, was reprinted. But both cases gave illustrations of the same fact. Neither Canon Storr nor Canon Lyttleton completely understood religion, and both of them were woefully uninformed of the nature of modern Free-thought. The Free-thought they both had in mind was the form current about a hundred and fifty years ago, and they would have fared just as well had they discussed evolution with an up to date scientist, and limited their survey of science to that current at the end of the eighteenth century. I claim no credit for whatever degree of victory was achieved in these discussions. A modern army might as well claim credit for victory over a force armed with only bows and arrows. And as the Free-thought they criticized belonged to a bygone period, so their advocacy of religion left out altogether the revelation concerning the origin and history of religious ideas as disclosed by modern anthropology.

Is there any wonder, then, that "learned religious men" should fight shy of entering into discussion with one who is only moderately conversant with modern scientific thought? Really they have everything to lose and nothing to gain. They are not, when they enter into such a discussion, actually debating with the individual who is representing Free-thought. They are trying to disprove the conclusions of modern science in terms of a slightly diluted seventeenth century theology. To be quite frank with Mr. Fidgen, I have greater respect for the intelligence of those clerics of "high position" who decline to discuss openly with a properly equipped Freethinker, than I have for those who come forward imagining they can disprove and displace modern Free-thought with the formulæ of a theological congress. To put the matter in a nutshell, the solution of Mr. Fidgen's puzzle is that the man who has in these days intelligence and learning enough to put up a reasonable case for religion, has enough intelligence to know that he has no adequate case to put forward.

* * *

Alice in Blunderland

Mr. Fidgen favours me with a confession of Faith, which, when analysed—I hope he will not mind my saying it, proves the truth of what has been said. Here is the confession:—

I personally believe in God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Ghost, and though I cannot see them and cannot understand how they function, I have sufficient faith to place my All into His hands, and firmly believe that the things that I cannot understand now, bye and bye, when earth's pilgrimage is over will be revealed.

Now in all sincerity (I am not striving after scoring points) how does one believe in something he doesn't understand? Surely it is a statement, the truth of which may easily be demonstrated, that belief must keep pace with understanding. There need not be

complete understanding, but some understanding must be there in order to provide material for belief. And if we do not realize how the thing we do not understand functions, how do we know that there is any "thing" there at all? After all, we only know anything by what it does—that is, by its function. And if we do not understand a thing—to at least the extent of knowing it is there—how do we know it is there at all? How do I know that water is present if it does not display wetness, or that the sun is shining on me if I do not get the sensations of heat or light? Belief does not, of course, imply complete knowledge and complete understanding, but it must surely imply something of both.

And what ground has Mr. Fidgen for saying that after life is over he will know and understand the things that he neither knows nor understands while he is here on this earth? If Mr. Fidgen lives again in some other world, and if he understands there the things of which he has no understanding whatever here, how will he recognize that the things then understood are the things of which he had no understanding before? Our knowledge of things may be imperfect, it nearly always is, our understanding of things may also be imperfect, but if we really believe in them, whether they be gods or carnations, we must have some knowledge concerning them, and some understanding of their nature.

Mr. Fidgen is really illustrating the inability of modern Christians to understand what Free-thought is, and upon what a sound basis it rests. And he has this much in common with Christians in "high position," who in their simplicity believe they can conjure out of existence scientific Free-thought with the necromantic formulæ of a medieval Church Council. Of course, if the one who is met in this way is still in that twilight stage when his rejection of religion does not exclude from his mental make-up formulæ which are religious in their origin and their suggestion, then the Christian may find some ground on which to make out a case for his own emasculated theology. But if he is dealing with those whose minds are really and truly cleansed of all those appeals of modern apologetic theology which rest upon the theology of the Dark Ages, which in turn roots itself in the superstitions of the primitive savage, then I am afraid he will make but little headway.

I hope I have helped at least to clear away some of the things that have been perplexing Mr. Fidgen.

CHAPMAN COHEN

There is no single religion in Guatemala; there are many. Every district, almost every village, seems to have evolved its own particular practices and (presumably) beliefs. Elements of Christian and pre-Christian worship have been selected and combined in an endless variety of ways. The Catholic pantheon has received the most surprising additions, the gospel story been treated to all kinds of the oddest emendations. There are villages, for example, where Judas, instead of being burnt on Easter Saturday, as is the case in the more orthodox cities, is worshipped as a god. At Atitlan, according to S. K. Lothrop, it is currently believed that St. John and the Virgin had a love-affair on the night of the crucifixion. To prevent a repetition of this event, their images are locked up, on Good Friday, in separate cells of the town prison. The next morning, their respective Confraternities come and, for a couple of hundred pesos apiece, bail them out of captivity. Honour is safe for another year; the saints are taken back to their altars. . . .

Psychologically it makes not the least difference which Gods the Indians [in Guatemala] choose to invoke or which rites they choose to perform. The only essential is that they shall believe the divine specialists to be properly qualified and the rites magically effective.

"Beyond the Mexique Bay," Aldous Huxley.

Throwing out the Sandbags

Open your mouth, and shut your eyes, and see what Zeus shall send you.—*Aristophanes.*

THE attacks of the Freethought sharpshooters on the Christian balloon are beginning to tell heavily. The defenders of Orthodoxy are getting nervous; and are throwing out the sandbags, and other things, in a frantic effort to escape. They may escape for a time, but at what a cost to themselves. Dogma after dogma has been thrown into the abyss for a mere temporary respite. To-day, the whole drift of Christianity is away from the earth and toward the ether. "Hell" has been thrown overboard; fear has been replaced by prattle of "brotherhood"; and the humanity of "Christ" is stressed instead of the divinity. The course of the great Protestant Churches is towards Unitarianism, and, before long, it will be indistinguishable from Nothingarianism. The Roman Church has no sympathy with compromise which has such an attraction for Britons, and which, in the last analysis, means indifference.

The real pressure came from the Freethinkers, and not from the scientists. By their attacks, the Freethought writers made Christians ashamed of their Oriental creed. Men like Matthew Arnold, John Morley, Leslie Stephen, and Grant Allen, not only had access to the monthly reviews, but had the ear of the public. They reached hundreds of thousands of quiet people in sheltered homes and widened their minds. At the same time Bradlaugh and his colleagues were challenging the clergy from the public platform, and in the popular Freethought press. Such a combined attack had to be met, and the clergy bent before the storm. Then began that downgrade movement which roused the anger of Spurgeon and other Cave-men of orthodoxy. To-day the only cocksure exponents of the historic Christian Faith are the Catholic priests. As this is a Protestant country, this admission makes little difference. These Romans are not so much paranoiacs as ignorant. They are the most ignorant of their sorry profession, not excepting the pastors of side-street chapels and tin tabernacles. Indeed, the clergy, as a class, are not educated at all in the modern sense of that word; they are merely educated in the patter of their trade.

This humanizing of their deity is a real revolution on the part of the Protestant clergy, and it means the end of the Christian superstition. It is a counsel of despair, because it can never be more than a temporary expedient. For nigh on two thousand years ignorant believers have worshipped the figure of "Christ" as that of a god. They never thought of "Jesus" as a man, and they had at least Scriptural warrant for such a belief in divinity. The figure of the historic "Christ" in the "Gospels" is that of a superhuman, and not a human being at all. It is, first and last, the story of one god out of many. His entry into the world and his exit are miraculous, and his life is one long string of marvels. You either believe the story or you disbelieve it; you can no more humanize it than you can humanize the story of Jack and the Beanstalk.

There is no support in secular history for this legendary figure in the Gospels. The attempt to insert a forged passage in "Josephus" is a tacit admission of this crushing fact, for no one would forge evidence if it were available. If apologists assert that the four recognized Gospels at least are authentic, the reply is that the so-called apocryphal gospels were all forged, and all, canonical and uncanonical, have a family likeness. The New Testament legends are poured into childrens' ears from early childhood, and have a familiar ring when half believed. The un-

blushing mendacity, however, of the Apocryphal Gospels, being in an unfamiliar setting, should make the most bigoted believer rub his eyes. And one thing must be evident to any honest reader. The Christian Religion is based upon similar nonsense, for Christianity rests on miracles and fear of hell-fire. It was not a creed of "love" and "brotherhood" which has fascinated ignorant millions through so many centuries, and caused them to pay tithes and to fill the priests' coffers with gold. If there be no hell, and if Christ were but an itinerant preacher, why pay tribute to a vested Priestcraft to-day?

That famous Orientalist, Ernest Renan, tried to humanize the historic Christ in his famous *Life of Jesus*. The result was a novelette, admirably written, but still only a novelette. And if Renan could do no more, neither will the clergy, who have neither the knowledge nor the genius of the great French scholar. It is all so like Thackeray's devastating description of George the Fourth. You took off his coat, his waistcoat, his vest, his decorations, his finery, and there was nothing left that could be called a real man. If you take away from the Gospel figure the sparkling phantasmagoria of the miraculous, there is nothing left but a wandering Jew. And even that is a very open question.

The Jesus Christ depicted in the Gospels is a legendary one. It was a hundred years after the events supposed to have happened that the texts of the Gospels were written, and it was yet another century before they were definitive. The same hands that wrote the accepted stories wrote also the fraudulent gospels of the Infancy, of Perfection, of Mary, and many others. Four of these novelettes were accepted by the Church, and the rest discarded. The atmosphere in which these documents were concocted is shown by the saying of Irenæus that, with regard to the four accepted gospels, there had to be that number because there were four seasons, four winds, and the four revelations of "Adam," "Noah," "Moses," and "Jesus."

There is nothing really original in the "old, old story." Comparative religion lets that cat out of the bag. Mithra was a redeemer; Zoroaster was born of a virgin; Persephone descended into hell. Osiris rose from the dead; Gotama was tempted by the devil; Moses was transfigured. Elijah ascended into heaven; Krishna died nailed by arrows to a tree. The "golden rule" was no novelty, for it had been preached by Buddha, Confucius, and others. Crucifixions were as common as hangings in England. The Roman Emperor, Vespasian, and many another, were said to have cured the halt and blind with a touch; and touching for the "King's evil" survived until recent times. The one thing that differentiates Christianity from other religions is the damnable dogma of hell-fire, the most disgusting trait in all the religions in all the world. The trade-mark of the Christian Superstition is blood and fire, the blood of "Christ" and the fire of Hell.

How such horrors were forced on people is simple. The priestly caste had it all their own way in those far-off days of dirt and ignorance. There were so few, indeed, to challenge their impudence and arrogance. Those who did went to their death as did Hypatia and Socrates. Even Kings were afraid of the priests, so absolute was their power. As for the common people their minds were as naked as their bodies. They were more impressed by the faked miracles, than their ignorant descendants are with the fraudulent Holy Fire at Jerusalem, and the humbugging liquefaction of Januarius at Naples. Priests are the very masters of the art of hocus-pocus, by which they have gained both wealth and power. They are the only showmen on earth who make money without raising the curtain

of their show. And they have made more money than all the other showmen of the world put together. Recall the ten-per-cent tax (tithe) on agriculture; the bullying at the death-beds of people with money; the sacred offerings of folks frightened of an imaginary hell; the cadging of pennies from Sunday-school children; the eternal appeals for money. In Britain alone Priestcraft has had a rake-off of thousands of millions of money, and usurped power such as tyrants dream of. And, now, after two thousand years of wholesale robbery, this audacious set of impostors is pretending that their superstition is a religion of love, and its alleged founder the first of all the Socialists. So be it. It is the ebb-tide of Protestantism, and the beginning of the end of the Christian Superstition. A religion which began as a damnable heresy culminates in a degrading and disgusting superstition and embodies a vested interest, beside which other businesses seem trivial. That is, in a nutshell, the history of so many creeds. "You cannot fill your belly on the east wind," said a wise man. The people ask for bread, and the Christian Churches offers them the east wind of a two-thousand-years-old Oriental superstition.

MIMNERMUS

The Toiler's Tasks in Old Time Egypt

IN ancient Egypt as in every other land, the prosperity of the people ultimately reposed on the peasantry who cultivated the crops. The serfs not only laboured on the land, but passed to the purchaser when an estate changed hands. Throughout the prolonged history of the country the peasants constituted the mass of the population, and they continued the common drudges of the State. During the period of the New Kingdom every acre of soil, save the temple property, was in theory a royal possession, let on lease to landholders or reserved for purposes of revenue. The serfs toiled under autocratic overseers, and a certain proportion of the harvested crops was assigned them for their sustenance. Indeed, in all occupations payment was made in kind, as no metallic currency was yet in use.

In addition to ploughing, sowing and reaping, the helots irrigated the crops. Rain rarely falls in Upper Egypt, while in the Nile's lower regions it is so scanty that it must be supplemented by means of irrigation. Apart from the annual overflow of Egypt's beneficent river, this exceedingly fertile territory would remain as barren as the Sahara Desert. The Nile rises in June, increases in volume, and attains its maximum extension in October, while depositing a highly fertilizing layer of mud over the adjacent country. So, to economize the river water, channels were cut to conduct the liquid to the growing crops. Sometimes the stream failed to rise to its normal height, thus reducing the community to severe scarcity or gaunt famine.

The lives led by the Nile-dwellers have been ingeniously reconstructed by Egyptologists from the episodes of daily existence pictorially displayed on the walls of ancient tombs. "Such wall paintings," observes Mr. A. W. Shorter, a British Museum authority in his informative *Every Day Life in Ancient Egypt* (Sampson Low); "bring us very close indeed to the peasants and workers of ancient Egypt, and often enable us to follow their conversation, for these are inscribed in hieroglyphs beside the pictures. . . . The ploughs are drawn by oxen, and an inscription above describes the scene."

Other pictures portray men and women gathering corn and flax; peasants cutting cereals with wooden sickles furnished with flint teeth. Nearly every operation of the agricultural year is recorded on the tombs. The taskmaster is seen urging the serfs to increased toil, while the grain is threshed on the barn-floor by trampling oxen. Winnowing follows, and when the grain is separated from the chaff it is seen piled up and measured, the ascertained quantities being noted by the scribe of the corn accounts. Inserted in sacks, the grain is shown on its journey to the granary.

The peasants led laborious lives, and apparently every ounce of energy was exacted from them by their overseers, and the authorities were not always above suspicion of defrauding the toilers by reducing their rations, at times, almost to starvation point. The Egyptologist, Dr. R. H. Hall, in a chapter in the *Cambridge Ancient History*, concludes that the well-worn phrase: "the changeless East" is completely applicable to Egypt as a whole. "So far as the life of the common people is concerned," he declares, "Egypt is the most unchanging country in the world; it has changed less even than China. The life of the fellah of the XIIth or even the IVth Dynasty is much the same as it is to-day. The change of religion to Christianity and then to Islam has altered nothing but the form of prayer; the changes of political allegiance have mattered nothing at all. The agricultural and urban classes were differentiated just as they are to-day."

When released from the toils of husbandry, the peasants chased desert animals, snared birds or fished in the river, while at times their labour was conscripted for building purposes. The colossal pyramids, imposing temples, giant statuary, stately sepulchral monuments and obelisks, were the products of slave labour. The creation of these immense structures at a time when mechanical science scarcely existed, and when tools and appliances were so primitive has long occasioned wonder and astonishment.

Mr. Shorter suggests that its explanation is to be sought in the circumstance that in the distant past little importance was attached to time. So long as the craftsman produced a completed masterpiece it was deemed immaterial whether he devoted two years or ten to his task. "In this attitude to work," Shorter concludes, "may be found a reason for the splendid perfection of many masterpieces; lack of hurry, endless concentration, these carry the mind's conception to a victorious accomplishment. Secondly, the use of the almost unlimited man-power could largely compensate for the lack of our modern machinery. Lastly, the fact that professions were nearly always hereditary resulted in the attainment of extraordinary skill, both in the use of primitive tools and the treatment of intractable materials."

In the opening phases of Nilotic history the armies of men engaged in building operations were natives of the Nile, but later, when Egypt was crowded with war prisoners taken in Asiatic and Nubian campaigns, these unfortunates were extensively employed in heavy manual labour. But far superior to these hodmen were the expert architects and engineers who directed the activities of skilled artisans and craftsmen.

Amazing as it seems, the stonemasons who erected the massive pyramids of Gizeh were restricted to the use of flint and copper implements, as iron was apparently very little utilized prior to the tenth century B.C. Yet, the immense Pyramid of Gizeh is even now 451 feet in height, and was probably nearly thirty feet higher in the past. According to information received in Egypt by Herodotus, many centuries later, this colossal structure which covers nearly thirteen acres

with a cubic content of more than three million cubic yards was erected in the course of twenty years by the strenuous toil of 100,000 workers.

With the primitive appliances at their command it has always appeared difficult to explain how the Egyptians contrived to convey the enormous masses of stone employed in their constructions. The Great Pyramid itself is built of blocks of stone each with a volume of forty cubic feet. But, as Alan Shorter urges, the problem is partly elucidated when we consider the fact that the Egyptians were quite familiar with the use of the lever and that the capacity of "this instrument to increase human power is one of the first principles of mechanics." Moreover, wooden rollers might easily have been utilized for the purpose of transporting the huge blocks of masonry to their destined site. It must also be remembered that the toilers were lashed into labour by their harsh taskmasters.

There is a realistic representation on the wall of a necropolis at El Bersheh of the mode of conveyance of giant statues. In this, an immense stone figure of a royal prince is depicted deposited in a timber sledge dragged over the ground by a multitude of conscripted labourers. These comprise recruits, warriors, and even the inferior orders of clergy.

The erection of obelisks must also have proved a very onerous task. Two such monuments erected in the reign of Queen Hatshepsut at Karak, one of which is now overthrown, are noteworthy. This remarkable woman ruled for twenty-two years and the land enjoyed peace and prosperity. Her obelisks each consist of single granite blocks, and that still standing is 76 feet in height. We read that: "The granite quarries from which they were hewn are at Assuan, about 120 miles to the south, and one may appreciate the vast difficulties that must have confronted the ancient workers who had first of all to extract the two blocks, then convey them from the quarries to the Nile, and downstream by boat to Thebes, and finally to set them upright upon their bases in the temple of Amon." Yet, according to the inscription carved on the base of the still-standing obelisk this enormous undertaking was completed in the space of seven months.

A series of reliefs in a Nilotic temple portrays the passage along the Nile of two obelisks—perhaps the pair in question—borne in a large barge towed by tugboats escorted by sailing vessels in which sacred ceremonies are being conducted.

But even when these massive memorials had reached their destination their erection in an upright position must have proved a formidable task. As Mr. Shorter observes: "When one considers the elaborate machinery which was found necessary in our own day for the erection of the obelisk of Rameses II in the Place de la Concorde at Paris, or for that of Tutmosis III., better known as Cleopatra's Needle on the Thames Embankment, one may well be at a loss to explain how these things were done in ancient Egypt. And yet the answer proves fairly simple if we remember the cardinal principle: 'time and labour no object.'"

Our most detailed information concerning the lives of the servile classes relates to those engaged in funerary activities. The highly laborious construction of the tombs of Kings, when galleries running for hundreds of feet into the solid rock were excavated and then ornamented with chromatic reliefs and inscriptions, as well as the preparation of the countless necropoli of less exalted personages, and the production of the funerary furniture and other embellishments, in addition to the embalming of the dead, must have necessitated a large working community whose lives were devoted to the service of the departed.

The artists and craftsmen employed in these industries were very miscellaneous, and included sculptors, engravers, wood carvers and various others. There was also a police force of Nubians to preserve order and, if possible to prevent the plunder and desecration of the tombs in the vast Necropolis on the west bank of Thebes.

Innumerable records have survived which deal with the lives of the lower classes. Legal documents and registers inscribed on papyrus and limestone intimate that the men were the servants of the State who received no monetary wage but were merely furnished with food, oil and raiment. But these were not always forthcoming, and strikes and hunger marches were not unknown, especially in the time of the XXth Dynasty.

Stupendous was the toil expended on royal sepulchres. Seti's first hypogeum extends into the rock to a distance of 230 feet amid corridors and galleries whose walls are decorated with painted reliefs and inscriptions. The King is depicted in the presence of the divinities, and there are other sacred scenes, until a hall is reached with a ceiling resplendent with the goddess Nut and the stainless stars of heaven. Yet, in cavernous darkness, all this wonderful artistry was accomplished with no illumination save that afforded by the light of oil lamps. No marvel then that the supplications of the sightless inscribed on the tablets by necropolis workmen more than suggest that many beheld "darkness by day."

Curiously enough, most of our knowledge of the lives of ordinary people is derived from the records of litigation. These documents naturally give prominence to the crimes and misdemeanours of the litigants. In addition to the customary trials and hearings in a court of justice, disputes and criminal cases were frequently decided towards the close of the New Kingdom by appeal to oracles. "The case" we are told, "was presented before the image of a god, and the latter signified his wishes by nodding his head, worked no doubt by an inspired priest."

T. F. PALMER

For of Such is the Catholic Church!

"VIEWLESS WINDS" is the title of a book, written by Dr. Moran, and recently published in London.

For many years, Dr. Moran practised in Sydney (N.S.W., Australia), and latterly has been living in England. The work is written in reminiscent, biographical vein. At the same time, it is a ruthless exposure of the methods of some of the members of the Sydney medical profession, and a fierce denunciation of Catholicism in Australia. Dr. Moran was born of Irish parents; was brought up a Catholic; and is still an adherent of that faith—a fact which must give added force to his revelations regarding the Church to which he belongs.

Space permits of only a few of the extracts that might be made from *Viewless Winds*.

"The evil in Australian Catholicism," says Dr. Moran, "may be summed up in this way: There is a large percentage of unedifying failures among our clergy. A commercial spirit pervades many of the secular priests and nearly all the nursing orders. The prelates who have always been distinguished by virtuous behaviour have usually a profound distrust of their own laity.

"Only two duties are assigned to a layman—those of practising his religion, and subscribing liberally to the church.

"It can be very properly retorted to much that follows: Who is this that throws the first stone? But if it is alleged that, being a doctor, I have seen only the pathological side, I reply that usually the delinquent Catholic priest does not consult a Catholic doctor when he is suffering from the effects of his misbehaviour."

Among the many priests who have fallen from grace,

encountered by Dr. Moran, was one who had "lain in the gutter, become a drunken derelict, touched bottom in every vice." But drink is by no means their only weakness. Dr. Moran's experience is that "nearly every priest who breaks away from the church in Australia does so because of a woman."

"On one occasion," he proceeds, "there came to my surgery a priest whose drawn face warned me he had something heavy to unburden. He had the fame of being an excellent pastor. As I listened to the account of his troubles I realized how much it must have cost him to consult a Catholic doctor."

"After living for years in a constant ferment of sexual emotion, he had ultimately, in a moment of weakness, yielded to temptation, and gone out, recklessly, to look for the enjoyment of those gambols of the flesh which a thousand of his ancestors had known. But since he dreaded to give scandal by his evil example, he had turned his footsteps to a drab purlieu and to hired bodies, seeking those little women whose lives are going up and down furtively in the shadow of mean streets."

"There he had sneaked into some public cesspool where men ease themselves as in a vespasian on a public boulevard. The penalty of this adventure was the minor venereal disease. For a man of his sensitiveness no chastisement could have been more terrible."

Dr. Moran gives numerous instances of the wealth acquired by priests within his acquaintance.

"One," he remarks, "was an Irish archdeacon, whose main hobbies had been horse-breeding and the Stock Exchange. Many more followed his lead in buying and selling than profited by his Sunday homilies. His life was spent between his breviary, his race-book, and his investment portfolio, and he died leaving a substantial fortune."

"It surely must require a considerable amount of self-assurance for a celibate priest who drives a thousand-pound car (bought entirely from the dividends of a clerical career) to exhort his congregation of middle-class families to put more and more money on the church plate. Most of those listening are striving always to make both ends meet. They have children to educate and launch on a career. There are, too, many who use their pulpit as a rostrum from which to sell at auction, demanding a cash deposit in return for future salvation."

"After all, Judas's little transaction was a purely private affair."

"I sat one Sunday morning amidst the throng of a poor parish church, where the people all glowed with a simple faith. Next to me was a tired, prematurely-worn woman, whose hands were hardened and cracked with rough work. To the pulpit came puffing a bull-necked, over-fed priest who had great rolls of fat about his middle. He looked as if a little blood-letting would have improved him."

"He began with the usual exhortation for more generous offerings. God would surely reward them a hundredfold."

"Then he passed to the main theme of his sermon, which was birth-control. Now I was deeply interested in this matter. I had indeed founded the first Guild of St. Luke in Australia. But the violence of his denunciations appalled me. He flayed those who resorted to prevention. He ridiculed woman's preoccupation with her body. He jeered at those who whined about economic difficulties. The worn woman at my side stirred uneasily in her seat, crossing and re-crossing her feet. 'Selfishness—selfishness!' he thundered."

Dr. Moran goes on to vigorously denounce this particular priest who, from "his secure and privileged position, was very harshly castigating those who, in the midst of poverty, were trying to find some compromise between their religious beliefs and the realities of their marital life"—a priest who, in this respect, typified so many others.

Dr. Moran refers to "another picture that is etched deeply" in his memory with "the acid of a hot resentment."

"At Randwick Racecourse during one spring meeting," he relates, "I watched two priests talking together on the edge of the concrete area where bookmakers ply their calling. One of the priests had on a raincoat which he

kept buttoned. He had turned up the cape as if to conceal his Roman collar. The other was slovenly in dress, unshaven, rakish-looking. He seemed to have taken some drink."

"Suddenly a Hebrew bookmaker raised a stentorian voice to proclaim a shade better odds for the favourite."

"There was a wild scramble to get in on what all considered 'a good thing.' A struggling, jostling, pushing mass now scurried to get near the rostrum, many holding aloft the notes which they wished to put on. Tussling in this tight scrum were the two spiritual leaders of my church. One was lucky enough to reach the bookmaker before he shortened the odds again under the deluge of bets. The other priest, less fortunate, seemed to be disgruntled. For a moment I imagined the apostles struggling on the ground for some of the coins which had dropped from Iscariot's unnerved hand. They were nothing better than racecourse touts in the service of Mammon, who thought themselves cunning because they had put a saver on the Almighty."

"The last I saw of these followers of an ancient Fisherman, they were zealously pursuing their mission into an adjacent bar."

Endless other quotations, to the same effect, might be made from *Viewless Winds*—a book, by the way, which the Catholics here have been forbidden to read. The feminine side of the church is similarly brought under Dr. Moran's lash, particularly for the subterfuges and lies to which they are so artful in resorting where any "holy" end is to be served. One example of conduct that comes within the sphere of the sisters must suffice.

"When it becomes debased," continues Dr. Moran, "professed religion develops a sense of the theatre. It has—not only its exits and its entrances—but also its footlights. Too often the sisters walk down the aisle, bedizened with piety, and jingling ostentatiously, but decorously, their heavy, suspended beads. They genuflect with careful dignity. They feel that they are not quite like those others who have chosen the less honourable vocation of the flesh. They—thank God—are immaculate, free from the lewdness of maternity."

"In such a soil a new kind of Mother Superior springs up."

"I recall one, since called before a higher tribunal to justify her material achievement, who for years strutted around with the power and arrogance of a modern dictator. Doctors, nuns, and priests were subservient to her. She was ruthless and severe towards everyone except the rich."

"Wealth she adored."

"It excused all, justified all. When she travelled, it was in great state, like a Queen. She had always her cabin de luxe. A professed nun was her lady's maid. Bishops stood in awe of her—she was so powerful. Some day they, too, might have to ask her for a bed in her hospital, which was fitted out in the style of a modern hotel, except for its addition of appropriate religious fittings. She was intelligent, financially courageous, terribly ambitious. The poor were nothing to her. She conceived a hospital as a great financial institution, with every imaginable facility and luxury for treating the rich, and with highly-trained nuns to do the nursing."

"A single discreditable episode will best reveal the stasis of spirituality in certain organs of the Australian church."

"In one Australian city there used to be held each year a Police and Firemen's Carnival. Its purpose was to foment a friendly rivalry in the collection of funds between the different public hospitals. A prize was given to the hospital collecting the most money. Each institution however, was allowed to retain what it had gathered in; and, in addition, the Government gave it as subsidy a pound for every pound it collected."

"Two artful Catholics conceived the ingenious idea of making bogus gifts, each for a large amount."

"With the connivance of a Mother Superior, these sums were conditionally accepted, and permitted to have a string on them. An equivalent amount was later received from the Government, after which the original donations were pulled back. I am too simple to appreciate the subtleties by which any religious mind can justify what common men would call a vulgar fraud."

Dr. Moran remarks that in England an English Jesuit

asked him what was wrong with the church in Australia. "The priests," was the prompt reply. The doctor, it is plain, might well have added, "Aided and abetted by the feminine members of the Catholic order." Briefly, Dr. Moran seems to utterly recall from the hypocritical, wholly unnatural principle of celibacy imposed by the church.

"All my experiences of priests," he declares, "convince me that the purest-minded men are those who have found their sexual equilibrium in a happy marriage. I do not believe that the proper judges of sexual health and habit can be looked for among the celibate priests who learn most of what they know about human nature through a fetid breath and across the grill of the confessional."

In all, a most ably-written book—a book that is both a devastating exposure of the church itself, and a merciless flagellation of those in its professional service.

J. Y. ANDERONEY

Sydney, N.S.W., Australia.

Acid Drops

Now we know! The Archbishop of York says the Church of England is not the Church which belongs to England, "It is the Church Commissioned by Christ to claim England for His Kingdom." That is quite clear. The Church was commissioned—we have Dr. Temple's word for it—by someone who probably never existed to claim a kingdom he has never acquired, and is never likely to acquire, by the method of preaching a doctrine the meaning of which followers of Christ has never yet determined. Dr. Temple was speaking at his Diocesan Conference, and we have no doubt that his message was quite clear—to the Conference.

Not content with fully-blown parsons and ministers of religion being exempted from military service, the Rev. James Hudson writes in a religious weekly that theological students ought also to be exempted. He says that "theological students are picked men. They have approved themselves as called to work of a special nature. Our Church insists that the men she sends in for theological training should have a definite call from God to their work. Not to seek to have them exempted from military service is for the Church to deny that she sets much value on that call."

Granting the premiss we agree with the conclusion. It is, of course, unkind, when one looks at the intellectual character of the average clergyman, to place the responsibility on God for his being where he is. But it is an obvious slight on God's judgment, or on his authority, for Parliament to say it doesn't care a damn whether God called A.B. to the ministry or not, he will be of much greater service shouldering a gun than wearing a surplice, and better employed in doing military drill than in studying theology in one of those theological institutions where men who are weak-minded by nature are made incurably so by a course of training. We think that he of the Beacon fame ought to be indicted for blasphemy.

Many things are visible to the "spiritual eye" that are not clear to the sight of the ordinary layman. For example, the clergymen who attended the recent Conference of the National (Church of England) Society approved the Dean of Winchester's statement that "there is a genuine desire for adequate religious instruction in secondary schools." By whom? There is no increasing demand from the students, nor from the teachers, nor from the parents—where they are not subjected to parsonic pressure. The demand comes from the parsonry, and by all kinds of underhand tricks and dealings they manage to keep alive, in the name of others, an agitation for something that the demand for would die out if the aforesaid pressure were relaxed.

At the same gathering co-operation with the Free Churches and Roman Catholics was advocated. That also is interesting and illuminating. The co-operation is intended to make the demand for State support stronger and more imperative, not, be it noted, for the securing of a more effective education—for there is no dispute that the Council Schools are far and away better than Church Schools—but solely to see that the teaching of different forms of sectarian religion are effectively subsidized by the State. The sole aim of this is cash. There is no unity of belief with these Churches, there is only a unity of grab. When it comes to religious belief they are as ready as ever to fly at each other's throats. They agree only on a joint effort to plunder the general community only because they cannot see how they can do it as profitably by single action.

One other word need be added. Part of the strength of this piratical operation of the Churches is derived from the slackness of a great many people who actually have no desire for their children to have religious teaching but who are not taking advantage of their legal right to withdraw their children from such instruction. Politicians, as usual, ready to remain dumb where threats of adverse votes are made by the Church; Trades' Unionists afraid of the Roman Catholic threat; the Labour Party afraid that a confession of the justice of Secular Education, may lose them seats; all of these, to whom must be added those parents who think more of the opinions of their Christian friends than they do about the welfare of their children and a matter of mere principle, all play into the hands of the clergy of all denominations. An effective withdrawal of children from religious instruction, would encourage all these half-hearted people to make a stand for the policy of Secular Education, which would do justice to all.

Apropos of faith cures, the following from *Behind the Brass Plate*, by Dr. A. T. Scholfield, is quoted in a letter to the *Daily Mail* :—

My brother, who had thrown up a brilliant position to become a missionary in China, told me that some temples were full of rejected crutches, splints, bandages, etc., left as thank-offerings by those who had been healed.

One sees much the same sight on the Continent where such things are lavishly displayed in a great many Roman Catholic places. In England the Roman Church is more discreet in advertising its immense traffic in credulity and downright ignorance. As the Chancellor of the Exchequer is continuing his tax on patent medicines, why does he not try his hand in taxing the money received by the Roman Church in this country as a consequence of the cures affected by its patent (religious) medicine? It should bring in a good sum, and might reduce the heavy tax on whisky.

But the citation given reminds us of an incident that occurred many years ago. There has been a discussion on religion running through the *Daily Telegraph*, and an English Bishop had written sneeringly of the Chinese custom of using a praying-wheel. The Chinese Ambassador, in London, then sent a letter. He explained that a long time ago some wise Chinaman decided that if one prayer was good, a succession of prayers would be better. So he invented the praying-wheel, by which, as one revolution equalled so many prayers, five minutes of wheel turning would get a large number of prayers registered. He added that he was willing to put the matter to the test, and therefore would undertake to show that prayers made for rain, or good health, or good fortune, through the praying-wheel, had as much influence on health and the weather as the vocal prayers of a Christian Bishop. The Bishop never answered, but I think the same challenge could be made to-day.

We wonder if the following story from the *Evening Standard* throws any light on Christian origins :—

Mr. Wheeler is a keen-faced, untidy-haired sculptor whose work figures on many public buildings. He carved the new Old Lady of Threadneedle Street on the Bank of England.

Some years ago Mr. Wheeler used his six-months-old son as model for his Infant Christ, carving a halo round his head. His son now points it out proudly to visitors: "That's me, with a plate on my head."

It reminds us of Laurence Housman's satirical novel, *Mr. Trimblegrigg*, in which the reverend hero wears a nimbus, thus making his character Divinely guaranteed to all beholders. Many a child has wondered how on earth anybody could possibly be sceptical about the "Saints, Apostles, Prophets, Martyrs," each of them adorned in thousands of famous pictures with a miraculous halo.

The idea of open-air public executions is rejected by a number of journalists who have no objection to capital punishment. We believe that secret executions are a degree worse than public ones. If we are to kill criminals, let us at least have the courage of our barbaric recidivism. The latest French murderer to be guillotined (in public) was Eugene Weidman—who admitted to the killing of six victims. His biography shows that Weidman had a religious education, and he had only one request to make after sentence was passed: he possessed several "lucky" Roman Catholic medals, and he was anxious to get what he called "these holy medals" into appropriate hands. The newspapers quote Weidman's lawyer:—

"In all my long experience I have never known a man to face his death with such serenity," he told the British United Press. "While his crimes were those of a monster, his death was that of a saint."

Like a saint!

The *Church Times* is trembling at the way modern developments against religion are making people think, and wants to "draw the line." It admits, of course, that the Bishops "have no common front." "What one encourages," we are told, "and another condones, a third may peremptorily condemn." Which is a nice state of affairs in the Christian Church is it not? So here is the journal's own solution against heresy:—

Catholics stand by the Creeds.

Catholics stand by the Bible. "In its main broad outline and significant details, the vast edifice of Revelation stands clearer than before."

The Bible is a Catholic Book.

Catholics stand by the priesthood.

The Reservation of the Blessed Sacrament is part of the duty of the parish priest.

All these things are sacrosanct and the *Church Times* draws the line at anybody, even a Bishop, touching them. All the same we have an idea that the most faithful believers in these great "standbys" will one day receive a rude shock. They are no more likely to preserve Christianity than any of the other articles of faith.

The *Times* recently published a supplement on the United States, which gave an excellent account of its Government, shipping, broadcasting, transport, and many other of its daily activities—yet not a word about its religion! One of the writers in a religious journal complains about this, as he understands that "the study of religion is one of the most fascinating of the whole of American life." What should have been said, we think, is the study of "religions," for there must surely be hundreds of varieties of Christianity alone in God's own country. Perhaps when the *Times* was faced with describing them it shirked the responsibility; or perhaps it thought that, after all, religion was not important enough for detailed notice.

The Rev. E. Bagnall, being in Holland, thought of the exiled Kaiser, and determined to cheer up that pacific old gentleman by calling on him and reminding him of the days when His once Imperial Majesty received a bunch of British Clergymen at Potsdam. Here is the report written by Mr. Bagnall in the *Methodist Recorder*:—

As we chatted together, I remarked that the Christian Gospel was the only power that could heal the world-wounds to-day. "Yes," he said, "but it must be the

pure and simple Gospel." Speaking of world affairs, the Kaiser said: "Nations do not recognize the hand of God in human affairs. Providence has never permitted a World Empire, and never will." I agreed, and quoted Matthew Arnold as saying "down they come, down they come, one after another, Chaldea, Egypt, Rome and Napoleon." He said that only God can be supreme over all.

Arnold may have had some funny religion of his own, but he was at least a very great poet. How he would turn in his grave if he heard such banal rubbish attributed to himself. What Arnold wrote was of course:—

And Man has . . . made Greece,
Rome, England, France . . .
And Empire after Empire at their height
Of sway have . . .
Drooped and slowly died upon their throne.

The roof of the nave of the village church of Ownby-by-Spital, near Lincoln, collapsed as a result of ravages by the death watch beetle in the centuries-old oak beams.

"God's House" is notorious as a habitation for this industrious insect, and if the "Householder" had had any regard for "His" property, he would surely have scrapped the beetle's "design," or denied it refuge in the ark. "He" couldn't have expected Noah to hear the little beggar's tickings in the pandemonium the old skipper went through.

The *Catholic Times* regrets that 25,000 Spanish Republicans found shelter in Mexico. It fears these men might act against the Church if the occasion arose in which they could do so. We hope they will. Naturally the *Catholic Times* would rather these men were delivered over to the mercy of Franco and the Church. Prison or a firing squad would then soon settle the question, or questions, to answer which these men may be ready to devote their lives.

The Catholic press by the way, aided by Catholics in high places, still continues to carry on a vigorous public, and a very vigorous underground, crusade against any alliance between this country and Russia. The Catholic Church cares little for any form of civilization that does not permit the Church to rule everything, and is prepared to plot against it by every possible appeal to cupidity, ignorance and hatred that is possible.

We are told that unseasonable weather in Italy is causing fear for the harvest. There has been considerable rain, and it is felt that, unless the weather changes, Italy may have a bad harvest which would mean that wheat would have to be imported. Should this calamity occur, the Harvest Thanksgiving Services in God's Tabernacles will go on just the same.

Fifty Years Ago

You [The Bishop of Peterborough] tell me that "in some way Christ's death has removed an obstacle to our forgiveness"; you say you admit "an Atonement" but no "particular theory of Atonement"; you say "we are wise if we refrain from at all attempting to define"; and finally you appeal to Faith to justify your "strange mysterious, difficult, perplexing dogma." Why should I believe what is strange, mysterious, difficult, and perplexing? You have many good reasons for pretending to—a bishopric, a seat in the House of Lords, social distinction, and £4,500 a year. But what reason have I—a poor, persecuted Freethinker—to believe what I cannot understand; or what, so far as I do understand it, I utterly detest and abhor?

The Freethinker, June 30, 1889.

THE FREETHINKER

FOUNDED BY G. W. FOOTE

61 Farringdon Street, London, E.C.4

Telephone No.: CENTRAL 2412.

TO CORRESPONDENTS.

- G. H. TAYLOR.—Thanks for good wishes. We felt much better for our week's holiday, but could have done with four times as much. And there was the accumulation of matters when we returned! Anyway, so far, so good.
- H. MEERSON.—Your article received. Will write you later. Your suggestion on the other matter we should much like to adopt, but you are wrongly informed. There is no sub-editor on the *Freethinker*, and there has not been since we became editor. We wish there were, but sub-editors cannot be obtained as easily as for an ordinary journal, even if adequate funds were forthcoming.
- J. F. PRICE.—There has been no concealment that the Royal Tour was an elaborate piece of propaganda. Those who recall how by the same method, and within the course of a few days, Edward VIII. the "Prince Charming" and "ideal King" of the Archbishop of Canterbury and Mr. Baldwin, was forced to abdicate, and a new Ideal King stepped into his place, will take these things at their proper value. And the next monarch, whoever he or she happens to be, will display all the high qualities and awaken the same affection as the present one. That is the best of an hereditary monarchy. It not only indicates the succession of the monarchy; it also secures the handing on of the same great qualities of mind and character.
- D. DALL.—Obliged for cuttings. We note what you say regarding propaganda in general. There is no pamphlet dealing with G. W. Foote. We agree that much use might be made on suitable occasions of G. W. Foote's "Bible Romances." Foote was one of the most forcible writers that the Freethought movement has ever had.
- J. McKENNA.—One might as well object to dating a letter 1939—which counts from the alleged date of the birth of Jesus, as refrain from using the indicative phrases "Good Friday," and "Whit-Sunday."

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

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

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

Orders for literature should be sent to the Business Manager of the Pioneer Press, 61 Farringdon Street, London, E.C.4, and not to the Editor.

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

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

A reader—evidently a new one—writes us expressing his appreciation of the *Freethinker*, but suggests that the paper might get into more hands if we altered the name to one of a less aggressive kind. We have had the same suggestion before, but we do not think it advisable. The hostility of the religious world to the *Freethinker* does not rest upon hostility to the name of the paper but upon what the paper is. And it will not do to assume that because Christians profess beliefs which we believe are nonsensical, that therefore they are stupid enough to be

deceived by a mere title. If we called the paper *The Christian's Friend*, and kept the paper as it is otherwise, Christians would still discover what we were. We believe the name of this paper is one of our greatest assets, and the need to-day is for papers with courage, not journals which try to tame tigers by feeding them with jam rolls.

Some of the other suggestions made by this reader we may consider, but most of them have the drawback of demanding a fairly large annual expenditure, and our struggle at present, and the chief cause of anxiety is how to make ends meet. That concern has helped to kill more than one leader of the Freethought movement, and while it will not kill us, it does not make the job easier, or keep us free from anxiety. So for the moment we must depend upon what the *Freethinker* has always depended upon—the help of its friends in recommending the paper in all likely quarters. There is always a new reader just round the corner.

We are pleased to learn that the Glasgow Branch is making good headway with its open-air campaign. The attendances are, generally, larger and the quality of audience good. We are glad to hear this. The mistake made by many speakers in the open-air—no matter on what subject they are speaking—is that of assuming that an out-door audience must be of a mentally poor type, probably due to the fact that the general public has not outgrown the influence of government by a titled aristocracy. And that the language and the thought must also be, as it is said, on the level of the people. Whereas if an audience is in a hall it must of necessity be of a higher type. The assumption is quite false. Both indoor and outdoor audiences are made of much the same people, and as we have had so often to point out, even education adds little or nothing to a man's intelligence. It often does no more than enable him to express his ignorance in a more cultured language.

The one important difference between indoor and open-air speaking is that in the open-air an audience is likely to be more at the mercy of passing incidents, and a certain number of the audience is always coming and going. A speaker needs, therefore to divide a speech into sections which while connected will be sufficiently distinct from what has gone before and what may come after to enable anyone to "jump in" at any point. Given that, with good humour and tact, an outdoor meeting, if it is held regularly, will be very much made up of the kind the speaker creates. But the material of an indoor or an outdoor speech, provided it is not a political out-door speech, where one seldom expects or gets serious thinking, should be of the same quality—subject only to the modifications suggested.

A Peace Congress has been organized to take place in London at an early date. The Executive of the N.S.S. received an invitation to send delegates to the Congress. Accompanying the invitation to send delegates, who will be merely spectators, and so form part of the audience, except that they are expected to make some sort of a contribution, was a list of speakers who have been selected, in which list there is, as usual, a good representation of the Churches. The Secretary was therefore instructed by the Executive to acknowledge the invitation in the following terms:—

I am instructed by my Executive to acknowledge the receipt of your letter inviting the National Secular Society to send representatives to the Congress arranged by the National Peace Council. The full programme of the Congress appears to be already arranged, and without any consultation whatever with the National Secular Society which is the oldest accredited organization of avowed Freethinkers in this country. My Executive has, therefore, only to express its regret that the National Peace Council should be so completely out of touch with opinion in this country to have left out of consideration so large a section of public opinion as is represented by this organization.

The Executive of the N.S.S. is always ready to co-operate financially and otherwise with any public organization

that represents principles for which it stands, but it must be on equal terms. It asks for no preference, but it insists that it is time societies and movements that are really aiming at reform decline to play the game of the Churches by a platform boycott of avowed Freethinkers.

All Freethinkers within range are invited to join the Annual Outing Party of the Birmingham Branch N.S.S. to-day (July 2) proceeding to Weston-Super-Mare. Train leaves Snow Hill at 9.35 a.m. Lunch is to be carried, and tea will be arranged at Weston. Return fare, 6s. 3d. Saloon carriages can be arranged at an additional 1s. per head if those wishing to join the party will notify, without delay, the local secretary, Mr. C. H. Smith, 93 Willows Crescent, Cannon Hill, Birmingham, 12.

Mr. A. A. Green writes from Johannesburg enquiring what we meant by describing the election of a Pope as being "generally as fine a mass of trickery and sharp practice as one can imagine." Well, there is first of all the diplomatic game of countries immediately interested in the election of a new Pope trying to secure the election of one most favourable to this or that interest. Then there is the personal ambition of Cardinals anxious to secure the post. There is also the scheming and plotting to secure, as in a political election, the appointing of a Pope that will place this or that party within the Church in power, and over all there is the transparent imposture that it is God who selects, through the cardinalate, the Pope. There are other currents at work, such as the election of a man who can become the catspaw of a party, and so prevent the election of a man who might really wish to rule.

Obstacles to Human Progress, by George Ives (Allen and Unwin, 10s. 6d.), who will be known to many of our readers by a previous interesting work, *A History of Penal Methods*, is a rather difficult book to classify, despite its plain title. For the title hardly does justice to the scope of the work. Most of the obstacles that hinder progress, difficulties of conveying thought by means of language, the persistence of primitive thought-forms which block the way to a complete understanding between people, the power of vested interests, the tyranny of the old over the young, and so forth, all these are noted, and many of them would provide material for farther and deeper study than the author gives. In this direction there is enough raw material in the book to set half-a-dozen other books on the stocks. Mr. Ives dwells on the difficulties of communicating exact ideas owing to the nature of language—a matter which has received considerable recognition of late from the new science of Semantics, the persistence of primitive taboos, the influence of religious teaching and the innate unreasoning conservatism of religion in general, with many other similar obstacles to orderly and persistent progress. The work will also prove useful to those who are not so familiar as they might be with the world of books, and because of its hundreds of exact references, will probably send those who are familiar back to dip again in their old favourites. We remember that some years ago, and as a consequence of reading a fine article on the subject, we went again through the whole of the Platonic dialogues—with profit.

The only word of criticism we have to offer is that the work has too strong a resemblance to a commonplace book which has been gradually built up in the course of the author's study of books in general. One consequence of this is, we think, that a careless reader may give Mr. Ives credit for holding erroneous views that he most probably rejects. There is, for instance, a wording of a short section on "The First Cause," which would imply that the writer is in the grip of that religious nightmare, while he is probably aware that the objection to the phrase—an *idea* about it is impossible—is that it is just meaningless chatter. The section on "Taboo" suffers from the same fault, and it is a pity that when dealing with mourning customs Mr. Ives did not include a quotation from such an author as E. S. Hartland, pointing out that

the real significance of wearing black, or yellow, or other colour and forms of clothing after a death, was a method of seeking protection against the ghost of the dead by a form of disguise. But these are minor faults in a book which is packed with good ideas, and may lead many readers into courses of study with some of the most suggestive of modern writers.

There was a rustle in the trees at Hampstead Garden Suburb last Wednesday. The Institute was packed to hear the Debate arranged by the Peace Pledge Union between Mr. Ebury of the North London Branch and the Rev. A. Herbert Gray, on "Is Christianity a Religion of Peace?" One estimated that the majority of those present were Christians. This was the second debate that has taken place there on this theme. On the first occasion Mr. Ebury met Mr. Barclay, the President of the Peace Pledge Union. After that, it was thought that someone with a greater theological equipment, such as Dr. Gray, would perhaps be better fitted to deal with the subject.

Dr. Gray's theology was of the modernist type. He belonged to the newest of the New Dispensations. Judging from his presentation, the dispensing it enabled him to carry out was of a wholesale order. He dispensed, for instance, with the record of Christianity. He admitted he knew this record, and, as he didn't like it, he warned Mr. Ebury off this course. As the Debate was only a debate of sorts (the arrangement enabled Dr. Gray to have both the opening and closing speeches) the Revd. gentleman was able to both put up the notice-boards and take them down. Dr. Gray, in fact, *dispensed* with almost everything, save the teaching of Jesus. Through that teaching he thought some good had already been done to the cause of Peace and much more was still to come. It is not our custom to engage in any trumpeting. Mr. Ebury handled the Freethought case in an excellent manner, and gave great satisfaction to the friends of Freethought present.

Our Czech Friends

LAST Autumn at the International Freethought Congress, one of the outstanding figures was that of Captain E. V. Voska, the President of the Volna Myslenka, the Czech Freethought Society. He took an active part in organizing the Czechs in America during the 1914-19 War, and is a friend of the Masaryk and Benes families. During the war he worked for a time with Mr. Somerset Maugham, and appears, though somewhat disguised, in one of Maugham's books.

Those in touch with the movement in Bohemia knew that it had been established in the teeth of imperial opposition in the early years of this century, that an International Congress was held there in 1907 in defiance of the authorities, and that in spite of oppressive measures it survived the war. Since the war, under freer conditions, it greatly prospered, until about one eighth of the Czech and German population of the country were professed Freethinkers, and the stirring of liberty was making itself felt in the more backward regions of Slovakia and Ruthenia.

The Munich agreement which handed over to Hitler the Sudeten region was a great setback. The Volna Myslenka organized help for its members in the lost districts, brought many out of danger and supported them and many others who gained safety. This meant, not only a heavy strain on the finances of the Volna Myslenka, but a loss of about one fifth of their source of income as well as a diminution from the remaining sources. An appeal was therefore made to English Freethinkers to help them financially, and this appeal was met nobly. In all over £500 was raised, of which £300 and more was sent to Prague

and the balance was retained to aid those who sought refuge in this country.

Since then the situation has materially changed. In April, 1936, President Benes, at a reception given to the leading delegates to the International Freethought Congress held at Prague, sent a message to English Freethinkers, assuring them that the Czechs would do what they believed to be their duty whatever might befall. What was probably in his mind was that his country would have to bear the brunt of a war brought on by Nazi aggression. It is difficult to conceive that even then he foresaw that Great Britain and France would advise him to surrender the defences of his country and refuse him any form of aid if he made any effort to protect his people. How much easier it would have been for the Czechs to have fought than to have given up all that they have dearly gained in order that Englishmen and Frenchmen may sleep soundly o' nights! How bitterly they regret now that they trusted to the good faith of those who guaranteed their shorn territories, shorn of all defence!

When Hitler's men marched into Prague while President Haha was called to Berlin, among the first to be arrested were Captain Voska and Dr. Bartosek. The latter was one of the early members of the movement, took an active part in the 1907 Congress and organized the Congress of 1922. Captain Voska was at the time seriously ill and imprisonment in an unheated jail during a freezing fortnight in March, together with three long interrogations by the Gestapo made him so much worse that he was discharged. At first only those so unfortunate as to be Jews and Communists were badly mishandled, and on the whole the Volna Myslenka was let alone.

Among the most unfortunate were those who had found asylum in Czechoslovakia, land where liberty was most honoured in Europe. Most of these had fled from Vienna, and, now that their refuge was in the hands of the oppressors, they had to seek further, and many turned their eyes and hopes to this country, this other Eden, and this happy breed of men. And not only those of Austrian and German blood, but Czechs too, place their hopes of escape from a monstrous nightmare in the aid of Englishmen.

There are many persons in this country anxious to do what they can to help them, but when they attempt to translate the wish into the deed, they find that the way is not made easy for them. Only elderly people are allowed to enter, as refugees, this blessed isle, to enter and remain. All others are permitted to come in on the understanding that they are soon to go out, i.e., to migrate still further. A child may be adopted, but £50 must be set aside to provide for its emigration when it attains the age of 18 or before. A lad or a lass may be trained in some handicraft, but £100 have to be found as a minimum cost of admission to some other clime. A grown man or woman must be on his or her way to a better land, waiting, it may be, for two long years for a visa to America. None may make his home in England unless he finds employment which no Briton is available to do. Nor is it much kinder in the Empire. It was widely announced that Australia had promised to house 15,000 refugees. Yes, provided they paid the fares, could produce £200 (Australian) and a guarantee of three years maintenance, i.e., in all about £500. And all that Hitler allows them to take out is 10 marks!

The £200 odd in our hands for the relief of suffering Freethinker refugees is rapidly dwindling, and we have been able to do little. This sum was about enough to warrant the guarantee of a single refugee.

There are organizations for the Jews, there are committees for the Christians, but there is nobody but ourselves to help the refugee without a religion. There

were over a million German Freethinkers; there are a million Czech Freethinkers, and as many Spanish.

These numbers must not appal us so greatly that we do nothing. We cannot help all, but we can a few. There must surely be Freethinkers in this country who require maidservants, or sick nurses, or child nurses, or who can take a child into their household, or can train a young man or young woman (18-35) in some manual occupation. Those who can do none of these things can by adding together their sixpences enable us to provide emigration money for refugees adopted by their fellows.

Those who are able and ready to help should send their names to me c/o *The Freethinker*. It must be borne in mind that it takes two to three months or even longer in some cases to get the necessary papers.

C. BRADLAUGH BONNER

The Christian Confidence Trick

I.

THIS trick which is performed every day in our large cities is only a repetition of what was performed before the ignorant and wonder-seeking public in the time of Jesus. It is still practised by Christians in support of a religion which has more than a doubtful basis, and one which will not bear close scrutiny. Fortunately for the clergy, they have a very apathetic people to deal with, who are too lackadaisical to trouble to enquire, preferring to leave that to the clergy who are paid to do the thinking. Bishop Origen of Alexandria said that Kelsus in common with the Greeks, looked upon Christianity as a "blind faith which shunned the light of reason," and that Christians were "for ever repeating the Roman saying that: 'the Plebs' (common people) like to be deceived; deceived let them be.'" The principle that lying and deceit, if in the interest of religion are justifiable is admitted not only by the "Early Fathers," but by the Apostle Paul; and was duly practised by the translators of the biblical text of the Old Testament, which Christians have annexed from the Jews, firstly by the rendering of the original Hebrew into Greek, and secondly, from Greek into English. The factors employed in the trick are, on the one hand *plausibility*, and on the other, *faith*—in other words *credulity*. In the former case, the object desired is the sordid one of somebody else's money; in the latter, it is the winning of a soul for the glorification of the church, and so much written off from the debit side of the heavenly account book to the credit of the successful confidence trick man.

Jehovah is said to have "put a lying spirit into the mouth of his prophets" (1 Kings xxii. 23); and to have affirmed that "If the prophet be deceived, I, Jehovah (rendered "the Lord"), have deceived him." (Ezek. xiv. 9). In the New Testament Jesus threatened unbelievers that his father "would harden their hearts that they should not see nor understand and be converted" (John xii. 39); and this threat is repeated in the Mark gospel (iv. 12): "To them that are without" unbelieving Jews and Gentiles—"all things are done in parables, that seeing they may not perceive, and hearing they may not understand"! The apostles being chiefly illiterate fishermen could not write, and nowhere in the Epistles attributed to Paul, does he state that he *wrote*; and he himself admitted (1 Thess. i. 5) that the gospel he preached to them was in "words only." The Epistles were probably written at his dictation by some monkish scribe, by which it will be seen, how easy it would be to add interpolations which are so frequently noticeable in

the New Testament. Paul followed the footsteps of Jehovah and Jesus, by stating to the Corinthians (i. ix. 32) that: "I have become all things to all men that I may save souls"; and excused his trickery and falseness to the Romans by: "If the truth of God through my lie abounded unto his glory, why should I be judged a sinner?" (iii. 7). To the Thessalonians: "God sendeth them a strong delusion" A.V. (R.V. "a working of errors"), "that they shall believe a lie, that they all might be damned" (R.V. "judged") "who believe not the truth" (2 Thess. ii. 11).

What do the early Christian writers say in the matter? Origen admitted that: "It is not only justifiable, but our bounden duty to lie and deceive if by such guiles we can catch souls"; he died 254 C.E. In 320 C.E. Bishop Faustus wrote complaining of so many forged manuscripts on the market for sale: "words and whole paragraphs," he says "have been inserted into the scripture *ad libitum*." The Emperor Julian (d. 321 C.E.) who had been cajoled into becoming a Christian, soon found out the character and frauds of the religion of his adoption, and abjured it, saying: "it is enough for you to seduce a few slaves and beggars." Half a century afterwards, we find the Christian Emperor Theodosius (d. 395 C.E.) who, previously a sun worshipper, after conversion established the phallic doctrine of the Trinity, decreeing that: "all writings against the Christian religion shall be committed to the fire," with the result that many valuable historic records were lost for ever. Bishop Augustine of Hippo (d. 430 C.E.), writing on the subject of forgeries, complained that: "many things have been added by our forefathers; even the words of our Lord himself, and sentences never uttered by him, nor yet emanating from any one of the Apostles, nor known from whom." Eusebius, Church historian, 337 C.E. wrote (Lib. viii. 21): "I have related what might redound to the glory of, but have suppressed all that can tend to the disgrace of religion." Mosheim, another Christian historian (Cent. I., Part 2, Chap. ii. 17), wrote: "Not only after the Saviour's ascension, various histories of his life and doctrine, full of impositions and fables were composed by persons who were superstitious, simple, and addicted to pious frauds; but afterwards, various spurious writings were palmed upon the world, inscribed with the names of the Apostles." In Cent. ii. Part ii, Chap. iii. 15, he wrote: "Another error amongst Christians is to deceive and lie for the sake of truth and piety. This vice early spread amongst the Christians." In Cent. iv., Part ii., Chap. iii. 16: The greater part of the prodigies recorded in the histories of the age are liable to the strongest suspicion of falsehood and imposture. The simplicity and ignorance of these times furnished the most favourable occasion for the exercise of fraud; and the impudence of impostors in contriving false miracles was artfully proportioned to the credulity of the vulgar." In Cent. v. Pt. i. ch. i. 6: "Not long after the ascension several histories of his life and doctrines, full of pious frauds and fabulous wonders appeared, which disclosed the greatest superstition and ignorance on the part of the writers. . . . It was a maxim of the Church that it was an act of virtue to deceive and lie, when by that means the interests of the Church might be promoted."

The decree of Theodosius was well carried out for, besides the cruel murder of Hypatia—the lecturer at the Pagan University of Alexandria—by Christian monks, and the forging of MSS. in the cause of the new religion, all evidence against it was deliberately destroyed. Among these wanton destructions was the Serapian and Bruchian Libraries at Alexandria collected by the Ptolemies and Julius Cæsar,

and the library at Pergamos collected by Eumenes of Persia.

In the Preface to the "Revised Version" of the Bible, it is admitted by the translators that the renderings of the original text has not been faithfully carried out, and that much is incorrect and the meaning disguised. The Hebrew word *elohim*—plural of *Al, El, or Eloh*, signifying a god—has been made to appear as if an alternative name for *Jehovah*, as "God," "Lord," "Lord God" and "God Almighty" (Ex. vi. 3). The name was too sacred to be pronounced by the Jews; and the rendering of it does not give a true idea of the pronunciation of the Hebrew letters IHVH—J and I, and V and U being synonymous—sometimes written Iah, and by the Greeks Iao—"Yahuh" is the most usual pronunciation by the Gentile world. Christians at the present day who complacently worship the chief member of their tri-une god, would be surprised if they knew the object of their worship was the SUN (Ps. lxxxiv. 11) who was identical with Adonai and the Greek Apollo—the glorious nimbus surrounding which has given rise to the frequent use of the word *glory*, is seen in the adornment by the halo of the heads of the saints. The author of all things—NATURE—neither seeks for glory, nor could receive any flattery or other sycophantic adulation. The study of science teaches us that nature is a principle, not an anthropomorphic god to be cajoled into granting favours to Christian supplicants, and that petitions to it are as useless as they would be to the moon or the domestic cat. The Sun-god was the chief of the *Elohim* or "Host of Heaven" (Deut. xvii. 3; Ps. xcv. 3; 2 Kings xxi. 3); and the tribal god of the Hebrews. The "Host of Heaven" were the planetary gods; and "Zion" (Ps. ix. 11) meant the *Zodiac*. That God was given to riding "upon" or "through" the heavens (Deut. xxxiii. 26; Ps. lxxviii. 33) and hiding behind clouds (Ex. xix. 16), sometimes accompanied by loud trumpeting, in the midst of fire, and the quaking of the top of Mount Sinai, when he paid a visit to Moses and the Israelites. The character of this sun-god Jehovah or Yahuh, it is regrettable to say, was not of the best according to the records of his proceedings in the Old Testament, which is rendered conspicuous by his murders, cruelties, and acts of injustice and obscenity; and which show that he was well endowed with all the vices of humanity, and exposes his human origin.

The rendering of "*Jehovah elohim*" as "Lord God" is unwarranted and should be "Yahuh of the Gods." In the Psalms where *Jehovah* and *Adonai* are indiscriminately rendered "Lord" and "God," make it very misleading for the biblical student. See Ex. xv., and Ps. lxxxii. 1, where the translation is ridiculous; and that of Ps. lxxxix. is a very bad example; for it refers to the Greek mythology of Aphrodite, the supposed mother of Eros or Cupid, who was the personification of sexual attraction; and laments the loss of her lover Adonai (or Adonis), who was attacked by a wild boar who injured and emasculated him, when she cried out: "Oh my Adonis, where are the endearments of old which thou swearest for the sake of love. . . . Oh Ammon" (the God of the Lybian Desert).

The ward *asherah* is admitted in the Preface to have been wrongly rendered "Grove" in the A.V. (Ex. xxxiv. 13); and in the R.V. is said to be "the wooden symbol of a goddess," which is inaccurate. The Asherah was the phallic altar of *Baal-peor*, upon which the wooden symbol of the sex-organs were exposed for veneration and offering of incense, in connexion with the worship of Priapus—the god of the generative principle. The chief altar was in the Temple at Jerusalem, for which the Jewish women

wove hangings (2 Kings xxiii. 7). Baal was identical with Bel of Babylon, and was "The Lord" or "Master of the opening" or entrance. The symbol was the *Crux Ansata*, so frequently seen in Egyptian lore, and was identical with the *Yoni lingam* of the Vedic nations and Hindus. It consisted of the Greek letter *tau* surmounted by an oval, representing the combined sexes. With the Hindus the symbols were more realistic and gross. The fact that with the Jews, the symbols gradually gave way to actual sex images carved in wood, caused Asa, King of Jerusalem, to order the destruction of the "abominable images for the Asherah" (1 Kings xv. 13). They were cut down and burnt; and the houses of the *Nethinim* (the children of the *Kadeshim*, Ezra II.) to be broken down; and the *Chemarim* (Astrologer priests) to be dispersed (2 Chron. xv., and Hosea ix. 10). In 2 Kings xxiii. 7, the word *Kadeshim* is wrongly rendered as *Sodomites*. They were women consecrated to the "devotions" of the chemarim. In the quadrangular temple of Jupiter Belus in Babylon, the Kadishah for the night was supposed to be visited by the deity, familiarly known as *Bel*.

In the A.V. the phallus or upright emblem was invariably wrongly rendered "obelisk," but in the R.V. appears as "pillar" (1 Kings xix. 23). It is also euphemistically rendered "thigh" in Gen. xxiv. 3; xxxii. 26 as "loins" in Ex. i. 5; as "images of men" in Ezek. xvi. 17; and poetically as "palm tree" in Song of Songs v. 10; vii. 9! It may be considered excusable in the rendering of verses 4 and 5 of chapter v. of the Song of Songs, to disguise the true meaning, for the lustful meanderings of the sensual female voluptuary are two shocking for literal reproduction.

Seraphim or phalli of gold and silver (Gen. xxxi. 20-24; Ex. xx. 29) were carried about for veneration. We read that Rachael stole her father Laban's teraphim, and hid them in the saddle bags of her camel (34). Phalli were erected as thank offerings on the roadside when journeys were taken, and oil poured on or incense offered for a good night's rest. They were called *hermes*, and dedicated to *Priapus*, identical with Mercury, the Ram-sun god—Aries at the Vernal equinox of the zodiac, *Aris* the ram of Egypt, and *Agnus* the lamb of Persia, the "Ram Bearer," and the "Lamb of God," the precursor of the "Good Shepherd." The Trinity is of phallic origin, consisting of Ashur, Anu and Hea, the sacred *triad* or "three in one." Ashur being the chief god of the Assyrians.

W. W. HARDWICKE

Dr. Hayward and Freethought

"THE Philosophy which I prefer for the moment," says Dr. Hayward, "is dualistic; its formula is 'Animalism and Inspiration' . . . As an evolutionist I hold that man was once a lowly, crude being, but that under the influence of Inspiration (which has increased under the influence of civilization and has been further evoked by them) he has been able to rise to incredibly high achievement" (International Congress, World Union of Freethinkers; report).

But what have we explained when we have ascribed the rise of man to "Inspiration"? We have explained precisely nothing, but have thrown into the problem a label which is exactly on a par with Life Force and Vital Principle. We have labelled the problem, not solved it. And the finality of the ticket acts as a bar to further scientific understanding. It is therefore anti-scientific and fundamentally an extenuation of religious superstition. As used by Dr. Hayward it should have no part to play in the vocabulary of a seeker after truth.

On the one hand we have the reverent Ethicist ascribing the ascent of man to some ghostly "Inspiration"; on the other we have the psychologist showing how the particular development of the forebrain gave to man powers of learning far beyond those of the ape and made him the most teachable of animals. Which are we to follow—the ethicist word-monger or the scientific investigator? As an educationalist Dr. Hayward should be aware of contemporary experiments with such animals as monkeys and apes, and of the increasing knowledge at our disposal of how the capacity for learning evolved. And as an educationalist he should also be wary of throwing into the gear of our understanding words which are mere lumber for science to shift.

Now let us see to what use this "Inspiration" is put. Dr. Hayward asks, "How can Freethought employ the noble resources of Inspiration? There is one small way and one great way. Let us remind the people who are despairing of the world because of events in Spain and China that there is always an element of the unforeseen which may completely change the situation at any time."

And so, friends, we are inspired to sit and wait for the unforeseen. Is this fatalistic reliance on some fortunate twist of future events what we understand by a call to militant action—one purpose of the Congress? We must *make* the future, not lie down to it. If Freethinkers cannot hope to have some effect on the shaping of the future, what is the use of a movement at all? There is nothing anti-determinist in this. The future is, like the novel emergent, "not there till come"; rooted in causes, but to us not wholly predictable.

Dr. Hayward descends to the level of argument of the orthodox Dialectical Materialist: Communism *must* be the next stage, for it is the only possible outcome of the dialectical contradictions in society. Why, then, work for it? In order, says the Communist, to help it along.

To help on something that is fatalistically bound to come, or to work for something that may not come, that is at present endangered, and which has to be achieved—which demands the higher type of character? The one offers you ultimate sure victory, the other asks you to make that victory. I prefer the words of Garibaldi quoted by Mr. Cohen (Congress Report), "When you march with me I can give you the earth for a bed, probably a crust of bread to eat, probable death if you advance."

Next, as to Dr. Hayward's method of evoking support for "certain leading ideas." He wishes to "convey a philosophy and a code *impressively*," and to give "emotional energy." To achieve this I have proposed Emotionalized Celebrations, in which by the employment of appropriate music, poetry, eloquence and a little ceremonial certain leading ideas may be made powerful and convincing. I believe that youth could be impressed even more than adults by this method, this deliberate evoking of Inspiration; and I also believe that it could to some extent supply the needs of people who do not go to church, but feel that they would like a helpful substitute."

But this is where the Freethinker should be cautious. With Dr. Hayward he wishes to "convey" ideas and "achieve" support. But what Dr. Hayward calls Emotionalized Celebrations should on no account be used to achieve sympathy where argument cannot carry conviction. This is the game played by priest, press and politician.

If sober, intellectual interchange of ideas has not elicited sympathy it is mere obscurantism to employ "Emotionalized Celebrations." It is thus not merely negatively useless but positively dangerous. And a mind won over by musical effect can just as easily be

lost by the same means. The Freethinker will be scrupulously honest in the pursuance of his principles.

I venture, then, to suggest as a good rule, that such "emotionalized celebrations" should invariably follow, not precede, intellectual argument and discussion. They should not be used to convey or achieve sympathy for any cause or idea, but to crystallize intellectual sympathy into active militant help. The musician, the poet, the stage manager, must be the handmaids, not the precursors, of the propagandist.

What, in conclusion, is the effective function of the reverent Ethicist? His aims are sincere, his character to be respected, but his effect is that of shielding the forces of religion and superstition from the full force of attack. And I have yet to see that the quality of militancy is accompanied by any intellectual or cultural inferiority.

When the B.B.C. felt it incumbent upon them to make some official recognition of the Bradlaugh Centenary there was only one person who in common honesty could have been invited to speak, whom a vote from the English organizations now engaged in furthering Bradlaugh's work would undoubtedly indicate, and that was the man who was filling the position occupied by Bradlaugh as President of the N.S.S. I, for one, was surprised to see the job accepted by an ethicist of much the same outlook as Dr. Hayward.

The reverent Ethicist is a shield and godsend for organized Christianity.

G. H. TAYLOR

Correspondence

LEECH AND "PUNCH"

TO THE EDITOR OF THE "FREETHINKER"

SIR,—No, Mr. Kent is correct. Leech did draw many admirable and humorous illustrations for the *Illustrated London News*. I don't know about "thousands"; but I recall many. Prolific as Gilbert was as a book illustrator he did not do more than a fraction of the work achieved by "Phiz" and Cruikshank.

EDGAR SYERS.

National Secular Society

REPORT OF EXECUTIVE MEETING HELD JUNE 22, 1939

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

Also present: Messrs. Clifton, Rosetti (A.C.), Elstob, Bryant, Preece, Seibert, Ebury, Bedborough, Horowitz, Griffiths, Mrs. Grant, and the Secretary.

The minutes of the final meeting of the last Executive were formally read. The Monthly Financial Statement was presented and questions invited. New members were admitted to Kingston, North London, West London, and Glasgow Branches, and the Parent Society. Arrangements were made for speakers to visit Birkenhead and Glasgow during the indoor season, and a grant was made to the South London Branch N.S.S. Invitation to send delegates to a National Peace Congress was noted and a line of action was decided. A report of police interference with N.S.S. meeting in South London was received and the local Branch was advised. Matter and Motions remitted from the Annual Conference were dealt with and instructions issued. Messrs. Clifton, Rosetti (A.C.) and Mrs. Quinton were elected as the Benevolent Fund Committee. A vote of sympathy towards Mr. C. G. Quinton was passed on the death of his mother, who was an old and respected member of the Society.

The next meeting of the Executive was fixed for Thursday, July 13, and the meeting closed.

R. H. ROSETTI,
General Secretary.

SUNDAY LECTURE NOTICES, Etc.

LONDON

BETHNAL GREEN AND HACKNEY BRANCH N.S.S. (Victoria Park, near the Bandstand): 6.30, Mrs. N. Buxton.

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

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.

SOUTH LONDON BRANCH (Brockwell Park): 7.0, Sunday, Mr. P. Goldman. Rushcroft Road, opposite Brixton Town Hall, 8.0, Tuesday, Mr. L. Ebury. Liverpool Grove, Walworth Grove, 8.0, Friday—A Lecture.

WEST LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (Hyde Park): 8.0, Wednesday, Debate—"Is the Universe Designed?" *Affir.*: Mr. Knox. *Neg.*: Mrs. Buxton. Thursday, 7.30, Mr. Saphin. Friday, 7.30, Mr. Barnes. Sunday, 3.30, Messrs. Bryant, Barnes and Collins. 7.30, Messrs. Bryant, Barnes, Tuson and Wood.

COUNTRY

INDOOR

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

OUTDOOR

BIKENHEAD (Wirral) BRANCH N.S.S. (Haymarket): 8.0, Mr. J. V. Shortt—A Lecture.

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

BURNLEY MARKET: 7.0, Sunday, Mr. J. Clayton.

CHESTER-LE-STREET (The Bridge): 8.0, Friday, Mr. J. T. Brighton.

EDINBURGH BRANCH N.S.S. (Mound): 7.0, Mrs. Muriel Whitefield—"Determinism."

GLASGOW SECULAR SOCIETY (Albion Street): 8.0, Sunday, Mr. T. L. Smith. Tuesday, 8.0, Albert Road. Thursday, 8.0, Minard Road. Friday, 8.0, Rose Street, Sauchiehall Street. Muriel Whitefield will speak at these meetings.

MANCHESTER BRANCH N.S.S. (Rocles Market): 8.0, Friday. Stevenson Square, 7.0, Sunday. Blackburn Market, 8.0, Monday. Chorley Market, 8.0, Tuesday. Mr. W. A. Atkinson will speak at these meetings.

MANCHESTER BRANCH N.S.S. (Bury Market): 8.0, Saturday, Mr. J. Clayton.

MIDDLESBROUGH (Davison Street): 7.15, Wednesday, Mr. J. T. Brighton.

NORTH SHIELDS (Harbour View): 7.0, Tuesday, Mr. J. T. Brighton.

QUAKER BRIDGE: 3.15, Sunday, Mr. J. Clayton.

SCOUTBOTTOM (Rossendale): 7.30, Friday, Mr. J. Clayton.

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

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