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Views and Opinions

War Aims

We are at war, but it is loudly proclaimed that we are also at war in the interests of peace. So far, good. But if we proclaim that our object is peace, it would be well to have assurances as early as possible as to the kind of peace we desire. And if we know what we are fighting for, and what our ultimate aims are, it should be possible to state them with simplicity and directness. Such a plain statement would not merely encourage our own people, it would also, so far as the German people are able to become acquainted with our message, do something towards weakening the enemy. The reply that the war is not sufficiently advanced, and that what the Allies will demand must depend upon the position when the war is ended, is quite beside the point. That reply simply will not do. Its only influence will be to awaken suspicion where none need exist, and to intensify suspicion where it is already in existence. There is not the slightest necessity for the aims of the Allies to be stated in full detail. Neither is it enough to say that we aim at preventing the present rulers of Germany any longer acting as a danger to the rest of Europe. It is the aim of every country at war, at any time, to prevent that country from again disturbing the peace. If we are honest, sincere, and not completely dominated by hide-bound diplomatists and professional politicians, who have an historic preference for dubious language and concealed aims, we must lay down a definite and clear statement, in at least general terms, of our war-aims. If they cannot be carried out in the detailed manner all honest folk would desire, so much the worse. No one who enters a competition can be certain of where he will stand when the competition is ended. The necessity for plain speech in the present case is the greater because it is certain that by the time the war is ended the Allies will not be in a position to impose a peace of any duration on the rest of Europe. Whatever world policy is possible in the direction of a durable peace can be put into operation only with the co-operation of others. A lasting peace

must be an *agreed one*, not a forced signing of peace with the cannons ready to roar if an *agreement*, forced upon a vanquished enemy, who may afterwards be able to claim that he had no alternative. Such a peace is maintained only so long as it cannot be broken. It is well that the Prime Minister who for so long sneered at collective action, now speaks in terms of a federal Europe.

* * *

Fascism and War

To say that we are out to crush Nazism is merely to repeat at least one reason why we went to war; it is an aim that must be preliminary to a reasonable peace, and to a European settlement along desirable lines. A civilized world can no more live at peace with a Nazi Government than the Government of the United States could live at peace with gangster organizations. Difference of name most frequently represents a difference of things to those whose mental life is determined by words, that is why I have so frequently used "Fascism" when referring to Germany. Nazism is the German form of Italian Fascism and Hitler's law-giver, Mussolini, has laid it down in the clearest possible words that

military forces represent the essential element in the hierarchy of the nation. Nothing has yet been discovered which can take the place of that which is the clearest, most tangible, most decisive expression of the total strength of an entire people—that is to say, the size, the prestige, the power of its arms on land, on the sea and in the air.

It is simply impossible for a Nazi Government to live at peace with its neighbours. Increase of territory means greater strength to a nation of Nazis, but it also means greater danger from the impact of ideas over an increased area. An armistice may be concluded with a nation of Nazis, but never a permanent peace. If the present Germany stood in the same position as Great Britain, with "possessions" in all parts of the globe, it would be compelled to aim at the annexation or the subjugation of all contiguous peoples. In no other way could it protect itself against the one weapon it dreads—that of free opinion. To live peacefully with others would be to prepare for its own disintegration.

The destruction of Nazism must, therefore, be one of the war-aims of the peace, if it is to be a real peace, and if our professed aim of creating conditions where the bullying of one nation by another is made next to impossible. That amount of definiteness of aim can be stated now, and must be stated if our professions are to have any real effect on the German people. Thus far we can express our aims, and make it crystal clear that short of this, Germans and others will be left free to work out their own salvation. To some extent the Prime Minister travelled along this path, but

there were, again, the usual qualifications and ambiguities. Thus, after victory, each country would have the unfettered right to choose its own form of Government, so long as that Government did not pursue an external policy injurious to its neighbours.

Italics mine. What Government ever admits that its external policy is injurious to its neighbours? It is the wickedness of its neighbours that compels it to go to war—witness the wickedness of 4,000,000 Finlanders threatening the security of 170,000,000 Russians. And,

armaments would gradually be dropped as a useless expense, *except in so far as they were needed for the preservation of internal law and order.*

Again that fatal diplomatic proviso. What is understood by internal law and order? It cannot refer to extent of country and population, or Germany would need much larger armaments than Britain. It must refer to the *extent* of territory and population under the control of each nation. France and Britain with possessions in different parts of the world would demand very large armaments for internal law and order. Germany and other States would require very little. Britain would retain command of the seas, which in peace time is of no consequence and of no value, but in times of war, as we are now demonstrating, is very valuable indeed.

It is quite clear that a real, a lasting, a world peace is not to be obtained by these dull-brained diplomatic equivocations. If we wish to have peace in the world, and if we wish to have 70,000,000 Germans working with us for peace, we must give as well as take, and as a means of winning the war with as little delay as possible, and to induce the German people to help in the task of ending the war, we must make it plain to the world that we are ready to submit all national disputes to an independent internationally constituted tribunal, armed with power to enforce its decisions. If we wish to see universally established the reign of law we must give up the weapon of individual force as a means of settling disputes between peoples. We must help to create the conviction that fifty million, or seventy million or one hundred and seventy million people have no greater right to judge their own case as between themselves and other groups than has a gang of criminals to adjudicate on the guilt of its members. Is there not as great and as good a justification to enforce the rule of law between nations as there is to enforce it between individuals? At the present moment we have to take the risk of destroying civilization in settling national differences. Could we not venture a little with a prospect of gaining international peace?

There is no justification for putting off giving a statement to the world of our war-aims. Exactly how far we may be able to put them into operation must, of course, depend upon how we stand when the war is over. But we shall certainly hasten the date of the end, and make the road clearer for the realization of those aims, if we are clear and plain in our statements, and show our readiness to give as well as receive. We must make it clear that security of any part of Europe involves the security of Europe as a whole. Every war to-day is civil war.

* * *

After the War

Apropos of the end of the war, an old friend of the *Freethinker*, Mr. A. Hanson, raises a point that is worth dealing with. He says:—

The immediate war aim after the defeat of Hitlerism will be the restoration to power of the Roman

Catholic hierarchy in Poland and Austria. As a Freethinker I regard this consummation with no great enthusiasm. To put it quite plainly, Protestant Britain—incidentally, if you like—has become an instrument of the policy of the Vatican. This, of course, is not the official way of stating it, but I have simply crossed the "t's" and dotted the "i's." Don't misunderstand me. Even at this I still think it would be a lesser evil than the triumph of Hitlerism, but I think it right we should face that damnable consequence of Allied victory.

Mr. Hanson puts his point strongly because he feels strongly, but I think that his feeling has in this instance overrun his usual judgment. That the Church will be restored to power in both countries may be taken for granted, but Mr. Hanson's argument assumes that it will be a restoration to *complete* power, and that I do not think will happen. The more accurate statement would be that a victory of the Allies will permit the Roman Catholics to reinstate their Church. I shall regret the people exercising their freedom for the restoration of the Church, but I do not see on what grounds we, as Freethinkers, could object to it being done. I know there are many *non-Christians* who would forcibly prevent this, but a real Freethinker does not allow his dislike to religion to dull his sense of justice. We do not wish to see Fascist rule destroyed in its relation to political life, and restore it in relation to religion. There can be no half-way advocacy in matters of opinion. We must either confer equal liberty upon all, or make freedom of opinion another form of opportunism. Freedom does not destroy risks, it merely introduces new for old ones, and if experience goes for anything we know that greater risks are run by suppression than by freedom. I do not think that Mr. Hanson will disagree with me so far.

So I prefer to say that the victory of the Allies will restore to Austrians and Poles the freedom to restore their Church. It is just possible that the Church may regain all its old power, but not, I think, probable. If the Roman Church gains from the downfall of Hitlerism, so may Freethought. The old warfare between the Church and Freethought will be resumed (I could say something concerning the existing relations between Freethinkers and the Church in Austria and Germany, but refrain for many good reasons), and it will be strange if all the gains are on the side of the Church. The collapse of the Church of God before Hitler will not have been without its lessons to many believers. I am not confident that Rome will regain all its old strength in either Poland or Austria. It is not likely that very many who were sincere believers in the Church will come to Atheism in one jump, but their faith will be weakened. Atheism is no intellectual "Blitzkrieg," by which conviction is changed in the twinkling of an eye. A people may restore an autocratic monarch, but his autocracy suffers from a fall, and Gods, like Dictators may withstand anything but a demonstration of their limitations. I do not, therefore, think that Rome will regain its old position either in Austria or Poland. Protestantism may gain, so will Freethought. In what proportion remains to be seen.

Another disadvantage to the Church—in Germany at least—will arise out of one of the evils of Hitlerism. German Nazism will have had under control for some vital years the control of youth. These young people have been, because of their education and rigid discipline brought up without faith in the Church. I do not regard the training to which these young people have been subjected as providing good material for Freethought, but it is certain that the Roman Church, if and when it is restored will not find them good material for conversion. On this side alone the Roman

Church stands to lose heavily. The old religious shibboleths will have lost their hold over them, and the Church cannot give them new ones. In this respect both Nazism and Roman Catholicism are at one. A true Nazi and a true Roman Catholic must be bred. Otherwise the memories of a freer life may haunt him and make for his undoing.

I feel that I ought, in justice to my readers, to say that I have written the earliest of these notes on the assumption that we shall have discussing the peace men of first-rate intelligence, who will rise above the claims of a narrow nationalism, and who are free from a desire to steal a march on others. But if we have, as we are likely to have, a gang of diplomatists playing their childish game of plot and counter plot—the moves of which are so well known that not one of the players are deceived—a number of office-seeking politicians and international financiers, with the whole of the gathering dominated by mutual and deserved distrust, in that case it is likely that the blunder of calling a league of political and financial tricksters a "League of Nations," will lead to yet another war just as soon as some of the peace-makers think it may be profitable to have one.

The unprovoked attack of Russia on Finland does not weaken anything we have said, it merely emphasizes the necessity for curbing the nationalistic ambitions that are having a second try, in the course of fifty years, to ruin civilization. Granting that Russia in claiming the right to bring Finland (as real a democracy as any that exists) under its control is behaving only as other countries have done, our own included, the crime of invasion remains. And Stalin has given a close imitation of Hitler's methods. Finland was a threat to Russia, even as Czechoslovakia was a threat to Germany. The bombing of civilians followed the plan of the master, as did the statement that the Finns were using gas. Only the preparation to use gas against the Finns if necessary, could be responsible for that. The refusal to further negotiate with the Government of Finland, while recognizing as the Government *de facto* a handful of supporters of Russia who "govern" a territory with the population of an ordinary English village is a piece of impudence that can go down only with those with whom Russia can do no wrong. A nation of 170,000,000, covering one seventh of the earth's habitable surface declares its security as so seriously threatened by a nation of 4,000,000, that it cannot wait longer for a dispute to be settled. It must go to war at once. And this by a nation that many of us, without following its political theory, had begun to look upon as the one country that did not threaten the security of other people, which had no territorial aims, and to sympathize with its difficulties and hope for the best from its gigantic experiments within its own borders. Not so obscenely brutal as a Nazi invasion, the attack on Finland emphasizes the truth that until we establish some form of international control over the relations between nations the world will never be secure or peacefully progressive. We hope that Russia will not proceed to regard the seat of the British Government as situated in the office of the *Daily Worker* instead of at Westminster.

CHAPMAN COHEN

There is no alleviation for the sufferings of mankind except veracity of thought and action, and the resolute facing of the world as it is, when the garment of make-believe by which pious hands have hidden its uglier features is stripped off. . . .

T. H. Huxley

The Challenge of Emily Bronte

The genius that can stand alone
As the minority of one,
Or with the faithful few be found
Working and waiting till the rest come round.

Gerald Massey

FEW writers have made an immortal name for themselves with such a slender literary output as Emily Bronte. One novel and a few poems formed but a modest equipment with which to challenge posterity. But the novel was *Wuthering Heights*, written in earthquake and eclipse, and the poems included "Last Lines" and "The Old Stoic," which constitute the finest achievement of any woman in a thousand years of English literature.

The three Bronte sisters have a separate niche in literature all to themselves, but, whereas Charlotte possessed talents, Emily was a real and unmistakable genius. Brought up in the desolate vicarage of Haworth in the lonely Yorkshire Moors, without a mother's care, their lives were hard, cheerless, and full of suffering. There was little cause for laughter in their home, and in their books the lack of mirth is only too apparent. Emily especially was as wild and untamed as an eagle. Her sister, Charlotte, writing of her, says that she was "stronger than a man, simpler than a child, her nature stood alone." Matthew Arnold, with poetic intuition, wrote that her intellect:—

Knew no fellow for might,
Passion, vehemence, grief,
Daring, since Byron died.

It was indeed, entirely owing to the admiration of Arnold, Rossetti, and Swinburne that her name was kept evergreen. For it was these great poets who pointed out to a forgetful public that her work ranked with the finest poetry. Her novel *Wuthering Heights* has been most happily criticized by Swinburne: "As was the author's life so is her book in all things; troubled and taintless, with little rest in it and nothing of reproach." Rossetti wrote more strongly: "The action is laid in hell, only it seems places and people have English names there."

What this rare genius might have become had she lived her full span, no one can say, but she died of consumption at thirty, "torn," her sister said, "conscious, panting, reluctant, though resolute, out of a happy life." The other sister, Anne, was altogether different. She died leaving as her farewell to the world some mild verses, whose meekness and submissiveness make them very touching. She was by far the weakest of the three sisters, and but for Emily and Charlotte her name would not now be remembered.

What a marvel is genius! Emily Bronte was a poor governess, whose world was scarcely wider than the wild Yorkshire moors that ringed her home. This tall, frail girl died when she was barely thirty, yet she wrote some deathless verse and a novel of passion and terror such as no woman, and few men, had ever paralleled. The case of the poet Shelley, is just as astonishing. This most daring and democratic of all poets came from a long line of country squires, bucolic folk with no literary gifts, and with no more sympathy with progress than a faint knowledge that there was such a thing. Shelley's surviving son was a charming man with a love of yachting and the sea, the only characteristic he shared with his gifted father.

Emily Bronte was a born rebel. Ringed around with Victorian conventionality, reared in a lonely and remote country vicarage, she soared above her narrow environment and outdistanced all her feminine rivals. Writing poetry purely to please herself, she displayed complete originality, and fundamental brain-work, astonishing in one who lived so secluded

a life. Recall her lines in "The Old Stoic":—

And if I pray, the only prayer
That moves my lips for me
Is "leave the heart that now I bear,
And give me liberty."

Yes, as my swift days near their goal,
'Tis all that I implore;
In life and death a chainless soul,
With courage to endure.

Her "Last Lines," commencing: "No coward soul is mine," is too long to quote, but a taste of its rare quality is in the verse:—

Vain are the thousand creeds
That mire men's hearts; unutterably vain;
Worthless as withered weeds,
Or idlest froth amid the boundless main.

Emily died as she had lived, a brave, solitary, and unconquerable woman. The fell disease which was the bane of the family, killed her, but she would not suffer a doctor to approach her. One night, combing her thick brown hair, the comb dropped from her fingers, and, worn out, she was carried to her death-bed.

Where beyond these voices there was peace

A truly remarkable woman, Emily Bronte was free from the uneasy egoism so common with writers of her own sex. There was much of the Stoic in her fine nature, and she soared far above the little vanities of her contemporaries. Indifferent to fame, unknown to luxury, she did her work bravely and well. Intellectuals welcome in her a sister, not silenced by the terrors of theology, nor limited by the bonds of convention; but capable of pioneer work in life.

Like our own "George Eliot," a woman of this stamp must be judged sympathetically. With all the inevitable drawbacks of her restricted and unlovely life, haunted by constant ill-health, this gifted woman fought the battle for Freedom. If her work exhibits this warfare and this perplexity, we judge with the forbearance springing from that larger wisdom which tempers justice with mercy. Her first claim on us is, indeed, her genius; but we should be hardly less interested in the record of a woman born of that heroic temperament to which, after most terrible suffering, Liberty never waxed old, nor the light of reason failed of its appeal. It is Emily Bronte herself who is always as attractive as the most brilliant of her writings. This austere genius of the moors has won from a more emancipated generation the gratitude due to a pioneer:—

A fever in her pages burns;
Beneath the calm they feign,
A wounded human spirit turns
Here on its bed of pain.

MIMNERMUS

Ichabod

THE widow's cottage is more bright and tidy
Because her man is gone;
Her sister says: "There's none to lie beside thee";
Her face looks pinched and wan,
And sometimes she feels faint,
But she makes no complaint.

Her children too, grown up, come home no more,
Nor with their muddy feet
Leave cow-dung on her nicely polished floor;
Now all is clean and neat:
"They make the place a mess,"
She often would confess.

Her man is dead, her children are all scattered,
Her cottage is more bright;
But was their dirt a thing that really mattered?
A husband sometimes tight?
The widow knows she's cleaning
A house that's lost its meaning.

BAYARD SIMMONS

Are Acquired Characters Inherited?

THE Freethinker is not likely to proceed to the advocacy of definite eugenic measures until he is satisfied that the social evils he seeks to abolish cannot be tackled without resort to laws limiting the freedom of the individual.

If, therefore, the individuals noted as genetically defective could be made to acquire traits of a socially advantageous character, could those new integrated acquirements be passed on to the offspring? If so the genetic structure of future generations could be ameliorated without having to dictate who shall and who shall not have children.

In a word, are acquired characters transmitted?

The fact that the bulk of scientific evidence points to a negative answer does not permit us to dispose airily of the question, when such distinguished investigators as E. W. MacBride and Rose Harrison maintain the contrary. They are joined by Bernard Shaw, who is not an authority, and whose "facts" J. B. S. Haldane regards as unsound. (Haldane also dismisses the case for the inheritance of acquired characters as "obsolete.")

Those who wish to pin their faith to this avenue of escape from eugenics must be prepared to hand over to the Vitalist an important argument. Conversely, as C. E. M. Joad, our leading British Vitalist, acknowledges, if acquired characters are *not* heritable, that is, "if the gains of one generation cannot be handed on to the next, then it is clear that the notion of plan or purpose in evolution, and of a cumulative progressive advance in realization of that purpose must be given up." (*The Meaning of Life*.) In other words, Joad sanely submits his case to the findings of science.

The Darwinians sought to dispose of the case for the inheritance of acquired characters, associated with the names of earlier biologists, Lamarck, Buffon and Erasmus Darwin.

For the Darwinians, Weismann tried the experiment of cutting off the tails of young mice, and found there was no shortening after nineteen generations of cutting. Butler objected that a great length of time might be necessary for the cutting to take effect.

In this connexion, however, it is perhaps worth remarking that as many Vitalists regard evolutionary purpose as *continuous*, then the effects of docking ought to be immediate, even if slight.

Butler had another string to his bow. He argued (as he was entitled to argue, as a believer in Purpose) that there was no biological advantage of shortened tails in mice. Life had no motive to acquire such a meaningless mutilation. The new character must be one *wanted* by the species.

Weismann, too, had another string to his bow. Besides a *posteriori* argument he appealed to a *priori* deduction. Since the offspring develops from the germ-cell, and since the latter is screened from outside influence, no modification acquired by the parent body could cause any such modification in the germ-cell, and so could not be transmitted. At this point Joad brings in the Life Force to attend to things not attended to in the actual mechanism of inheritance.

Later research has certainly shown that the germ-cell can be affected from outside by physical agencies working on the parent. Muller (1927) induced mutations in a fruit fly at 150 times the normal rate, by X-rays, and others responding to short-wave radiation include fungi, maize, antirrhinum and habrobracon (a parasitic wasp). Short-wave rays apparently increase the rate of a natural process. But these are materialistic processes. They have nothing to do with any

purposive effect on qualities transmitted. They do not point to anything acquired by striving on the part of the parent.

MacBride appeals to the experiments of an Austrian researcher, Kammerer, in support of his view. Kammerer claims to have proved the inheritance of acquired pigmentary reaction to light in salamanders.

Pavlov's work on mice also appears to lend aid to the Lamarckian view. Whereas 300 rings were necessary to teach mice to seek food, 100, then 30, sufficed for succeeding generations. MacBride claims that the exercise of a habit renders the same habit easier to the offspring.

But Pavlov has not, I think, been as widely used in this connexion as Kammerer, and there are not, to my knowledge, any grounds for supposing he himself was a Lamarckian. The only alternative explanation which occurs to me, however, is an improved technique as the experiments progressed.

With regard to Kammerer, he kept lizards at abnormally high and low temperatures; and induced colour changes which were in some degree transmitted. Applied to the case for the inheritance of acquired characteristics Prof. W. E. Castle finds this evidence "quite insufficient" (*Genetics and Eugenics*). Individual differences in coloration are on other grounds known to exist independent of external temperature. Kammerer also tried background colour effects in spotted (European) "fire salamanders," and again Castle argues that his conclusions from these experiments are "fallacious" (*ibid.*) The only point in Kammerer's work not yet disposed of is the possibility that pigmentation correlated with darkness may demonstrate some acquired characters to be transmitted.

Semon, who also leans to the Lamarckian view, cites Kammerer's soft-bodied marine animal, *Ciona*, and ascidian, which, having its siphons cut off, regenerates new ones abnormally long, which are afterwards inherited in the first filial generation. Castle regards this case as highly improbable in view of the weighty evidence against the inheritance of acquired characters; Semon he regards as clutching at a straw. Fuchs has since shown that the length of the siphons regenerated is related to the food supply.

There is, then, no doubt that the bulk of scientific evidence is against the inheritance of acquired characters. Castle sums up the position thus: For the transmission of acquired mutilations, disease and induced epilepsy—evidence negative. For cases of acclimatization, changed food and temperature—facts explained on other grounds. For pressure and light effects—transmission cumulative, as, probably, with instincts. But instincts are not acquired at the behest of a Life Force and transmitted, or, as with Semon, habits registered like phonograph records in the germ-plasm. They arise, according to the neo-Darwinians, because the structure of the germ-plasm necessitates a particular response. A hen may even crow if castrated and supplied with a testis.

A favourite case quoted in support of the Lamarckian theory is that of a cat which lost its tail and gave birth to kittens, part of whom were short tailed. Circumstantial evidence is here no criterion, for the kittens could obviously be short-tailed from inheritance, reaching farther back than the mother. Tail-docking has been carried on for generations in sheep, with no racial shortening as a result.

If the parent's germ-cell is influenced in certain ways effects become apparent in the offspring, but there is here no analogy to the integration of useful characters in the parent stock. Hertwig, for example, has injured the germ-cells of frogs by radium emanations, and got enfeebled or abnormal offspring as a result. Stockard repeatedly intoxicated guinea

pigs with alcohol, enfeebling the germ-cells, and getting a greater likelihood of sickly offspring.

External physical agencies have so far proved to induce disadvantageous effects, so that here again there is no channel of escape from the eugenic problem. Acquired characters are probably never taken into the parent constitution in such a way as to be passed on. Should syphilis and such diseases occur to the reader's mind, it must be remembered that the disease is not transmitted genetically but by contact.

It is hoped we have now cleared the way to some actual proposals and opinions on eugenic reform from some of the distinguished inquirers who have been mentioned.

G. H. TAYLOR

Christian Morality

THERE is perhaps no subject of intellectual interest that is surrounded with so much confusion of thought, viewed either from an individual or social point of view, than the rights and wrongs of human conduct. A confusion made worse confounded by the contradictory teaching of the Bible and the impracticable ethics of the New Testament. It was Comte, I think, who said that "Man makes his own moral world"; and, considering that every country makes its own laws and regulations for the guidance of its inhabitants in their conduct towards their fellows, this would seem to be an undeniable truth. But when these laws, barbarous as they may be, become incorporated in a religious system, there is erected a barrier to any further progress in the advancement of moral ideas.

Let me illustrate what I mean by an incident of which I was recently the painful witness. I was visiting a sick man, lying on what proved later to be his deathbed. There was also a lady relative present who began passing some very severe strictures on the barbarities of Gen. Franco in the Spanish Civil War, in bombing from the air defenceless women and children. "Yes," replied the sick man, "but you must remember that God commanded the Israelites to utterly exterminate the inhabitants of Canaan, man, woman, and child." Now, this man was well above the average in intelligence, being a student of European history and kindred subjects, and a local preacher for fifty years, yet his notions of morality were on no higher a level than that of the most ignorant savage.

As an individual opinion this would not be worth noticing, but there can be no question that it represents the general attitude of a large part of the Christian world. I have before me a letter that appeared in our local evening paper, in which the writer, in reply to another correspondent, says: "It is no doubt terrible to read of the bombing attacks on Madrid, and the violent deaths of women and children; but we must consider their eternal interests. It is better that these women and children should be killed rather than grow up without the blessings (!) of Catholicism." Between the frightfulness of Herr Hitler and the barbarities of Gen. Franco, there is not a particle of difference from a moral point of view. Indeed, the barbarities of Gen. Franco would appear to be the more heinous, in that they were directed against the women and children of his own country. And yet we are asked to believe that Herr Hitler is a fiend incarnate, and Gen. Franco a nice Christian gentleman! Can any reasonable person doubt that the Catholic Church to-day, if it possessed the political power it usurped in former ages, would scruple to put millions to death, on the pretext of heresy? It

professes to be the divinely appointed guardian of "faith and morals"; but while it may have plenty of faith, and an abundance of absurd superstitions, long ago discarded by the intellectual world, its so-called morals condone any acts of cruelty or barbarism that have for their object its own aggrandisement.

The writings of the Greek and Roman moralists, which the early Christians despised, in subject matter and treatment were on similar lines to the ethical philosophies of the modern Western world. But Christian morality consists only of a hotchpotch of isolated texts scattered throughout the Hebrew Scriptures from Genesis to Revelations, and certain vague sayings of doubtful ethical value in the New Testament; the interpretation of which, after twenty centuries, is still a matter of dispute among Christians themselves. Indeed, all kinds of conduct and superstitious beliefs can be supported by Bible texts. The early Church soon created a lot of what we may call artificial sins; that is offences, not against morality, but very foolish impositions having reference to foods and drinks and amusements. A Christian friend of mine refused to have any gastronomic relations with the inoffensive "black pudding," and gave as the reason some text in St. Paul's Epistles in reference to *blood*. It was this same St. Paul who gave specific instructions as to how the ladies should wear their hats. Many readers will remember the hubbub there was a short time ago among the bishops and clergy on this very question. It also agitated the Bishops of a Baltic State some 25 years ago. The Sunday go-to-meeting clothes, the cold Sunday's dinner, the gloomy Sabbath, and many other silly practices, are all the products of Christianity.

I once went to stay at a health resort for a few days, and shortly after my arrival I met a Christian friend of mine who lived in the town. He invited me to spend the Sunday with them, if I would put up with a *cold* dinner. I might remark that our intimacy had been brought about by the *Freethinker*—but that is a story that would take too long to tell. When we sat down to dine there were some half-dozen dishes on the table, smoking hot. My friend, evidently remembering his remark of the day before, turned to me and said Of course, the meat's cold! But such religious fads, then on the wane, are probably now more honoured in the breach than in the observance.

The priesthood in all ages has adopted distinguishing forms of ecclesiastical dress in order to impress upon the unthinking multitude the notion of the sacredness of their priestly office, carrying with it a suggestion of the moral superiority of their lives; of which the less that is said the better. The public recognition that is accorded to them depends more than anything else upon the clothes they wear: their intellectual calibre counts as nothing. But things that are hidden from the wise and prudent are sometimes revealed to the unsophisticated vision of lowly childhood. The other morning I was walking up the high road when I met a bishop in all the fantastic garb of his caste; the padded calves of his legs matching the rotundity of his stomach. He was evidently on foot from his palatial residence on the outskirts, to the Cathedral in the centre of the city. As he passed me, there were two urchins standing on the curbstone, and they gazed after him in amazement, having, apparently, never seen a full-rigged bishop before. Then one of them, with an amused smile upon his face, said to the other: What a guy! It reminded me of the saying of Burns:—

O wad some pow'r the giftie gie us,
To see oursels as ithers see us!

And if the bishop could have seen himself, in his ludicrous costume, through the eyes of those urchins,

his self-complacence might have received a rude shock.

A Sunday paper recently had a large headline: BISHOP SLATES PAINTED LIPS. He said the growing habit of girls painting their faces and the use of lipstick was to be deplored. In a letter to the clergy of his diocese, the bishop stated:—

It is obvious that the habit is open to serious objection when receiving the chalice, and is liable to cause painful distraction to the minds of devout communicants.

He also advised that men should refrain from smoking before receiving the Communion. Such are the lofty moral heights attained by the clerical mind.

To return to the ethics of war, Norman Angell in one of his books, after a careful examination of the utterances of the American clergy in reference to that country's past wars, gives it as his candid opinion that the clergy only preach what is popular. And this is equally true of the present war. There may be a few conscientious objectors on Christian ground, and a dissentient voice, here and there among the clergy themselves, but this only goes to show that the Christian ethics relating to war have never been authoritatively defined.

JOSEPH BRYCE

Say Thank You!

POLITENESS costs nothing, we are frequently told. A word of gratitude for favours received is looked upon as the appropriate gesture. We are beseeched to hearken unto those who assure us that the old Christian Dogmas are as dead as Queen Anne and the fight can be "called off." We are entitled to ask such people how it comes about that those Christian Modernists who accept most of the results of the destructive criticism of the past, who reduce, in accordance therewith, their dogmatic cargo to what they can carry in their pocket handkerchiefs, do not show a little gratitude to those who, in the past, have carried on a brave battle to that end, suffering pains and penalties of no slight order. If it is a good thing that the Oracles of God have become humanised, then it follows that those who were responsible for this are worthy of a little pious recognition. Those who purged the Church of so many plain iniquities and absurdities should in common decency receive a few words of gratitude. "Come let us Praise Great Men" should be chanted in the Churches, and the names of Voltaire, Bruno, Paine and others should be prominently mentioned. Busts of them should be placed in alcoves and "meditation" on a few seats adjacent should be encouraged. If what passes for a more liberal and human theology is really liberal and human, those who profess it should be prepared to say Thank You.

In such an attitude one could discern sincerity; without it the *dead horse* proves itself animate. Without it, one is justified in believing it is the old Church, the old Dogmas, the old lies, that are being striven for to be kept alive, as far as this is ever possible. It is true we have recognition now and again, in the quarters where it is absolutely necessary, that the Church is not old-fashioned enough to be Fundamentalist. On these occasions difficulties are looked squarely in the face—and then they pass on.

There is evidence that dignitaries in the Church are at the same time hob-nobbing with Fundament-

alism in order to explore if there are any advantages to be gained by putting the clock back. Whether the Church have too readily dismissed witchcraft, demonology, and the cruder superstitions that up to recently were part and parcel of it, is a thing being seriously considered in pious conclave. Theology and Demonology it is seen are but the obverse and reverse presentations of the same intellectual coinage. "To give up witchcraft is to give up the Bible," said Wesley, and the logical minds in the Church know that Wesley was right. Their reaction to this, however, is not to put theology under an equal suspicion, but to resuscitate, if it be possible, Demonology. They think they have given up the Devil too soon at the behest of a poor thing that men call Logic. It has been advised even that the Proceedings of the Society for Psychical Research be studied in the hope that the devils that Jesus cast out of men and women in great numbers may be given verisimilitude. The demonstration without cavil of one poor ghost, would lead the way to the resuscitation of the Holy Ghost in time—with luck—and the life everlasting that Jesus brought to light would perhaps gain support from Mr. Harry Price and sources more likely in this year of grace to gain credence.

There is no joy in the Christian Church over the advance in Human Knowledge. As knowledge grows from more to more, Christian Truth diminishes from less to less. A process of this kind is not hastened; it is resisted. Freethinkers can be sure that in the organizations that have encouraged credulity there will be no disposition to allow the placing of any bomb to blow the old building sky-high. The Church will resist to the last any such act, and in that resistance history shows it will stoop to mean subterfuge, and in the last resort, persecution, on any scale that the situation demands.

They tell us now, these broad-minded clerics, that what Bishop Colenso wrote in his study of the Pentateuch was correct. They agree with him. Colenso was brave and free from deceit. He was loyal to Truth, as Ruskin saw when he called him the "loyal and patiently adamant Bishop of Natal." But to the Church in his day he was disloyal; he was a traitor. He let in light on dark places, not only in the Holy of Holies, but in the equally disreputable Imperialistic Council Chamber. And his fellow Bishops "cut him dead." He was a great man, Colenso, and some day should the Church find decency he will be permitted to stand out as a Saint, of sorts, whom the Church tried to crush but failed, and whose memory they will not to-day assist to keep alive by one act of grace, one distinct and unmistakable "Thank You."

If the Christian Church wishes to earn the respect of just men, it must at least learn to do so much. It must learn to do justice to Freethinkers and it must even learn to appreciate character, when it sees it, in its own ranks. It must not line up so unanimously under the banner of "Never Apologize." If it cannot do this, it is putting the seal upon its reputation as an uncandid, truth-hating institution. It is striving officiously to keep alive dead doctrines and hampering ethics. It is justifying by so doing constant, vigilant, well-informed, and merciless attack.

If, on the other hand, to excuse such manifest discourtesy, it is argued that the Church is a political institution, checking and releasing new knowledge, in wise homeopathic doses, with a view to self-preservation, then the Church of God becomes the Church of Man, and the fatal admission is made that Man is the Master of Things.

T. H. ELSTON

Acid Drops

That lively publication, the *Picture Post*, has been getting itself into serious trouble with the Roman Catholic press in this country. The offence of the *Picture Post* is that it published a summary of H. G. Wells' *Fate of Homo Sapiens*. The Roman Catholic journals would not find it good policy to advocate the suppression of all such books, but to have non-theistic ideas ventilated in a weekly journal which might be bought by unsuspecting readers is too much. Newspaper proprietors, they feel, should be as much on their guard as film censors and the stage censorship. And the public should be treated as infants who must be kept from "dangerous" reading, or as nit-wits who may be trusted not to read anything that encourages agitation of their grey matter. We wonder when it will happen that we shall have in this country a newspaper that will give the same publicity to anti-religious opinion as it does to religious propaganda. At present there is not one such newspaper throughout the whole of the country. Think of it? And think of the hostility that a paper such as the *Freethinker* has to face.

The editor of the *Picture Post* remarks, "One would suppose that a thinker of Mr. H. G. Wells' standing would be entitled to put his own views before the public, to stand or fall by their own merits." That is very good—on the face of it. But does it really amount to much? It looks as though the editor is sheltering himself behind Mr. Wells. Mr. Wells has a standing, and his name helps the journal in which he writes. But suppose Mr. Wells were not so well known; would the *Picture Post* then be ready to publish his heresies? We think not. Mr. Wells is popular, his name draws, and his heresies are really not of the most robust character, and it is fairly safe, thanks to the real pathmakers, for either him, or anyone else who is in the public eye, to renounce doctrines that are an insult to intelligence. We should be more impressed by what the editor of the *Picture Post* says if he were ready to open his columns to real attacks on Christianity. As it is, the appearance of an occasional piece of heresy by well-known men or women is apt to be taken as merely the aberration of an individual well-known to the general public. At present it is the "standing" of the writer that is important. The quality of the writing submitted has very little to do with it. And in such a situation what is not pure snobbery is apt to strike one as sheer self-interest.

Father Collingwood, of Westminster Cathedral, appears to be in some doubt either as to the character of his own followers, or of the power of his patron saints, to prevent theft in the cathedral. It seems that a number of bags have been stolen while their owners were either in the confessional or receiving the sacrament. Surely among the crowds of saints who look after those devoted to them, some could find time to protect the handbags of their worshippers. Perhaps a couple of London policemen might be more effective.

Hitler, as becomes a good Catholic—he still is as far as we know—is now demanding half the precious metals owned by the Catholic Church in Germany and, in particular, a "gift" of the gold. The Bishop of Berlin, Count von Preysing, has been threatened with the severest measures if he refuses. People who know their history will recognize a familiar idea behind the German demands. It was the Roman Catholic Church when it was all powerful with its Kings and Cardinals, which put forward the same demands for exactly the same purpose from the unlucky Jews living in their midst. Severe measures were threatened against the race if the demands were not satisfied, and in any case, nothing that the present German Government could do would be any worse than what happened to Jews who resented being robbed in those "good old days." There is, of course, no difference between the "familiar" of the Inquisition, and the members of the Gestapo—but it is something against which Catholics are now squealing. What pity did they have for their opponents in the days of their strength?

Meanwhile some Roman Catholics are being seriously disturbed over the fact that the Pope sent congratulations to Hitler over his escape from the Munich bomb. To them the *Universe* thus moralizes:—

The heat of war is apt to disturb our perspective and confuse our judgment. We must bear in mind that the Holy See is not involved in the present war. The Pope is in fact a "neutral" . . . that is not to say that the Pope is blind to injustices committed, or that, in particular, he condones the rape of Poland. . . . It was only a matter of elementary courtesy for the Pope to send to the Fuehrer his congratulations . . . we must remember the pregnant words of our Lord. . . . "Love your enemies." A good Catholic will be quite ready to pray even for Hitler. . . .

It would be too much to expect a Roman Catholic paper to be honest enough to say that the Vatican is as much a nest of scheming diplomats as any centre in Europe. Once upon a time the Catholic Church would have taken the bomb, if it had actually done the work for which it was intended, as an instrument of God's vengeance.

To-day God cannot protect his followers while they are eating bits of his son's body in the ceremonial of taking the sacrament in Westminster Cathedral. So it congratulates the man who, they shriek out, is robbing the Church when he escapes assassination.

We have often heard quoted the words: "Prepare to meet thy God," but we had no idea that it meant having a "hair-cut and shave." Yet a correspondent in the *Church Times*, one who in war-time likes to be known as "Padre" (or "Woodbine Willie," or "Stinker," or plain "Sky-pilot"), explains his particular trick of getting attendances at Mass (or is it the Lord's SUPPER at some ungodly hour before breakfast?) He says:—

Since I let it be known that men on their way to early service could use my premises for a shave beforehand, every possible member of the local force has made his Communion one time or another in the past two months.

If facilities for shaving produce only a monthly Mass, why not bait the hook with a pint of beer and secure a daily attendance? Some converts we know would attend every half-hour for half the quantity.

We are disappointed in Dr. Maude Royden. She has less consistency and moral courage than we credited her with. According to the reports she declared at a Seven-oaks meeting that she "approved of Mahatma Gandhi's policy of non-violence"; even adding that it had been "successful." But she "could not urge that our country should adopt" a similar plan of action. It seems curious to find that a right, just and successful plan should not be adopted because England is "spiritually" inferior to India. There is much to be urged against Gandhi's plan, but it is a poor sort of "spirituality" which advises people to adopt a policy entirely opposed to that which the adviser approves. This sort of "spirituality" is at work in Germany and elsewhere. By this criterion the Christians in Germany can heartily approve of all Hitler's crimes because Hitlerite Germany is not "spiritually" prepared to do otherwise.

The *National Review* for November has an article by an expert on Flags, Mr. E. H. Baxter. He chides the churches for their new-fangled notion of flying the White Flag—in addition to the Union Jack. Presumably the idea of this is to prove the Churches' desire for peace consistently with maintaining the Empire. It is, however, just as likely that anybody may object to seeing the Empire flying the white flag—which is sometimes a sign of surrender, although really a white ensign is quite a familiar symbol of the British Navy. In recognition of the last-mentioned fact, Mr. Baxter warns the Churches that any building displaying the Naval Ensign is liable to be shelled or bombed at sight. The Churches had better stick to things they understand, if we can imagine institutions confining themselves to so limited a study.

Those hard-shell moralists who run the "Temperance Council of the Christian Churches" are presuming to create unsocial conditions, and to add to the present gloom by recommending "the supreme necessity of self-restraint, particularly in the use of alcoholic liquors." The signatories to this nonsensical appeal include—of course—the Archbishop of Canterbury, Cardinal Hinsley, and Evangeline Booth. They would like to restore the worst effort of the Dora of 1914, namely the prohibition of "treating." According to these clerical Pecksniffs, the Good Samaritan would have been sent to jail if he had not insisted upon the wounded man being asked to pay before receiving a first-aid treatment which included "alcoholic liquor," after having been robbed of all that he had. Treating is not a crime, it is the act of a Good Samaritan.

We rather liked the religious verse prominently displayed in that unctious organ the *Sunday Express* the other week, which ended:—

But whether my affairs go right or wrong
Grant me, O Lord, the GRIT to CARRY ON.

Yet we hold the appeal to be quite superfluous, as nothing ever stops the Christian "carrying on" against the peace and comfort of the rest of the community—especially when "the Lord's Day" is so "desecrated" as it is these war Sundays. Still: "wrong" and "on" make a lovely rhyming precedent.

It was in April last that the Commons, by a narrow majority, granted the opening of Cinemas on Sunday nights. When further concessions towards a sane and healthy Sunday may be sought, we trust the bishops will be as far away from action as they appear to have been last April, when a pressman sought their opinions. The Bishop of London was not in town, Ripon was "abroad," Lincoln "away from home," Liverpool "away from home," Chichester "away; month's holiday," Coventry away, Truro staying in London, Exeter and Blackburn too busy to be interviewed. All the poor pressman could say was: "The Churches complain that newspapers do not pay enough attention to their opinions," adding bitingly: "Very often they have none." God grant that the war doesn't keep them now at home or at Westminster.

The *Evening Standard* for December 1, notes in large type that "Bricklayers and Oxford Graduates are serving side by side in the ranks of the Twelfth Queen's Royal Regiment." One might enquire, why not? And if there is no reason why not—the Bricklayers have raised no objection—why stress the fact? Is it because the *Standard* desires to call attention to the snobbery there still exists in our home brand of "Democracy"?

Further afield we note in the *Evening News* (December 2), that three "Southern gentlemen," with two others, induced a journalist, who had offended them in some of his writings, to leave a public hall and then gave him a beating. Five to one, three of them recognized "gentlemen." Their honour, they complained, had been besmirched. But it was restored by five brutally beating one. If they had not been "gentlemen" they would probably have murdered the journalist's wife and children. Or perhaps the gentlemen never thought of that.

Twenty Five Years Ago

JESUS CHRIST is most frequently called the Saviour. Whether he will save us, or any of us, somehow and somewhere, in the next world, if there is a next world, is a matter of pure speculation. Whatever we find out on this point, we must die to do it. Meanwhile, it is pretty certain that he has not saved us in this world. All the salvation we get comes from the progress of science and civilization.

To get a New Subscriber is to make a New Friend

THE FREETHINKER

FOUNDED BY G. W. FOOTE

61 Farringdon Street, London, E.C.4

Telephone No.: CENTRAL 2412.

TO CORRESPONDENTS.

- S. MUSKETT.—We have seen several reports of Christians sitting on tribunals airing their intolerance. One must expect that kind of thing, and use it as a reminder that there is still a lot of work for Freethinkers to do.
- G. A. MORRISON.—We should very much like to see the anniversary of the birth of both really great men, and the publication of world-renowned books, duly celebrated. Time is spent chiefly on the people who count for least in the world's progress.
- P. TROWER.—We supply quite a number of Public Reading Rooms in the country with copies of the *Freethinker*, and we are pleased to learn that your acquaintance with the paper was made in this way. Also that you have been a subscriber of many years standing.
- A. V.—We agree with you that in the existing state of national and international affairs there is great need for the continuous affirmation of the value of genuine Free-thinking. Without that neither sociology nor anything else is likely to get very far.
- M. W. DOUGLAS.—Sorry, but we think the controversy has gone far enough in these columns, particularly when we consider its interminable character.
- R. HANWAY.—Thanks for cuttings. Friends give us real help in sending anything of importance they note in the press. It saves time, and by ourself we are bound to overlook some things, or never to see them. Only name of paper and date of issue should always accompany the cutting.
- W. W. SMITH.—We agree with you as to the injustice of any leaning by tribunals towards conscientious objectors professing religious opinions.
- J. G. F. HEDDLE.—We appreciate your point, but it does not remove the fact that the gospel Jesus had many prototypes, apart from the inherent impossibility of the story. Nothing would serve Christian orthodoxy better than for Freethinkers to stress the presumed value of a number of moral commonplaces that were as well known two thousand years ago as they are to-day—and as completely ignored.
- H. WITTINGHAM.—We might consider a cheap reprint of Mr. Cohen's *Religion and Sex*, at some later date.
- W. A. WILLIAMS (Birkenhead).—Many thanks for your efforts to help the Jubilee "Freethinker" Fund.
- J. B. JONES.—We read your letter with much interest, and are pleased to learn the extent of the interest of yourself and friends in the *Freethinker*. We should indeed be ungrateful if we did not find in such letters a strong incentive to keep on with the work.
- D. GLOAK (Dundee).—We well remember our visit to Dundee over forty years ago, and remember it so well that we recall—or believe we can—that your father bore the same name as yourself. Pleased to learn that your family are all following the right line. Curiously we know many similar cases in Scotland. We think it indicates a quality of the Scottish character we have always admired—care in forming an opinion, and courage in maintaining it.
- A. E. SMITH.—Thanks for promise of continued support.
- C. HUTTON.—We supply a number of libraries in the country with copies of the *Freethinker*. This paper can be ordered from any newsagent or bookstall in the kingdom. We cannot compel them to display it, but it would help considerably if they did.
- A. J. GIMBERT.—Thanks for paper. We shall be obliged if you will keep us informed of any further developments.

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.

Rosetti, 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, 5/9.

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.

"Jubilee Freethinker Fund"

Since our last list of acknowledgements to this Fund the following subscriptions have been received. C. C. Dove, £10; R. S. Skan, 10s.; F. Newell, 5s.; D. F. Gloak, 10s.; J. M. Mosley, 2s. 6d.; E. V. Crumpton, 1s. 3d.; E. H. Bass, 10s.; F. Lee, £2 2s.; J. M., 5s.; J. Jones, 5s.; H. Irving, 2s. 6d.; H. Youngman, £5; A. E. Smith, £1 1s.; W. Evans, 5s.; Rochester Postmark (no name enclosed), 1s. 6d.; W. T. Hawks (Durban), £2; Ishmaelite (5th Sub.), 2s. 6d.; G. J. Thornton (S. Rhodesia), £10; J. Bell, 5s.

Sugar Plums

We received very many interesting letters in connexion with the "Freethinker Jubilee Fund," only a few of which we were able to acknowledge. But we have preserved many, and the warm appreciation of our work would cheer us, if we ever lost faith in the value of the Cause in which we have spent our life. Many of these letters contained interesting accounts of the way in which contact was first made. Here is an abridged account from a Manchester friend:—

My first acquaintance with the *Freethinker* was at a meeting you addressed in Manchester in the Autumn of 1930. At that time I was busy with evening studies. After glancing at a copy on the literature stall I confess to my shame and lasting regret that I came to the conclusion that there was nothing in it of special interest to me and did not even buy a specimen copy! This blunder was repeated in 1931, and at the Freethought Conference Public Meeting in 1932. In self-defence I plead that the *Freethinker* was issued weekly and not monthly and I felt that I had not the time to spare to read it.

Then came the Bradlaugh Centenary Meeting in Manchester, in 1933, which I attended and, of course, bought the Bradlaugh *Freethinker*, which I read with intense interest and delight. Since then I have bought each issue without fail. I look forward to its arrival each week with the greatest pleasure.

How highly I value the *Freethinker* may be judged by the fact that I have purchased back numbers when the opportunity presented itself, and I am now the proud possessor of every issue since it commenced publication, including, I believe, all the Christmas and Summer numbers. Not only are they of interest, but I find that they contain much that has not "dated" with the passing of the years.

Another interesting letter came from one of the daughters of G. W. Foote, the founder of the *Freethinker*, accompanied by a subscription, who says that while she may not be the oldest reader, she has done what she could to atone for it by reading the paper ever since she was able to read. Mrs. Walter adds, "I look forward just as eagerly to my weekly copy of the *Freethinker* as I did when I used to devour it under its previous editorship, and I find the mixture of wisdom, philosophy and good common sense particularly satisfying during these dark (in more senses than one) days." We are pleased to have a member of the Foote family in such cordial relationship with the paper which owes so much to her father.

Another subscriber to our funds, who bears an honoured name in the life of Scotch Freethought, Mr.

James Ralston, writes, "It is forty-five years since I first made your acquaintance in Motherwell. Looking back over those long years it is a delight to see the great amount of energy and intellectual ability you have shown. The *Freethinker* is a real weekly treat to all minds capable of studying the many subjects with which it deals. Had I as many millions as Lord Nuffield, the financial worries you have had for so many years would end. Heartly good wishes to you and able staff of contributors." These who have complained of our decision to set aside, in these times, any attempt to provide a material demonstration of whatever we have been able to do, will perhaps realize that we have had that testimonial in the form we value most.

Our always welcome contributor, M. T. F. Palmer, is, as reference to our advertising column will show, disposing of some of his books. A list of books, with price, etc., will be sent on application. Full particulars will be found on another page.

Apropos of what we said last week with regard to the need for more Freethought propaganda in the West of England. Rushing about the country lecturing, with journeys longer and more wearisome than usual, rushing home to get a fresh issue of the *Freethinker* through the press, with an increased batch of letters to deal with, must serve as an excuse—even a justification—for some things not getting the notice they should have received. One of these items was to discover an old fighter and friend in the cause, Mr. Hammond, once of Liverpool, stirring up things in Teignmouth. It was in connexion with an address dealing with the causes of war that Mr. Hammond took occasion to stress the part played by religion in fostering wars, and what he said was evidently new to many of his listeners. Another old friend of the movement, Mr. Millward, presided over Mr. Hammond's address. Compliments to both of them.

This is the season when we are thinking of presents—outward or homeward bound. Those who wish to make a present of a good book to a friend could not do better than make choice of a copy of Professor Gesterreich's *Possession*. The book is an elaborate study (400 pp.) dealing with the belief in Possession by spirits in all stages of culture, from early savagery, through the Christian Church, to modern Spiritualism. It is a book no one who wishes to understand the factors that have built up religion can afford to miss. But, a word of advice. It is not a book for anyone who is not prepared to sit down to the study of genuinely scientific work. For those who are so prepared the work will throw light on the nature of religion, and also on many sociological questions. The book was published at 21s. The Pioneer Press bought the whole of the remainder stock, and is offering it at 5s. 6d., by post 6s.

Peace upon earth! was said. We sing it,
And pay a million priests to bring it.
After two thousand years of mass
We've got as far as poison-gas.

This quotation from Thomas Hardy, artistically printed on a post card, and suitable as a greeting card or pasting upon gas mask covers, can be obtained from the Pioneer Press or offices of the National Secular Society at one penny each, or ninepence per dozen, which includes postage. The churches are proclaiming the present war as Christian, and we can help by giving the above quoted verse as wide a circulation as possible.

Those who wish to keep in touch with Freethought periodicals in English-speaking countries might well bear in mind the *New Zealand Rationalist*. This journal is published monthly, price threepence, or 4s. per year, post free. The *Rationalist* incorporates the *Truthseeker*. No. 2 of the *Rationalist* promises well, it is written in a lively manner and the notes on "Early Dunedin Freethought" promise to be interesting. Publishing office, 315 Victoria Arcade, Shortland Street, Auckland, C.I., New Zealand.

Faith

SINCE "man was created by the Trinity on October 23, 4004 B.C." (Dr. Lightfoot, 1828-1889), no more agreeable doctrine has ever been preached than that of John Agricola (1492-1566), the friend and companion of Martin Luther. He is said to have founded (about 1838) Antinomianism—the belief that Christians are emancipated by the Gospel from the obligation to keep the moral law. A doctrine which, though unacknowledged in this enlightened twentieth century, is everywhere acted upon in all ranks of life, from the highest to the lowest, e.g., "Have you been to confession since you stole that goose?" said a lady to her coloured servant. "Indeed no, mam," she replied, and then scornfully added—"As though I would let a paltry goose come between me and my blessed Lord and Saviour!"

Justification by faith was accepted wholeheartedly by John Agricola. To him—"He who nameth the name of the Lord shall be saved," be he bus driver or Bishop. "And to him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness." (Rom. iv. 5).

In Luke xviii. 8, the question is asked—"When the Son of man cometh, shall he find faith on the earth?" If the questioner referred to an intelligent faith, I should answer, no! But, if he referred to an ignorant, vulgar faith, I should say, Yes! If we persist in our present way of living, liberty cannot triumph over fanaticism. The present world belongs to will, not to wisdom.

The average Christian would be shocked if classed along with the savage. But he deserves no better treatment. He accepts the faith of his parents just as the savage does. An intelligent faith can only be found by seeking—an individual faith whereby a man may live; such a faith as the Hebrew prophet, Habakkuk, had in mind when he wrote—"The just shall live by his faith!" (Hab. ii. 4). Says Ruskin, "Without seeking truth cannot be known at all. It can neither be declared from pulpits, nor set down in Articles, nor in anywise 'prepared and sold' in packages ready for use. Truth must be ground for every man out of its husk, with such help as he can get, indeed, but not without stern labour of his own. In what science is knowledge to be had cheap? or truth told over a velvet cushion, in half an hour's talk every seventh day? Can you learn Chemistry so?—Zoology?—Anatomy?"

Faith was looked upon by John Agricola as a gift, just as it is by most churchgoers to-day—"For by grace are ye saved through faith; and not of yourselves: it is the gift of God." (Eph. ii. 8) Further—"unto you it is given to believe in Christ." (Phil. i. 29). Without this prerequisite, belief is impossible. The gift may be denied in some cases, in others weakly given. For instance—Christ's own brothers did not believe in him—"For neither did his own brothers believe in him" (John vii. 5); and the apostles needed a tonic sometimes—"Lord increase our faith." (Luke xvii. 5.)

The general Epistle of James ("a gospel of straw," said Luther) has quite a lot to say about faith. James' view was diametrically opposed to that of John Agricola. Faith, he says, if it have not works, is dead. A man is justified by works, and not by faith only. A mere profession of faith, or a bare assent to the truth, without good works which proceed from faith, is false. And he cites, as proof, the devils who believe and tremble. "Doth heaven forgive her own?" The poor devils! Trembling is accepted as a proof of the reality of their belief, but they were not empowered to work out *their* salvation, like the elect,

"by fear and trembling."

Amongst either lay or cleric can any evidence of faith, "even as a grain of mustard seed," be found to-day.

My dwelling-place is bounded on the East by one church and two hotels; on the West by five churches and seven hotels; on the North by one hotel; and on the South by one church, and one hotel; in all seven churches and eleven hotels within less than a two-mile radius.

These seven churches have lightning conductors fixed to safeguard them, and most of the worshippers attending them carry gas-masks.

The eleven hotels, on the other hand, some of them quite as large as many of the churches, and attended seven days a week, are all without lightning conductors, and few of their habitués carry gas masks.

Church people think their God capable of damaging his house by lightning, and destroying his worshippers by poison gas. They cannot trust him for one hour a week! What a faithless lot they must be! But, after all, why blame God? He predestinated man to make poison gas, lightning conductors, gas masks and everything else. "Shall there be evil in the city, and the Lord hath not done it?" (Amos iii. 6). "I make peace, and create evil: I the Lord do all these things!" (Isa. xlv. 7).

And what about our unguarded hotels? Christ, on his second coming—which, I am told, is near at hand—will be able to repeat a former experience. But this time, when he befriends some heretic, repudiated by Priest and Levite, he will find our modern inn—our last *public* house—better equipped than heretofore. Yet, still with a scripture text adorning its walls—"Guinness is good for you!" And here, in a quiet room, "oft interrupted by the din, of laughter and of loud applause, the music of a violin," with the assistance of mine host, cheerfully given, the man of sorrows will be enabled "to take care" of his brother.

One glimpse of it within the tavern caught,
Better than in the temple lost outright.

GEORGE WALLACE

John Morley as a Freethinker

(Reprinted, *The Freethinker*, 1892)

(Concluded from page 759)

MR MORLEY is not a militant Freethinker after the fashion of Charles Bradlaugh. He is of different temperament and mental constitution. Mr. Bradlaugh, for instance, was a *popular* man in the best and fullest sense of the word. When Mr. Morley began public life he had to deliberately set himself to acquire a platform style. Popular work is not natural to him; he does it by an effort; and as he is a man of resolute intellectual training, he is achieving success in this direction; but he will never possess the electric quality of a great orator. There is, so to speak, a touch of pedantry about his writing and speaking. It is not exactly offensive, but it shows the scrupulosity of the scholar, as opposed to the audacity of the propagandist.

Nevertheless, in his own way, Mr. Morley has been an effective propagandist. He has addressed other classes than those reached by Charles Bradlaugh. His method is not that of direct attack, but of patient sapping and mining. We shall not attack you (he once said to the priests), we shall explain you. In the long run this is indispensable. It completes the work of destruction. It banishes any lurking suspicion that the falsehood may be true. When a superstition is

once explained; when its origin and development, in conditions of imperfect knowledge, have been traced out; there is an absolute end to its power of imposture. Until this is done the task of criticism is only half finished, and even the first half of it may have to be done over again.

Let us not quarrel with Nature. Let us be grateful for all her gifts. There is room for both Bradlaugh and Morleys in the great temple of Humanity.

Mr. Morley has penned a noble plea for free thought, true speech, and honest action in his essay *On Compromise*, which is a valuable supplement to Mill's essay *On Liberty*. He scourges the indifferentists and hypocrites as well as the bigots. "It is justly said," he remarks, "that at the bottom of all the great discussions of modern society lie the two momentous questions, first whether there is a God, and second whether the soul is immortal." In relation to these problems Mr. Morley is obliged to pass the following censure on modern society:—

Now, in spite of the scientific activity of the day, nobody is likely to contend that men are pressed keenly in their souls by any poignant stress of spiritual tribulation in the face of the two supreme enigmas. Nobody will say that there is much of that striving and wrestling and bitter agonizing, which whole societies of men have felt before now on questions of far less tremendous import. Ours, as has been truly said, is "a time of loud disputes and weak convictions." In a generation deeply impressed by a sense of intellectual responsibility this could not be. As it is, even superior men are better pleased to play about the height of these great arguments, to fly in busy intellectual sport from side to side, from aspect to aspect, than they are intent on resolving what it is, after all, that the discussion comes to, and to which solution, when everything has been said and heard, the balance of truth really seems to incline. There are too many giggling epigrams; people are too willing to look on collections of mutually hostile opinions with the same kind of curiosity which they bestow on a collection of mutually hostile beasts in a menagerie. They have very faint predilections for one rather than another. If they were truly alive to the duty of conclusiveness, or to the inexpressible magnitude of the subjects which nominally occupy their minds, but really only exercise their tongues, this elegant Pyrrhonism would be impossible, and this lighthearted neutrality most unendurable.

Another class of culprits condemned by Mr. Morley are the "men of the world," who laugh at religious superstitionists, yet bow down before a still less respectable tyranny.

The man of the world despises Catholics for taking their religious opinions on trust and being the slaves of tradition. As if he had himself formed his own most important opinions either in religion or anything else. He laughs at them for their superstitious awe of the Church. As if his own inward awe of the Greater Number were one whit less of a superstition. He mocks their deference for the past. As if his own absorbing deference to the present were one tittle better bottomed or a jot more respectable. The modern emancipation will profit us very little, if the *status quo* is to be fastened round our necks with the despotic authority of a heavenly dispensation, and if in the stead of ancient Scriptures we are to accept the plenary inspiration of Majorities.

This is well expressed. It states an important fact, and conveys a wholesome warning. Majority votes are not solutions; they are only compromises. They decide what shall be done at the moment. Nothing more. Counting heads is a passing expediency; in the long run they have to be weighed—which is a more difficult operation. Problems, in short, are not

solved by voting, but by investigation and discussion. The man who is in a minority of one to-day may turn out to be entirely right to-morrow. Authority, therefore, especially the authority of numbers, should never be recognized in the High Court of Reason. We must give and take in the world of practice; in the world of thought every brain should be an absolute sovereign. Mr. Bumble and Mrs. Grundy should be kept off with deep moats and strong drawbridges.

Some persons say we should leave theology alone, and go on with the pursuit of science, the practice of art, and the solution of social problems. But theology cannot be left alone. It is mixed up with all the most profound, and therefore the most important, questions in politics and sociology. It *must* be reckoned with. Further, if it be *not* reckoned with, and confronted boldly, the priests are left in full control of the popular mind. Religious heterodoxy, when it justifies quietude, is really animated (in Mr. Morley's opinion) by "a desire to find a fair reason for the comforts of silence and reserve." An honourable man cannot exert a more useful influence than that of "a protester against what he counts false opinions, in the most decisive and important of all regions of thought."

Surely if anyone is persuaded, whether rightly or wrongly, that his fellows are expending the best part of their imaginations and feelings on a dream and a delusion, and that by so doing moreover they are retarding to an indefinite degree the wider spread of light and happiness, then nothing that he can tell them about chemistry or psychology or history can in his eyes be comparable in importance to the duty of telling them this.

Mr. Morley is Pagan enough to see in veracity the root of all other positive virtues. "They who tamper with veracity," he says, "from whatever motive, are tampering with the vital force of human progress." The so-called comforts and delights of the religious imagination are dearly purchased at the cost of that love of truth on which depends our increase of light and happiness. "We have to fight and do life-long battle against the forces of darkness, and anything that turns the edge of reason blunts the surest and most potent of our weapons."

Of the hypocrites who sacrifice truth for convenience, and live a lie for the sake of comfort, Mr. Morley pens a terrible passage, which has less the note of denunciation than of doom.

It is no light thing to have secured a livelihood on condition of going through life masked and gagged. To be compelled, week after week, and year after year, to recite the symbols of ancient faith and lift up his voice in the echoes of old hopes, with the blighting thought in his soul that the faith is a lie, and the hope no more than the folly of the crowd; to read hundreds of times in a twelvemonth with solemn unction as the inspired word of the Supreme what to him are meaningless as the Abracadabras of the conjuror in a booth; to go on to the end of his days administering to simple folk holy rites of commemoration and solace, when he has in his mind at each phrase what dupes are these simple folk and how wearisomely counterfeit their rites: and to know through all that this is really to be the one business of his prostituted life, that so dreary and hateful a piece of play-acting will make the desperate retrospect of his last hours—of a truth here is the very abomination of desolation of the human spirit indeed.

Mr. Morley turns casuist (not in the bad sense) in discussing how far Freethinkers should keep silent in the domestic sphere. Briefly put, his view is that there should be no obtrusion, but no concealment.

Before marriage a man is bound to let his opinions be known to the woman he seeks to wed; if his opinions change afterwards, it is at his peril if he plays the hypocrite. His wife has no vested interest in his insincerity. If he is weak enough to make-believe—he cannot really deceive her—he must not make the maxims of his own feebleness a rule for stronger and braver spirits. "It is a poor saying, that the world is to become void of spiritual sincerity, because Xanthippe has a turn for respectable theology."

Freethinkers are bound to save their children from the mischiefs of theology. Hand over your children to the priest, said Clifford, and he will make them enemies of the human race. There are Freethinking parents who let their children have a measure of religious education, from a fear that they would otherwise be ostracized and persecuted. Mr. Morley doubts, however, if the young would be "excluded from the companionship of their equals in age, merely because they had not been trained in some of the conventional shibboleths." For the rest he writes as follows:—

I have heard of a more interesting reason; namely, that the historic position of the young, relatively to the time in which they are placed, is in some sort falsified, unless they have gone through a training in the current beliefs of their age: unless they have undergone that, they miss, as it were, some of the normal antecedents. I do not think that this plea will hold good. However desirable it may be that the young should know all sorts of erroneous beliefs and opinions as products of the past, it can hardly be in any degree desirable that they should take them for truths. If there were no other objection, there would be this, that the disturbance and waste of force involved in shaking off in their riper years the erroneous opinions which had been instilled into them in childhood, would more than counterbalance any advantages, whatever their precise nature may be, to be derived from having shared in their own proper persons the ungrounded notions of others.

We have written enough to show that Mr. Morley is a Freethinker. Those who wish to make a fuller acquaintance with him in this capacity may read his works for themselves. They will not regret the time bestowed upon the undertaking.

Mr. Morley is a Freethinker. He is also a high-placed statesman. What a sign is this of human progress! Thirty years ago, nay twenty, such a phenomenon would have been impossible. Bigots and hypocrites would have barked in chorus against such a man's occupying an eminent post in his country's service. But all that is changed. There is still a penalty for the more aggressive Freethinkers; yet even Charles Bradlaugh did not die before winning almost universal respect; and now we see another Freethinker at the very right hand of England's Prime Minister. Surely it is an encouraging spectacle. It shows us how far the forces of truth and progress have triumphed over those of "Chaos and old Night."

G. W. POORE

Everything hath two handles; the one by which it may be borne; the other by which it cannot. If your brother acts unjustly, do not lay hold on the action by the handle of his injustice, for by that it cannot be borne; but by the opposite, that he is your brother, that he was brought up with you; and thus you lay hold on it, as it is to be borne.—*Epictetus*.

Yield at Your Peril

THROUGHOUT its term of office the present Government has never revealed any great affection for liberty. Rather it is a demonstrable fact that its efforts have been concerned with repressing democratic rights, both at home and abroad.

By a ready ability to invent high-sounding words such as "sanctions" and "non-intervention" for diplomacy, which, to put it mildly was of a hypocritical nature, it was able to view with tranquillity the destruction of liberty in Czechoslovakia and Spain, and the invasion of Abyssinia and Austria by notoriously anti-libertarian States. When outraged Democrats, and all those who prized freedom protested vehemently at British inactivity, the Government pathetically held up the fetters which it had so astutely fastened on itself by its own policy.

It is therefore rather surprising to find our statesmen now expressing a warm-hearted devotion to liberty. A Government poster proclaims in large type: "Freedom is in peril," and bears the exhortation: "Defend it with all your might."

The menace to freedom, so the public promptly adduce in the light of the extant facts, emanates from Nazi Germany. No one, other than an ardent admirer of Hitler, whose creed teaches him that our freedom is a malignant growth fostered by that effete political system—democracy, would deny that National Socialism embodies a threat to freedom quite as formidable as that offered by the Roman Catholic Church at the zenith of its power. But, Mr. Chamberlain and his colleagues have taken an unconscionable time to make this discovery. Indeed they have only just published documentary evidence showing that atrocities of the vilest type have been committed in Germany since the advent of Hitlerism. In spite of their White Paper No. 2, dealing with the "Treatment of German Nationals in Germany," and their poster, it is hard to believe that the Cabinet Ministers of the National Government have suddenly developed into disciples of humanitarianism or defenders of freedom. Changes of so revolutionary a character only occur in the pages of fiction.

Such scepticism is justified by the Emergency Powers Act which will in certain hands deprive the people of all the democratic privileges which constant agitation and untold suffering won for them. They must resolve not to yield an inch of ground however much their patriotic sentiments are appealed to.

It is emphatically not good enough for the Government spokesman to assure us that the measures outlined in the Act are demanded by the exigencies of war. We are aware that there must be a certain tightening up as regards the conduct of individuals under modern war conditions. There is, however, no justification for asking us to submit to being bound hand and foot in the interests of national emergency. To urge the acceptance of the proposed regulations on the principle that they would only be used when the occasion demanded, and not indiscriminately, is likewise an unreasonable bargain. Who is to decide when and where the Act shall be enforced? The initiative lies with the Home Secretary. Such plenary powers invested in the hands of a Government official creates a situation analogous to that which exists in Germany; it also is a dangerous and unwarranted precedent in a country which vaunts its democracy to the world.

Under the Act the Home Secretary has the right to arrest any person without giving a reason, and imprison him or her if he deems fit. Worse still he can have them tried in secret—perhaps even subject them to minor tortures to extort information, who knows? He has the additional right to ban all meetings, and extinguish any political agitation which does not meet with his approval. And he is entitled to interpret a strike or any working-class resistance to their conditions of employment as sabotage; which offence, we gather, merits a punishment of fifteen years penal servitude.

It would appear that the only power lacking in this bill is that of administering doses of castor oil to suspicious characters.

The Government poster above quoted carries with it a

doubly grim note which to a superficial glance is not discernible. Germany is not the only country threatening freedom. It is being seriously menaced here, ironically enough, on the pretext of defending it; it is also on unsafe footing in France, where the Communist Party has been disbanded.

In this Act the first serious casualty in the war waged on behalf of liberty abroad will be liberty at home. When the war is over the fighting men will return to find that what they were supposed to be engaged in destroying has been surreptitiously, but none the less firmly planted in their own land.

Perhaps, you may opine, the forecast of the ultimate results has been exaggerated. With a return to normal times Epa would, you believe, automatically disappear.

One cannot, of course, assert categorically that this will not happen. Still it is always unsafe to place great reliance upon wishful thinking. It is never wise to trust those in power to do the right thing by the people.

Democracy only exists and operates within a country when the inhabitants are alert enough and determined enough to demand it, when, if necessary they will undergo hardship that it may be attained. The fact that the Government could conceive such a damnable onslaught on liberty as the Emergency Powers Act is a reflection of their innate desires, a measure of their disrespect for the principle of individual liberty. Other legislation which stands to their credit (or discredit), such as the Trades Disputes Act, and the Sedition Bill reveals this strikingly.

Why then should we stand idly by in the hope that after the war our freedom will be restored to its former glory? We might just as well expect Germany to relinquish her grasp on Poland.

Concessions can only be gained by struggling for them, inertia is bound to result in their loss. Freedom is never entirely relished by those in power for the simple reason that it breeds an independent spirit which is liable to interfere in a disturbing manner with some Government scheme for dragooning the masses into accepting certain propaganda calling upon them to deny themselves a decent standard of living in the interests of the State, or commanding their support for a particular line of action.

It behoves us, therefore, to be on our guard with a firm resolve not easily to concede the territory of freedom so grudgingly mandated to us. To waver is to court disaster. Just as Hitler, after being made a present of the Sudeten area, proceeded to annex the whole of Czechoslovakia so, if we surrender some of our privileges or fail to resist attempts to wrench them out of our hands, we shall have them all snatched from before our eyes in a stunningly devastating blitzkrieg.

C. McKELVIE

Correspondence

KILLING AND WAR

TO THE EDITOR OF THE "FREETHINKER"

SIR,—Unlike Mr. Du Cann, I am not impressed with the self-sufficiency of the commandment "Thou shalt not kill." He regards it as "an absolutely perfect example of what a law should be; brief, plain, beyond doubt," etc. I suggest he omits the most important merit of any law, i.e., it should be worth following. In its unmodified state, for instance, it opposes such a praiseworthy project as voluntary euthanasia, opposition to which is surely inconsistent with Freethought. Further, if a little killing prevents a lot of killing this negative law defeats its own purpose. If I know there is a burglar coming down the road, breaking into house after house and murdering the occupants, I do not wait until he gets to mine before taking action. And if as a last resort I have to shoot him to save others being shot, I consider I am carrying out the spirit of the law about killing while Mr. Du Cann is clinging unrealistically to the letter.

Three countries at least are the houses already broken into, and as Mr. Du Cann suggests we should now call a conference and come to terms with the gangsters, one

can only marvel at his credulity in supposing there is any value in any undertaking or promise given by the Nazis. And when Mr. Chamberlain asks for "deeds, not words and paper," Mr. Du Cann asks whether men are to die for unspecified and "unstated vague action," I see nothing vague about it at all; it was perfectly obvious what kind of action the British Government stipulated; namely, the renunciation of ill-gotten gains. It is one thing to grant Germany the right to *Lebensraum*; it is another thing to ask, is Nazi culture worth spreading? *Lebensraum* soon becomes *Töenshaum* for the unfortunate victims.

Mr. Du Cann finds the reasons given for war "not cogent enough," because it may mean suffering for millions of people. But since all this has been weighed in the balance, the argument is taken no further by merely pointing out what a lot lies on the scales.

He then treads the dangerous path of prophecy. He quotes the Doxology in support of more aggressions after Hitler, he suggests Stalin as the next world-criminal, he says the Jews can flourish and defeat their oppressors, and he says the destruction of Hitlerism will be of no more benefit to humanity than the destruction of Kaiserism. Not one of these prophecies is sufficiently well grounded, and in any case the possibility of future aggressions is no reason why the present one should not be stopped in the only available way.

After making all these prophecies he says, "Sooner or later talks there will have to be." If, then, his prophecies (supported by the Doxology) are correct, these talks will be futile. Then, having proved, with the support of the Doxology, the futility of talks, he says we should now have a talk with Hitler.

And finally, having presented Pacifism for principle's sake he concludes by calling to his aid three men who are Pacifists for policy's sake, and I now leave him to be comforted by his Holy Trinity—Mosley, Pollitt and de Valera.

G. H. TAYLOR

"DID SHAKESPEARE WRITE SHAKESPEARE'S PLAYS?"

SIR,—Mr. Cutner asks me whether "I contend that Robertson stood for the authorship of the Shakespearean plays being exclusively by William Shakespeare?" The answer is "Certainly not." I think it is fairly common knowledge nowadays that Mr. Robertson was one of several scholars who have been disintegrating the Shakespeare plays, using their knowledge of the literary and histrionic conditions of the early 1600's to sort out plays (1) entirely written by Shakespeare, (2) partly written by Shakespeare, and (3) those which contain none of his work. The plays were the property of the Company, and though a few single-play quartos were published in Shakespeare's life-time (authorized or pirated), the collected folio edition was not published by his fellow-players till seven years after his death. Shakespeare had nothing to do with it, or he might have hesitated to claim other men's work as his own, especially as it was mostly distinctly inferior.

It seems to have been the custom for companies of players to take old plays and plays by other men, and either re-write them entirely, or insert alterations and additions before producing them, and so there was a considerable quantity of foreign matter in plays written up by Shakespeare for his company, and published in the folio after his death. Mr. Cutner, of course, knows this as well as I do; or does he claim that Edward de Vere wrote all the plays exactly as we have them?

But Mr. Robertson never imagined that the writers of the non-Shakespearean matter were any other than the acknowledged playwrights of the period. Certainly not Francis Bacon Viscount St. Albans, or Edward de Vere Earl of Oxford, or Francis Manners Earl of Rutland, or William Stanley Earl of Derby; all of whom have been put forward at various times by people who won't have Shakespeare the actor at any price, and who certainly seem to be fond of high-sounding titles. Mr. Cutner writes as a "de Verean," but he seems to have a hankering after Baconism. At least, he says that he is not con-

vinced that Robertson demolished the Baconian heresy. And now may I, like Silas Wegg, drop into poetry, in conclusion.

The evidence for Bacon
Having been severely shaken,
We now have Edward de Vere
Acting remarkably queer,
By writing the world's greatest plays,
And letting an ignorant actor who played a minor part in them, get all the praise.

A. W. DAVIS

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OUTDOOR

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

WEST LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (Hyde Park): 12 noon until 6 p.m. Various Speakers.

INDOOR

NORTH LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (Cricketers' Arms, Inverness Street, near Camden Town Underground Station): 7.30, Alick West—"The Religious Ideas of G. Bernard Shaw."

SOUTH LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (Alexandra Hotel opposite Clapham Common Underground Station): 7.15, Mr. Kenneth Bowden (Peace Pledge Union)—"The Futility of War."

SOUTH PLACE ETHICAL SOCIETY (Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, W.C.1): 11.0, Professor Susan L. Stebbing, M.A., D.Litt.—"The Need and Difficulty of an Ideal."

COUNTRY

INDOOR

BIRKENHEAD (Wirral) BRANCH N.S.S. (Beechcroft Settlement, Whetstone Lane): 7.0, Mr. J. V. Shortt. A Lecture.

EAST LANCASHIRE RATIONALIST ASSOCIATION (28 Bridge Street, Burnley): 2.30, Mr. J. Clayton. Questions and Discussion.

GLASGOW SECULAR SOCIETY (McLellan Galleries, Sauchiehall Street): 7.0, Mr. J. McDevitt, J.P.—"The Case for Social Credit."

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