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EDITED BY CHAPMAN COHEN

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Etc., etc.

Views and Opinions

Giving to God

The *Daily Telegraph* Saturday Soothsayer, the Rev. J. B. Ashby, has been enlightening his readers on "The Value of Sacrifice." It is an amusing article to those who understand the subject, and it is interesting as an example of the shifts to which one is put who sets out to accommodate one of the most primitive of superstitions to a modern environment. Mr. Ashby is quite impressed with the fact that "sacrifice" is a very old and a very prevalent idea. One need feel no surprise at this when one bears in mind that it is a religious term, with obvious reference to gods. The word "sacred" proves this, and in this instance its antiquity tells against its use and for what it legitimately stands. Present-day Man carries in his physical structure evidence of his relationship to the animal world, and, in his habits and customs, his descent from the earliest forms of social life, but it would be very rash indeed to argue from these facts that civilized humanity must follow all inherited customs, habits and inclinations without discrimination.

Mr. Ashby's thesis is that men were "obeying the deepest instincts of their being when they felt that they must surrender to God something precious to them, and the more precious the better." That is good, sound religious teaching, but it is poor philosophy and shocking science. I do not stress the fact that the statement is not true because that argument does not appeal with great force to a religious advocate, who so scornfully rejects utilitarianism in morals, while passionately defending a very low form of it when protecting his creed. For the one clear thing about religious advocacy is that whatever is found to be useful in establishing a creed must be true. I think this is the bottom reason why ecclesiastical history is so sharply separated from ordinary history. And even then it does not provide the full chronicling of religious beliefs and customs. From the time of the Christian Eusebius, who related so much that he thought ought to have occurred, it has been held in practice by his followers that fiction is as useful as fact when defending God. In this respect Protestants are not quite fair to the Roman Catholic Church. Professor Coulton has in his many valuable volumes made telling exposures of the lies, often crude and stupid lies, set down by Roman Catholic writers. But to stress that does not do justice to the capacity for lying that Protestant writers have shown. Protestantism came upon the scene late in the history of religion, and had to deal with a more wide-awake populace. Still, they did lie, and are still doing their best, and

the volume of lies set forth by Protestants is such that no religious person has real cause for complaint. We must distribute justice with impartiality. *Religious truth* is of much the same quality in all ages.

* * *

Stock Exchange Morals

It is not easy to deal with a subject on a dead level of misstatement and misunderstanding. Here and there a truth will emerge. Mr. Ashby gives the bottom fact connected with "sacrifice," when he says it is a symbol of giving. But having got so far along the main road of truth he strolls along a side path by confusing social giving with religious sacrifice. What man gave to God was a deliberate investment, of no greater ethical value than there is in one buying stocks when they are low and selling when they are high. "Sacrifice," as we have said, refers to the gods, and the earliest form of sacrifice was probably that of food, when by reasoning common to the earliest stages of religion the food is in essence used by them. We have an indication of this in the biblical statement that God smelled a sweet savour. But whatever the gift was, whether of food, or in small quantities of blood, or (in a later stage) when man sacrifices things on which he places great value, there is nothing in religious sacrifices to anywhere suggest a good-will gift. In common language it is more of a "tip" than anything else. Man was exchanging things for things. Roughly sacrifice resembles trading in its most primitive and most substantial form, that of barter. It was also a form of primitive magic. Understand religion and you can offer a reasonable and verifiable explanation of it. But as I have so often said, you may believe in religion, or you may understand it, but you simply cannot do both.

* * *

A Poor Creed

I am really not so much concerned with the origin of "sacrifice" as I am with the light it throws on the Christian character as a whole presented by Mr. Ashby. Mr. Ashby says—and it is the true Christian doctrine—that Christ offered his life "gladly and willingly because he knew that what was required was to die that others might live." Now the sacrifice of Christ was offered to God, man was only a predestined figure in the performance; and the Christian doctrine is that Christ was God, or at least a part of God. How, then, could man kill God? Gods we know may cease to be worshipped, and anthropology gives us the unmistakable information that gods die in man's disbelief as they are born and live in his recognition of them. But I do not recall a case in which man has actually killed a god as one man may kill another. In the New Testament the God who was killed and the God who made his killing inevitable were both one—or to be quite exact, two-thirds of one. Christ knew that he came to be killed. He also knew that after he was killed and ascended to heaven he would be just as much alive as he ever was. For my own part if anyone can prove that a virgin-born Christ lived before the crucifixion, I am quite ready to believe that he lived afterwards.

But suppose the game had not been played out to the arranged programme! Suppose the people instead of crying "crucify him" had been so impressed with

the power of Jesus, they at once forsook their sinful ways and did nothing that was "evil in the sight of the Lord." What then? Why, the whole plan of salvation would have broken down. There would have been no rejoicing at the sacrifice of Jesus, there would have been no room for the Christian crying out, "I am a sinner and deserve damnation, but for the sins I have committed someone else has been punished. Lo, I am as one who has committed a murder but who may rejoice because someone else has been hanged for the crime." If the Christian will have this hodge-podge of primitive religious beliefs exalted to the level of an historic event, he has no reason for rejecting the reading I have given. You may read lessons into mythology, but you cannot honestly derive them as anything but what they were in their formation.

But if we are looking in the records of humanity for examples of those who have faced danger and death for the benefit of their fellows, we can find them without appealing to mythology. So far as annals exist, and long, long before Christianity was heard of, we find examples of those who have from a sense of duty, or love of right, done all that Jesus Christ is said to have done. They have suffered imprisonment, torture, death, all for the sake of some purely human ideal. Parents have given themselves for their children, and children have given their lives for their parents; friends have died for friends, man has suffered for the sake of truth and justice, and have needed no fantastical theory of heaven or hell to brace them to their task. The intrinsic absurdity of the Christian theory of salvation, and the greatest insult it offers to the civilized mind is the substantial denial of goodness in men or women, in parent or in child unless they will take up the attitude of criminals.

Picture Christianity as it is in reality and the reply will be from the Christians, that it is a caricature. But the caricature is contained in the Christian creed. That caricatures humanity. I will not say, as some have said that the orthodox Christian religion offers us a caricature of God. One cannot caricature the non-existent.

* * *

Life and Conduct

Let us look at this talk of Christian sacrifice from another point of view. Sacrifice begins as a bribe to the gods to do something. And we have still with us, as we have rudimentary structures in our bodies, such expressions as sacred books, sacred buildings, sacred places, and sacred persons, all of which carry us back directly to the most primitive of our ancestors. But, as we have so often pointed out, the pressure of social life, the growing consciousness of the meaning and value of social situations, force upon the purely religious phrase a social significance. Hence the talk of man's sacrifice when he gives up a lucrative situation for a less lucrative one, or when he faces danger for the benefit of others. With all these situations we are well acquainted, and the man must be poor indeed who cannot appreciate them.

If the social situation is adequate, the religious one is unnecessary. But the Christian of the Ashby type—a very common one nowadays—is compelled to deny the adequacy of the social motive. He calls upon us to make "sacrifices" because Jesus, the God, went through the farce of sacrifice, knowing that if he gave his life he would immediately pick it up again. You cannot run the social and the religious thesis together. One inevitably cancels the other.

Moreover, sacrifice (I use the religious phrase in order to make the Christian case as strong as possible) must be spontaneous to be of any ethical value. It

must not be part of a parade, any more than a man exhibits benevolence when he gives away a sum of money in order to secure a knighthood. In that case, in common with the Christian who says I must sacrifice in order to reap a heavenly reward, he is paying for a calculable return. As Spencer would have rightly said, there is no logical, no really causal nexus between the act and what succeeds it. In either case one might with equal justification put a pound on a ten-to-one chance that runs last.

No man can offer a real "sacrifice" by going about looking for an opportunity of committing one, or because a long time ago someone said that it was a sure way of getting a front place in heaven as a reward. There is no more ridiculous figure than a Christian who informs us that for his sacrifice he will reap a handsome reward for doing so. "Unselfish" (again not a good word) action brings a feeling of satisfaction that cannot be counted on beforehand, just as the inevitably miserable man is the one who spends his time in a conscious hunt for happiness. And certainly there is no more hypocritical figure than the man who tells us that he cannot feel happy unless he commits so many acts of sacrifice. If Mr. Ashby had said that we must, if we really desire a better form of society, give up, to cite his own words, many "Profits, privileges, prejudices, etc.," if we really wish for a better community, I would agree with him; but when he says that we must do so because we "believe Christ died for us," he is setting before us the ideal of the monk—the very worst example he could give.

So once more I would put to Mr. Ashby the question I have put to others. "Is there any act of decency, or any act of 'sacrifice,' if that humbugging word must be used, that is performed by a Christian that cannot be, or is not, performed by men and women who have no faith whatever in 'Jesus Christ and him crucified' "? But although I put the question I really have little hope of its receiving an answer. I do not think that Mr. Ashby will leave the shelter of the *Daily Telegraph*, where not even a plain criticism of his religious musings may be seriously questioned. To come out into the open and subject their teachings to a criticism that must be answered is a form of sacrifice that very, very few Christian preachers ever think of practising.

CHAPMAN COHEN

Moonshine Triumphant

(HOUSE OF COMMONS, FIRST OF APRIL)

THERE are fairies in the moon,
Therefore must Shakespeare starve
And Molière go beg his bread;
The soldiers', sailors', airmen's boon
Of seeing plays on Sunday, M.P.s carve
Away, and actors are not fed.

There are fairies in the moon,
And mortals on this earth with power
And will to stamp on pleasure.
Mortals, forsooth; nay, ogres who will soon
Deprive our world of every lovely flower
That would delight the warrior's leisure.

There are fairies in the moon,
And moon-struck mortals in high place
Who hate the Theatre, but shun the Church:
The Stage must bow before the pious loon,
Intelligence accept a new disgrace,
And England leave her soldiers in the lurch.

BAYARD SIMMONS

Charles, the Archbishop

THOSE who believe that Virtue, especially ecclesiastical virtue, should be rewarded, and that saintliness deserves something more than the poverty of Jesus Christ or his Twelve apostles may find pleasure—and profit—in pondering the career of Charles Manners-Sutton, a former Archbishop of Canterbury.

Like his master, Jesus, he commenced life with nothing. Indeed he had not even royal descent as Jesus had (through Joseph who was not his father as Saint Matthew and Saint Luke tell us). For Charles was only the younger son of a younger son. To be precise, he was the fourth son of Lord George Manners, the third son of the third Duke of Rutland merely.

The poor penniless boy necessarily entered the Church. His very education was of a charitable nature, for he went to Charterhouse, that famous public-school, founded "for the maintenance and education of poor children." Then, to Cambridge, where he took orders. At thirty, his family made him rector of Averham (£900 a year) and rector of Whitwell (£620 a year), which temporarily kept him from starvation, when Income Tax was not what it is. Rapidly he added the Deanery of Peterborough to his gains, and at thirty-seven he was made Bishop of Norwich.

As Bishop, he presented his brother-in-law with three livings worth £1,923 a year, which speaks much for his affectionate nature, and obtained the Deanery of Windsor for himself in addition to his Bishopric. This last appointment enabled him to ingratiate himself with the Royal Family.

Notwithstanding his rectories, deanery and bishopric, the poor fellow was overwhelmed with debt. Naturally enough! At fifty he had a large family totally unprovided for except by Church livings. Royal favour pitied his ghastly plight and he was made Archbishop of Canterbury.

His publications consisted only of two sermons and one short essay on botany; literature was not one of his failings. An honest man in the best sense of that much-abused word, he immediately got an Act of Parliament passed to sell the palace at Croydon in order to pay his debts. And grateful to his Maker for his bounties, when he got the sale-price he spent a moderate sum in beautifying the parish church at Addington Park and a larger sum in building "an elegant mansion" for himself.

Archbishop Manners-Sutton was "Primate of All England" up to 1828—some 23 years. It is estimated that during his primacy he received at least £529,000 from the Church of England in money, and before his elevation he had received another £100,000 or a grand total of £629,000. Not merely did he manage by careful, economical, and prudent administration of these emoluments to pay off all his debts, but out of these beggarly receipts he left in personal property alone, on his death no less than £180,000. He was an old man when he died, worn out by his superhuman exertions on behalf of his purse and his family—and one can only pity such a life of toil!

Surely this life of unremitting financial labour is a Christian example to us all. But the half of the Archbishop's virtue is not yet told.

For not only did he provide for his own upkeep. This labourer in the Lord's vineyard also looked after his children and even his children's children. He took thought even for the husbands of his daughters. One son-in-law, the Rev. Hugh Percy—one of the Northumberland Percys—was made Chancellor of Salisbury, and at the same time given the three livings of Barmham, Bishopbourne and Ivy Church. Preferment was rapid. He added to these livings the Archdeaconry of

Canterbury, and then became in rapid succession Bishop of Rochester, then Bishop of Carlisle (also keeping the revenues of the prebend of Finsbury and the chancellorship of Salisbury). Dying in 1856, he has been estimated as having received from a grateful Church for his services no less than £250,000.

Another daughter married the Rev. James Croft for whom the Archbishop also nobly provided. When that cleric died in 1869, *The Guardian* (the Church newspaper) suggested that he had received no less than £168,680 from his benefices and appointments. Envious brother-clergymen with a statistical turn of mind protested and said he had had £176,430.

You will observe that this Archbishop and his two sons-in-law drew in solid cash from the Church of England more than a million of money! There was another son-in-law, three sons and a crowd of other relatives—but why should I paint the lily or throw perfume on the violet? Sufficient to say that Charles Manners-Sutton did his duty by all of them. Yes: every one. Not one was refused the spiritual opportunity of serving the Church to the profit of his soul.

The crowning achievement of this good and great man was to get an Act of Parliament passed towards the close of his life, securing to his grandson a sinecure office worth £8,500 a year. His eldest son was made Speaker of the House of Commons at a salary of £6,000; he ended as Viscount Canterbury with a £4,000 pension. Dying in 1845, he had drawn £148,000 for his services to his country. His eldest son—that grandson for whom the Archbishop did his best—made (I grieve to say) a loss out of the country instead of a profit for he was fined £5 at Bow Street for wantonly knocking down the wife of a respectable tradesman one night as she left the theatre—an act of which his archiepiscopal grandfather would have disapproved sternly as there was no money in it.

Seldom have I read in modern Church history a more inspiring career than that of Charles Manners-Sutton, based as it is on the Samuel Smiles principle of Self-Help. Every curate with a large family and small stipend should have his earnest attention called to it as a shining light to be followed; for there are still a few loaves and fishes left in the Church even in these days of predatory taxation. Business-men who say that "Christianity is not a paying proposition" will observe that the pseudo-Christianity of modern times in this case paid handsomely. The family motto of Charles Manners-Sutton was *Pour y parvenir* ("to attain to the object") and I, for one, will not pretend that he did not nobly and bravely live up to that motto. He was a living refutation of Jesus Christ's epigram that "Ye cannot serve God and Mammon!" May he rest in peace—we must all wish we had had a grandfather, a father, or even a father-in-law of his calibre.

There is still an Archbishop of Canterbury to-day. And while we cannot hope that our present Father-in-God can draw all that his predecessors in the Apostolic Succession drew—times having changed for the financial worse—it is a comfort to us all to reflect that he can still live in comfort and still provide for his relatives comfortably.

C. G. L. DU CANN

The weakness of man's reason is more evident in those who do not know it, than in those who know it. If we are too young, we judge not aright; if we are too old, in like manner; if we think not enough, we become stubborn, and we cannot discover the truth. If we consider our work immediately after it is finished, we are prejudiced in its favour; if too long after, we can no longer enter into it. There is but one indivisible point which must be their true spot whence we must look at a picture; the others are too near, too far, too high, too low. Perspective points it out in the art of painting; but in Truth and in morals who will point it out?—*Pascal*.

A Book About Books

II.

It is interesting to compare Mr. Burton Rascoe's judgment of Villon in *Titans of Literature* with that in *The Book of French Songs*, translated by John Oxenford, and published about a hundred years ago. Francois Villon has, of course, rightly taken his place as a great poet, one of France's greatest, as a matter of fact; and his genius was early recognized, not only by his literary contemporaries, but by the common people. He is not now easy to understand in his old French—any more than is for us Chaucer's archaic English; but there have been several fine translations of the poems of Villon into English, notably by D. G. Rossetti and John Payne, though Mr. Rascoe prefers that by J. U. Nicolson.

The note in Oxenford introducing the famous "Ballade des Dames du Temps Jadis" (Where are the snows of yesteryear? etc.), which has tempted many translators to try their hand, has the following:—

Francis I admired the works of Villon. . . . It is difficult, particularly for a foreigner, to discover in what the beauties consisted which attracted such correct judges, and made them to prefer him to all the poets who had gone before. . . . Were it not that he is regarded in some degree as the father of French verse, he would not have occupied a place in these pages.

John Oxenford's work actually is delightful, and he seems to have enjoyed compiling his translations of many of the best and most notable French songs; it is a pity however he was such a poor judge of the naturalistic and elemental work of Villon with its grim and stark realism. (Perhaps, however, he is not responsible for the note.) How different is Mr. Rascoe's opinion:—

In Villon's poetry there is a soul bared; laid utterly naked. And after all it is a fine soul, one of the most beautiful in all literature. It is tender, humble, sensitive, frank and honest. . . . Villon says that he has tried to understand life and finds that he can't; least of all can he understand himself. He asks all and sundry to forgive him and have pity on him, and in magnificent lines he forgives those who have ever done him any harm and pronounces his benediction on them.

It will be easily seen that the man who understands such a poet will also be hearty in his appreciation of that other great medieval writer, the immortal Rabelais. Both the chapters on Villon and Rabelais will, I am sure, be relished by the readers of this journal, many of whom indeed will need no introduction to such "titans" of literature. Mr. Rascoe does not hide the scepticism of the Curé of Meudon—"Rabelais was definitely anti-clerical," he insists, "but he was not sympathetic to the rise of Protestantism either." And he quotes (and agrees with) the opinion of J. S. Kennard in *The Friar in Fiction* on Luther and Rabelais:—

Luther and Rabelais were congenial spirits and the mission of both was the overthrow of the Catholic religion. But with this difference between them, that Rabelais sought destruction pure and simple of Catholicism and Christianity, while Luther's purpose was only to do away with what he held to be the accretions of superstition and paganism, that in ages of ignorance had attached themselves like barnacles to the nucleus of pure religion.

The next great "titan" dealt with is Montaigne, who receives splendid praise; and John M. Robertson is quoted as saying of him that "the human wisdom of Montaigne had entered into the lifeblood of France and of the world."

I should like to dwell on the chapter on Cervantes and Shakespeare, but space forbids. When we come to Milton, however, the author begins with something

more than a mere shock. Like Dante, Milton is quite sacrosanct. To say that you cannot read *Paradise Lost* puts you out of court at once with all true lovers of literature. I have often tried to brave their scorn by declaring that *Paradise Lost* was, if anything, even more boring than Dante's masterpieces, but have given it up. It is like saying to a musician that you cannot enjoy Bach—a heresy which will never be forgiven, and for which I am quite outside the pale in music. Here is how Mr. Rascoe begins his chapter on Milton:—

Take an aspirin and a bromide before I utter the most frightful blasphemy that was ever uttered since Dr. Faustus signed his name to an infamous pact with the devil, a pact which released him from the great urgency of following theological disputations to their ultimate, infinite end and gave him permission, almost too late, to go out and chuck a girl under the chin. I am about to say (please hold your breath) that *Paradise Lost* and *Paradise Regained* are horrible examples of what may occur when a man with a displeasing type of mind happens to be an expert versifying technician in what is loosely called the biblical style.

Of course one is too young to know at school whether such a poem as *Paradise Lost* is really great or not; and we are then told to wait till we grow up before we can thoroughly appreciate its wonderful power. Like Mr. Rascoe, I have never "grewed up," as far as Milton's "great" epic is concerned; and I am glad to agree with his mature judgment upon it:—

Milton is lacking in that epic, in common sense, in true loftiness of feeling, in kindness and generosity and give-and-take, and most of all, he is thoroughly lacking in style, grand or common. Milton, as an epic poet, has only the make-up and costume of the grand style: he is lacking in the unpremeditated gestures, in the unconscious revelations of feeling, the soul of style.

And he goes on to point out what has often been said in these columns: "that the so-called Biblical style nine times out of ten, propounds the dubious, the false, the untrue, the bombastic or the commonplace."

Milton, in fact, gets some hard knocks in the chapter devoted to him, and we are given as well some little known facts on the plot or originality of *Paradise Lost*. But Mr. Rascoe is just to one who is, in any case, a great writer, and Milton gets praise where praise is due.

Two other "titans" are Voltaire, and Daniel Defoe, that idol of our boyhood. Voltaire was "wit, audacity, courage and intelligence personified." And he "made the utmost use of his powers and, physical weakling that he was, he was the most lordly figure of his time." It is high and well deserved praise.

For those who know Defoe only as the author of *Robinson Crusoe*, I commend the study of the chapter devoted to him. Bernard Shaw in his *Sanity of Art* considered that "journalism is the highest form of art; for all the highest literature is journalism." Daniel Defoe was perhaps the greatest of all journalists—"the progenitor and paragon of editorial writers." But he was "an artist first and foremost." And certainly only an artist and a supreme journalist could have turned out the work he did in so many branches of literature and kept up so high a standard. In *Moll Flanders*, Mr. Rascoe declares that "Defoe exhausted nearly the whole repertory of possible plots in fiction"—a remark which is high praise indeed. And he considers it *psychologically* greater than either *Nana* or *Madame Bovary*—which is still higher praise. It is good to come across such an eulogy as is this chapter on Daniel Defoe.

The succeeding chapters, on Poe, on Goethe, on Byron and Shelley, on Hugo, Balzac, Tolstoi, and Dostoevsky, are also packed with shrewd personal judgments all worth considering even if one cannot go all the way with the author.

But I specially recommend the illuminating description of that strange enigmatic figure, Marcel Proust, and his extraordinary work. We shall hear more of Proust in the years to come.

Mr. Rascoe writes English, I am glad to say, like an Englishman—there is nothing of "new-English" in his essays. I am glad of this because the kind of thing we have in the later work of James Joyce, which one may call *very* new-English, is mostly balderdash. I still think that the English language in the hands of Swift and Paine, Cobbett and Dickens, has in it all the genius of our Saxon tongue. I want nothing better—and for this reason I heartily recommend *Titans of Literature*.

H. CUTNER

The Failure of Religious Training

JUVENILE DELINQUENCY

It is one of the commonest fallacies of our times that religion is necessary for good morals. The value of a religious upbringing for children is often stressed and the good work of Sunday Schools is extolled. Many people with no belief in the supernatural support religion because of the good they think it does as a moral force in the community.

These widely-held beliefs find no support in the latest report on Victorian Children's Court by the Stipendiary Special Magistrate, Mr. Ripper. There is no mention made in the report of the value of religious training, or of Sunday Schools, in either preventing or curing juvenile delinquency.

The figures given of the religion of the children brought before the Court are most enlightening and are highly significant.

Altogether 2923 children appeared before the Court, and they are divided into religious groups in this way:—

Roman Catholic	...	...	1025
Protestant	...	...	1887
Hebrew	...	...	11
			2923

On investigation we found that of the 2923 children, only two were of no religion, and these were included in the Protestant group. The amended figures then read:—

Roman Catholic	...	...	1025
Protestant	...	...	1885
Hebrew	...	...	11
No Religion	...	...	2
			2923

If we take these out as percentages, we find that we get the following results (approx.):—

CHILD DELINQUENTS

Roman Catholic	...	...	35.07
Protestant	...	...	64.49
Hebrew	...	...	.37
No Religion	...	...	.07

The child population of Victoria between the ages of 5 and 19 is 421,420, and of these 86,890 are Roman Catholic (Government statistics). This gives us the following comparison:—

ROMAN CATHOLICS

Percentage of child population = 20
Percentage of child delinquents = 35

These figures prove the complete failure of religious education as a preventive of delinquency. Roman Catholic children receive a more intense training in religious doctrine than any others in the community. The great majority of Roman Catholic children are educated in their own schools where daily religious instruction is given. The fact that the percentage of Roman Catholic juvenile delinquents is almost twice

that of the percentage of Roman Catholic children in the community is a complete proof of the failure of a religious training to establish good morals.

At the last Federal census between 62 and 68 per cent of the people of Victoria were classified as Protestant, and about 65 per cent of juvenile delinquents are Protestant, so that the Protestant religion has had no influence in keeping its children from delinquency.

At the same census, 12.9 per cent gave no religion; we have seen that no religion was given in only two cases of delinquency, making .07 per cent of the total.

From these facts the following conclusions can be drawn with complete confidence:—

1. Religion is not responsible for preventing or curing juvenile delinquency.
2. An absence of religious training is not a factor in causing delinquency.

We have noted that while one child in every five is a Roman Catholic, there are approximately two Catholics in every five delinquents. It would hardly be correct to infer from this that the Roman Catholic teaching is a cause of delinquency. Authoritative studies show that two of the main causes of delinquency are poverty and bad home conditions, and it is possible that an undue proportion of Roman Catholic children are influenced by these factors.

But the high proportion of Catholic delinquents, the duly proportionate number of Protestant delinquents and the very low number of delinquents without religion are important facts. The lesson they clearly teach is that religious teaching is not necessary for the development in children of moral behaviour, and there is some evidence to suggest that those without religion are more moral than those who profess one of the Christian faiths

(From N.Y. *Rationalist*)

Acid Drops

Mr. Magnay, who led his gallant army of bigots and humbugs against the 136 (the rest of the members were either busy elsewhere, or afraid to risk offending the Churches) to defeat the Government proposal for the opening of theatres on Sunday, quotes Voltaire as saying, "If I can capture the English Sunday I could destroy Christianity." We do not recall any such passage in any of Voltaire's writings, and at the same time we are quite sure that Voltaire would not have put in the way Mr. Magnay says. And we certainly would not care to take Mr. Magnay's word on the matter.

Mr. Magnay also said that Sunday worship is "the main evidence to show that this is a Christian country." Mr. Magnay also knows, or should know, that all over the continent the English Sunday is, and has been for several generations, the recognized illustration of British religious humbug and hypocrisy.

The dramatic critic of the *Daily Express* has the following contemptuous note on these liberty loving bigots:—

I do not deny these men their scruples. I do not doubt that they feel deeply on this subject of pleasure on the Lord's Day. But I would like to be able to discover what seventy constituencies they represent in Parliament and how many of those constituencies, by popular vote of ratepayers approve of this pleasure that the elected members abhor.

These men are running to keep up with the procession. They are out of honest breath, and the parade has nearly gone by. For the last stronghold of Sunday observance is to-day tradition.

The keenest supporters of the Sabbath rule can do no more for their trust than fight a delaying action. What a country this would be if these bigots had their way!

One might find in the turning down of the Government order for opening of theatres on Sundays welcome evidence of the independence of individual members, were we not aware of the way in which the thing was done. Then we realize that with, probably, the majority of

members what they do is largely decided by (1) how far independent action will affect their political "career," that is, militate against their being appointed to office. (To-day it must be borne in mind that independent action damages a member not only with his own but also with the other party) and (2) how far it will affect constituents when they next go before them. It does say something, however, that less than half of the members voted. They were too timid, or too ashamed, to vote for the closing of theatres on Sunday, and had just enough sense of decency left not to vote against it. These leaders of the people follow very obediently.

There is no secret as to how this victory, by the most ignorant section of Christians we have, was achieved. The Lord's Day Observance Society, of which our Lord Chief Justice was President until "yesterday," has its letter-writing squad in all parts of the country, and Members of Parliament were duly bombarded. Between common-sense and local opposition at the voting station, Members that would have agreed with Sunday opening either voted against it or abstained. It is said the Lord's Day Observance Society spent over £500 on this campaign. We fancy the sum is underestimated. The Society has an income of £17,000. If the measure had been agreed on, the Society might as well have disbanded. Certainly there would have been a great falling off in income.

The miserable part of the whole business is that this kind of thing can go on while we are ostensibly fighting a world-war in defence of liberty. There can be no real excuse for pleading national necessity. Our intellectual development may, as a whole, be low, but surely it is not low enough for the majority of people to believe that national salvation depends upon the respect we pay to these taboo days. Intellectually, the "sacred" day is even lower than the astrological forecasts by means of which some of our papers try to improve their circulations. A great many of the clergy themselves no longer uphold the puritan Sunday. But they also do not like to speak out, for one cannot break one of a bundle of associated superstitions without weakening the whole. In this matter self-interest, credulity and sheer superstition work well together.

But why do not the people interested in dramatic and musical performances screw *their* courage to the sticking point. There is nothing illegal in having a dramatic performance on Sunday. The legal objection is when a charge is made for admission. But we believe it is still the law that there is nothing against charging for reserved seats. If we are right, then fifty seats in the least comfortable part of the house could be gratis. The remainder of the building would hold nothing but reserved seats, and for these a charge would be made.

We have had it put to us by Cinema owners that if they were to defy Sabbatarians in this way, the police would be induced to annoy by enforcing numerous petty regulations so that their lives would become unendurable. Well, in that event, a case might be stated for the courts to decide; and in this respect the right of the individual citizen to appeal to the courts against an order, or against the unwise application of the law, still remains. That has not yet been taken from us in the name of liberty. Officials are getting nearer the state when liberties may be taken to restrict freedom, but we have not yet completely got there. Let theatre managers and cinema proprietors do something for themselves, and the general public will help.

Judging from the newspapers, big and little, from the chief London-daily down to the semi-advertising sheet in a small town, a visitor from another planet would assume that the outburst of demands for more religion in the schools represented a nation-wide thirst for more religion, and the chief lament of the parents of England is that their children are not being taught enough dogmatic religion. Those who are better acquainted with the way things are done are quite aware that all this outburst means is clever and persistent advertising. The vast majority of parents are not really interested, and it is necessary, in order to get the Government to do anything, for those members to be able to point to a national demand. For these things stand out plainly. (1) There

is a fairly large and influential proportion of men and women in office who would like to create a revolution in the schools that would give the parsonate—established and nonconformist—greater control over the schools. (2) The clergy, from the Archbishop downward, would not dare to speak with the confidence they have spoken of the change that will come over the schools unless some kind of unofficial understanding with Christian politicians in high places. We could name a few of these, but as we cannot have documentary proof, we let it go at that. But the open confession of the Minister for Education in the House of Commons, that he is deeply interested in the matter of religious education is a pointer. The proper reply would have been that as Minister of Education the question was outside his province. And (3) considerable sums of money have been spent on this newspaper propaganda, concerning which the public will never know.

With regard to number two, in the above paragraph, it is interesting to find in a recent issue of *Country Life* an editorial note that "More than one pronouncement has lately suggested that the Government are prepared to take the necessary steps." In that case one of the fruits of winning the war would be to re-establish the priest in the schools. And that means, of necessity, a poorer type of teacher and a less effective education.

In view of what has been said there is significance, where otherwise none would exist, in an article by Mr. Robert Lynd in the *News-Chronicle* for April 5. Mr. Lynd helps the crusade by saying that he much enjoyed his visits to Church as a child, and felt injured when he was not taken there. (Mr. Lynd must have been a very unusual kind of an "infant," and one ought in charity to bear in mind that childish memories are not always reliable.) Mr. Lynd concludes that it is not "quite fair to the children. After all, the pleasures of Church-going have been almost a part of a child's education for generations." We agree with the last part of the quotation; and one wonders whether Mr. Lynd considers the present state of Europe a vindication of the policy? But apart from it being contributions to the campaign we really can see little reason for the article appearing. And surely something better could have been presented than the article before us.

The following is from the *New Yorker*:—

In Hollywood there is a Spiritualist church presided over by a lady named the Rev. Violet Greener. Each parishioner receives, as he enters, a printed leaflet giving the order of service, and also, at the foot of the page, a little additional informaton: "Miss Greener's gowns by Raymond; coiffure by Don of Hollywood."

Why not? Going to Church or Chapel has always been a recognized method of advertising, particularly in "small town" areas.

Another quotation from the *New Yorker* of the same date:—

The clubwomen of thirty-nine States have united in a boycott of gangster serials on the radio. The most harassed of the ladies, Mrs. Charles H. Phelps, Jr., of Bronxville, has complained that her nine-year-old son is altogether too familiar with "the inside of prisons and the hot seat" and also knows "how to cover up a trail to escape the bulls, how to cut telephone lines, how to hide licence-plate numbers, so that he can scam successfully." She feels that a few actual but romantic heroes, especially from the Bible, might well be substituted for the gunmen and their molls. We are not sure that Mrs. Phelps realizes exactly what she might be letting herself in for. The radio is a medium that calls for action, and a good deal of the best action in the Bible is either violent or disreputable, or both. A nine-year-old boy, taken on a radio tour of the Old Testament, would soon find himself possessed of a lot of information more curious than how to cut telephone lines. Not only would he be familiar with the inside of lions' dens and the fiery furnace, but he would also know how to summon up bears to eat anybody who happened to annoy him, how to knock down walls with a trumpet, how to make the sun stand still, and most useful of all, how to dispose of an inconvenient husband by putting him in the front-line trenches. We suggest that the ladies leave well enough alone. The Shadow may not be as important historically as King David, but at least he never danced in public with no clothes on.

TO CORRESPONDENTS

"FREETHINKER" WAR DAMAGE FUND.—B. A. WILTER, 2s. 6d.; J. T. IVES, 2s. 6d.; "Biddy and Arthur," £1; J. EVANS, 2s. 6d.; W. PERRY, £1; J. MELLWAIN, 2s. 10d.; B. JENKINS (Johannesburg), £15; Mr. OLIVER, 13s. 2d.

THE General Secretary of the N.S.S. acknowledges a donation of One Pound from Mr. T. H. Elstob towards the Benevolent Fund of the Society.

W.H.C. and W. D. HOLMES.—Thanks for addresses of likely new readers, paper being sent for four weeks.

N. T. GRIDGEMAN.—Pleased to hear from you at any time.

"ANDREWS."—Glad to learn of the good done by literature sent. A great deal of valuable propaganda can be done in the way you adopted. We are always ready to send literature and copies of the *Freethinker* for such purposes.

J.M.—Presumably the *Manchester Guardian* moves in some fear of religious prejudice. It is a pity, for the *Guardian* was once a paper of courage. But the clergy of this country do manage to exert a deal of underground pressure.

E. H. THOMPSON.—Mr. Cohen could see you at any time if given a few days notice. But he is not at the office every day. Most of his work is done at home.

N. A. SMITH.—The man to whom you refer may correctly be referred to as a religious lunatic. But his real offence is being born too late. Three or four hundred years ago he would have stood a good chance of ranking as a god-inspired person. Nowadays, it is unfortunate to be born too soon or too late. In either case one is likely to run into a bushel of trouble.

E. TRASK.—A capital letter, but you must not expect it to affect people of the type of Mr. Magnay. Such characters have no real appreciation of real liberty. No more miserable or contemptible tyranny exists than that of British Sabbatarianism.

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.

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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.

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

Sugar Plums

The following excerpt from a letter received will interest many of our readers:—

Your weekly paragraph "to the men of the forces," reminds me of the experience of a young friend who joined the R.A.F. some months back. I had informed him that if he desired to be registered in the books as an Atheist, he would have to be very firm with those to whom he was furnishing his particulars, as they invariably try to put one down as belonging to some brand of religion. He found it was so, and when he became insistent on his rights, he was taken to the commanding officer, who assured him that if he persisted in the use of the word Atheist his chance of any promotion was nil. That I am afraid did it, for not many young people like to spoil their chances, so he was put down as a "Congregationalist."

My young friend had a harder task than myself, as I had turned forty years of age when joining in the previous war to end war. Had anyone told me then that one word would spoil my chances of promotion, I was in the position to inform him what he could do with it.

We have received many letters of a similar character, and it does small credit to the officers concerned when these cases occur. Of course when a man is firm the officer must give way. But it is monstrous that an officer should persuade a man to commence his military career with a lie. But we are quite certain that if all Freethinkers would insist on their legal right to affirm and be set down as Atheist or Freethinker their attestation would be taken without comment or threat. We have said more than once

that courage in physical matters is common. It is courage on the intellectual level that is scarce, and more valuable.

"Fascism" is to-day a word that is in everybody's mouth, but we suspect that only a very small percentage of the general public have a clear conception of its meaning. Yet if we are to fight Fascism it is well to have an understanding of its nature, and appreciate the sociological causes of its existence. Abroad Fascism is a large movement, although we doubt if the philosophical historian of the future will count it as a great one, and at home we have plenty of sympathizers, without whose patronage neither in Italy nor in Germany would Fascism have achieved its present power in Europe. For these, and many other reasons, we commend for reading Mr. F. A. Ridley's *Fascism. What Is It?* (Freedom Press, 9 Newbury Street, E.C.) Mr. Ridley is the author of a number of interesting works, of which we specially single out *The Jesuits* and *Julian the Apostate*, each marked with that detachment of mind which is a feature of his work. We do not mean that Mr. Ridley's opinions are not clear and strongly expressed. They are both. But the grounds of his conclusions are clearly stated and the conclusions are dispassionately argued.

Anthologies tend to run along well-marked paths, whatever be their subject matter. *Forever Freedom*, by Josiah C. Wedgwood, M.P., and Allan Nevins (Penguin series, 6d.), has a note running through it that echoes the personal convictions of the compilers. One cannot easily quote from an anthology, but must be content with commending *Forever Freedom* as essentially a book for the pocket, with something cheerful and sound on every page. But it is regrettable that in compiling such collections, attention is not paid to such men as Holyoake and Bradlaugh, and above all to that master of fine phrasing, G. W. Foote. When Foote had finished polishing a sentence, and we have a suspicion he spent more time at the game in his earlier years than most people imagine, there was left very little room for further improvement. Of course there are a great many quotations from Freethinkers, in this Penguin issue, but we have in mind those who have carried on the tradition of freedom in conditions that, as Paine said, "try men's souls," but seldom bring them fame.

Turning over the pages of one of the collections of South Place addresses by Moncure Conway, we came across the following. Christianity, he says,

means what you like. It means one thing here, and another thing there. In a convent or a nunnery the ceremonies of altars may be still translated in abnegation of love parted from the play of the human life. Christianity means to monarchy its throne; to the Republic its President; to the Quaker his drab garb and silent meeting; to the revivalist his shoutings; to the Catholic, miraculous fountains and altar toys; to the Bishops their palaces, salaries and seats among the Lords. The army marks its cannon with the cross of Prince of Peace. We slay the heathen in the name of him who said "love your enemies," when we want their territory. . . . We talk of Christian charity, as if charity were unknown to other religions; Christian love, Christian duty, Christian Socialism, when we are Socialists, Christian Conservatism, when we are Conservatives, Christian Progress when we are Progressives. That we do not speak of Christian steam, and Christian telephones can only be that these inventions have proceeded from the one institution that refuses to be christened—Science. But already we hear of Christian evolution, and no doubt the discoveries of science will all be labelled Christian as they become adopted into that general system of convenience which Christendom really worships.

Conway, when we knew him, was a grand old man, always fearless in the expression of his opinions. His monumental life of Thomas Paine, and the fine edition of his (Paine's) works, will keep his name alive, but it is a pity that his other writings are not so well read as they deserve. Freethinkers, also, will never forget that when, in 1881, the editor of this journal, G. W. Foote, was imprisoned for blasphemy, and many "respectable" Freethinkers were shivering at the possibility of being identified with the *Freethinker* campaign, Conway spoke strongly and plainly, denouncing the use of such phrases as "indecent," "obscene," etc., which had frightened so many timid souls into silence or repudiation.

Who Was Paul?

I.—THE DOCUMENTS

OUR sole authorities for the life and work of Paul are the Acts of the Apostles, and the Epistles which bear his name. Neither is a wholly reliable guide. The Acts, though perhaps the most readable book in the New Testament, are not contemporary with the events described, and have a relative historical value only where they embody parts of the travel diary of a companion of Paul—i.e., chapters xvi, 10-18; xx, 4; xxi, 18; and xxvii-xxviii, 16. Even the travel diarist is not always veracious: the most that can be said for him is that his narrative is less changed with miracle than most of the Acts. It was formerly thought that the Epistles could be used to check the account in the Acts. Unfortunately the authenticity of the Epistles, as they stand, can no longer be upheld. In their present shape they are not even the work of one hand; and though they probably contain genuine pieces by Paul, those pieces have to be carefully looked for.

But though neither the Acts nor the Epistles by themselves can be treated as adequate evidence of the doings of Paul, the two together have the advantage of being at least independent authorities. The author of the Acts does not seem to have known the Epistles, or if he knew them, does not seem to have believed them authentic; for he nowhere mentions that Paul wrote any—a remarkable silence in view of the part they played in building up Christian theology. Nor do the Epistles betray any acquaintance with the Acts. Where the two deal with the same subject, they are often contradictory. Where, therefore, we find the Acts and Epistles agreeing, we may conclude that we have evidence of more importance than that depending on either source alone. The Acts and Epistles agree that Paul was a Jew; that at first he opposed and helped to persecute the infant Church; that in some way he became converted to the idea that Jesus was the Messiah and Son of God; that this happened at Damascus; that he made a hasty escape from that city; that for a period of years he preached his new religion in various parts of Asia Minor, Macedonia and Greece, chiefly in the big towns of Corinth and Ephesus; that he visited Jerusalem, was arrested, and suffered imprisonment at Rome. So much we may provisionally accept. We know nothing of his end; but 2 Timothy, an Epistle forged in the second century, implies that he was tried and put to death; and there is no evidence to the contrary. The Acts end abruptly on his arrival at Rome.

Apart from this modicum of common ground, the accounts of Paul given in the Acts and the Epistles are hopelessly at variance. In the Acts Paul, from the moment of his conversion, associates closely with the apostles, is always on good terms with them, and goes to Jerusalem to submit to their decision the question whether Gentile converts should be circumcised. The question is decided in the negative on the motion of Peter and James; and Paul carries their decision back to Antioch. Although he has won his case, he nevertheless in the next chapter (Acts xvi.) proceeds to circumcise Timothy, a convert of mixed parentage, and throughout conforms to the Jewish law. In the Epistles, on the other hand, and above all in Galatians, we are told a very different story. There we learn that Paul on his conversion saw nobody, and did not trouble for three years even to visit the apostles. After meeting Peter and James, he absents himself from Jerusalem for fourteen more years. Then he goes there to communicate privately to the heads of the Church the gospel he has been preaching to the Gentiles. They give him a free hand on the sole condition that the Gentile Churches contribute to help the poor of Jerusalem. Then, at Antioch, he has a

sharp passage of arms with Peter because the latter, at the instigation of "certain from James," has ceased to eat with Gentile converts. Thenceforward wigs are on the green. The rest of Galatians and a great part of Romans are given up to an attack on the Jewish law as not only useless, but pernicious. It is inconceivable that the author of these diatribes should have behaved with the meek conformity attributed to Paul in the Acts.

We cannot, however, assume that the picture in the Epistles is the true one. Both are equally likely to have been written up with a controversial purpose. To unearth the real Paul, it is necessary to analyse the relevant documents. Mr. L. Gordon Rylands, in his *Critical Analysis of the Four Chief Pauline Epistles*, has shown that Romans, 1 and 2 Corinthians, and Galatians each embody documents of different authorship, date and tendency, some going back to the first century, others definitely of the second. The proofs of composite authorship are as strong in the case of the Epistles as in that of the Pentateuch or the Gospels, and can be followed by a careful reader even in the English text.

Taking Romans first, Mr. Rylands points out that chapters i, 18-ii are different in style and doctrine from chapters iii-v. In the first case, we have an easy, flowing style; and the theme is the failure of both pagans and Jews to live up to the moral law. In the second, we have a harsh, jerky style, full of rhetorical questions and quibbles; and the purport is that the law is unfulfillable and useless, and that salvation depends on belief in the sacrifice of Christ and nothing else. In chapter vi the easy, flowing style reappears and continues, with two or three interruptions, to the end of chapter viii. The stress is no longer on vicarious atonement, but on moral regeneration through mystic union with Christ. In chapter ix the tone abruptly changes and a new topic is suddenly introduced—the calamities which have fallen on the Jews. The writer of this section is different from either of the two first; he is a Jew distressed by the miseries of his nation, and seems to have written soon after the catastrophe of 70 A.D. The harsh, jerky quibbler of iii-v chips in at intervals, e.g., in ix, 14-24 and 30-33. In chapters xii-xiv we have another writer again, entirely taken up with practical exhortation. Finally, the Epistle has no less than four different endings—xi, 33-36; xv, 33; xvi, 20; xvi, 25-27—proving that the whole is a patchwork.

Mr. Rylands gives reasons for thinking that the flowing passages of chapters i-ii and vi-viii were written first, and possibly by the real Paul. After the fall of Jerusalem, the distressed Jew of ix-xi, preoccupied by that calamity, added those chapters. Early in the second century the quibbling theologian of iii-v, in order to adapt the Epistle for use in the Catholic Church, interpolated and re-edited it; and there were some later additions of less importance. Mr. Rylands tentatively identifies the author of ix-xi with the Apollos of the Acts: all we can say is that it is possible. He suggests no identification for the quibbler; but as one of the latter's mannerisms is to fire questions at his readers, and to answer "God forbid!" we may nickname this gentleman "God Forbid."

Mr. Rylands shows in his book that Paul, Apollos and God Forbid all had a hand in 1 Corinthians, and traces the two last in parts, respectively, of 2 Corinthians and Galatians. These two Epistles, however, contain nothing by Paul himself. In a further article I will discuss the bearing of Mr. Rylands' analysis on the actual part played by Paul in the history of Christianity.

ARCHIBALD ROBERTSON

(To be continued)

Herbal and Other Remedies

We dig our graves with our teeth! The pleasures of the table lead us all astray. We enjoy sinning together, "but the sin that we do by two and two we must pay for one by one!"

Temperate we are, however, nowadays!

The annual consumption of flesh meat by 223 inhabitants of Alnwick Castle, Northumberland, during the reign of the fifth Earl Percy, was "109 fat beeves, 24 lean ones, 647 sheep and 40 lambs, 28 calves, and 25 hogs." (*Hill Side and Border Sketches*, Vol. II., p. 313 (1847) by W. H. Maxwell).

Maxwell thinks this consumption of flesh excessive—Reducing these 873 cattle to dead meat (Minimum weight) and averaging, I find it works out at a daily ration of three pounds per head—and he contrasts it with that prevalent in the reign of Henry VIII, by citing the allowance made to a nursemaid:—

Breakfast: A chine of beef a loaf, a gallon of ale.

Dinner: Boiled beef, a slice of roast meat; a gallon of ale.

Supper: A mess of porridge, a piece of mutton, a fine loaf, a gallon of ale.

Left on the table to ensure comfort after supper:
A Manchette loaf, a gallon of ale and half a gallon of wine.

Maxwell gives no authority for this quotation, and makes no comment, he simply leads us to believe that at each meal this young lady would consume one gallon—16 half pints—of strong ale, and that, at the end of a perfect day, she solaced herself in the evening with a further 16 half pints of ale, and 16 noggins of wine!

To Disraeli—"Health would seem to be a state of unnatural existence." And our State Church reminds us, every Sunday morning and evening, that "there is no health in us"! Facts which overcome us like a summer's cloud without our special wonder!

Tea, coffee, cocoa, and medicinal herbs, the cost of getting from overseas, to-day, in comparison to what it once was, is yet considerable. Whether these things are essentially necessary, may be questioned, but there is no shadow of doubt whatever about their economic, commercial values. For these goods our wares are bartered. Appetites, therefore, had to be specially created for some of them, e.g., opium.

Between 1610-1660 tea at £6 to £10 per pound was considered an ungodly luxury. People without the wherewithal shouted "sour grapes," and argued that Providence had provided in every country that which was requisite and necessary as well for the body as the soul, of its inhabitants. Yet, these same people, that voiced these sentiments, accepted a foreign Christ!

To go from home in search of food was to many like flying in the face of Providence.

The poet Tusser, speaking of gardens, says, "We grow 42 herbs for the kitchen, 14 for salads, 11 to boil or butter, a number for windows or pots, 17 to still in Summer, and 25 necessary herbs to grow in the garden for physic."

And Harrison (1534-1593) in his *Elizabethan England*, says, "Many strange herbs, plants, and annual fruits are daily brought unto us, from the Indies, America, Taprobane, Canary Islands and all parts of the world: the which, albeit that in respect of the constitution of our bodies they do not grow for us (because that God hath bestowed sufficient commodities upon every country for her own necessities) . . . but herein I find some causes of just complaint, for that we extol their uses so far that we fall into contempt of our own which are in truth more beneficial . . ." And "these herbs we tread under our feet, whose forces if we knew, and could apply them to our necessities, we would honour and have in reverence." And he doubts not "that the use of outlandish drugs has blinded the physicians of England."

For the space of six hundred years the Colewort was a medicine in Rome for all diseases, so he thinks, "his value was thoroughly known in those parts."

Harrison's garden had "an area of three-hundred square feet of ground. Of the variety of simples notwithstanding my small ability, there are near three-hundred of one sort and another contained therein, no one of them being common or usually to be had."

The women of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries (wives of Parsons and Squires, mostly) were real physicians, and the Herbarism, on which their pharmacy was founded, remained long in high repute.

These women were satisfied with lessons learned from experience, but wise men of the period wanted to know why some herbs cured certain diseases, and they found a satisfactory explanation in the doctrine of *signatures*. Plants to cure a disease, must, in form or colour resemble the parts affected, e.g., (1) colour: yellow flowers were best for yellow jaundice. (2) Form: Walnuts are good for the head, because the walnut in its shape and form resembles the head, and "its kernel hath the very figure of the brain, and therefore is very profitable for the brain, and resists poisons." *Signatures* and *Similaris* (a hair of the dog that bit you!) are akin. *Similaris* is a doctrine having greater application in the mental sphere, e.g., Sin came into the world because of a tree causing the fall of man, and Christ was crucified on a tree, to save man. This doctrine of *similaris*, applied theologically is interesting, and instructive. That there should be doctrinally a family relationship between "a hair of the dog that bit you," and Christianity!!

Some old Wesleyans have yet great faith in John Wesley's *Primitive Physic*. Here follow a few weird decoctions, etc., picked haphazard from this book and a few others.

The curative property of "water procured by distillation from a peck of garden shell-snails and a quart of worms, and a few other things."

Wesley's "Hot Brick," Bishop Cloyne's "glass of tar-water," and so many panaceas all had their day, and ceased to be. The "tar-water" deserves special mention. It became so popular in restaurants, that a glass of "tar-water" was as commonly called for as a dish of tea or coffee. A nameless poet wrote:—

Who dare divide what pious Cloyne hath done?
The Church shall rise and vindicate her son;
She tells us all her Bishops shepherds are
And shepherds heal their rotten sheep with tar.

Edmund Burke was a great advocate of warm water drinking. He kept his kettle singing to him while he imbibed warm water till he grew well, drinking sometimes five or six quarts of it.

Taking millipedes was an excellent medicine for the eyes. Spiders' webs were good for ague. Powdered wood-lice were taken in wine by asthmatical folks, but a safer plan was that of making pills of the vermin and swallowing them alive, "which is very easy and conveniently done, for they naturally roll themselves up upon being touched and slip down the throat without any taste."

Pliny (23-79) recommends wood-lice and green frogs boiled down as a remedy for paralysis.

To cure hydrophobia: the liver of the dog must be grilled and eaten by the injured person. A fox's tongue cut out of the living animal was supposed to be all powerful in curing all manner of diseases. Warts are easily got rid of if they are rubbed with stolen bacon. If the bacon be honestly come by there is no virtue in it. Cripples can be cured if rubbed with five stolen turnips.

But, something too much of this!

To conclude:—

Scott tells of finding, in a small town on the English side of the Borders, his knowledgeable blacksmith, who had some veterinary skill, set up as a Doctor of

(Continued on foot of next column)

A Light that Failed and Another Light that Dawns

(Continued from page 167)

AFTER more than twenty years of preaching of the above doctrines, accompanied by singing, dancing, shaking-shimmering, etc., the world continued on its even way—laughed, sneered and despised this poor creature and her followers. Her story did not take on—it failed to catch the popular favour. Collections fell off—funds got low—and the poor little company became discouraged and disheartened. Sickness brought on by hunger and privations and lack of comfort beset them. They ceased to go out to the world and waited its coming to them.

The world failed to come. They settled down in the corner of a park kindly lent them by the Hon. Algernon Herbert, M.P. And then, like a punctured ship, they sank down gradually to be swallowed up in the great sea of the mistaken and misunderstood.

Mrs. Girling's last letter to me reveals a sad state of suffering and want. After a silence of many months, there came a letter from one of her faithful followers named Osborne. In this letter he tells me of Mrs. Girling's death—but he assured me that they did not despair, for she had distinctly assured them all that she would soon come back, and that they were to patiently await her reappearance, for it was not far off.

They waited on, but she came not from the grave wherein they had silently bestowed her.

I dare say that all of them have been gathered into that wonderful silence that awaits us all.

Poor mistaken Mary Ann Girling, misreading the simple marks on her body as of such momentous import. Thus she passed into the vast limbo of the forgotten and despised Messiahs.

But the crop of would-be Messiahs fails not, which makes it seem that one half the world is busy trying to set the other half right.

While Mary Ann Girling lay a dying in 1884, there came into great prominence another female, who was destined to repeat the self-same mission of the Messiah-producing business. This lady, Mrs. Annie Besant, had parted from her husband, the Rev. Frank Besant, brother of the late Sir Walter Besant, and had to give up her two darling children. But not because of a call from God—for she had written *The Gospel of Atheism, My Path to Atheism* and Part II. of *The Freethinker's Text Book*.

Also she had dared to publish, in partnership with the late Charles Bradlaugh, M.P., the then most terrible book: Dr. Knowlton's *Fruits of Philosophy*.

This last *crime* was the last straw that broke the back of her husband's patience and he sued in the High Courts for the whole charge of the two children as he argued that Mrs. Besant was an unfit person to have charge even of her own children.

The Master of the Rolls upheld that suit and granted Mr. Besant his request.

There began one of the bitterest struggles conceivable.

Dr. Marie Stopes is too young to know or realize

(Continued from preceding column)

humankind. He told Sir Walter that his practice was very sure and perfectly orthodox, for he depended entirely on "two simples—laudamy and Calomy," "Simples with a vengeance," said the poet, "but do you never happen to kill any of your patients, John?"

"Kill? Oh aye, maybe sae! Whiles they die, and whiles no—but its the will o' Providence. Onyhow, your honour, it wad be lang before it makes up for Flodden."

GEORGE WALLACE

the terror of those days, though her case was hard enough.

Mrs. Besant's children were taken from her, and the world stood in two camps of sympathy and hate.

But we stood by the side of Mrs. Besant and rejoiced at each powerful and stinging tirade she issued against the robbers of her mother's rights especially the open letter she wrote to Lord Justice Jessell, the Master of the Rolls at that time.

Little did we think in our rejoicings and applause that we should ever live to witness what we have in the life of Mrs. Besant. Imagine this once grief-stricken, sorrowing mother living to enact the same process by stealing two children from their parents. And actually carrying her claims to a High Court in India, and winning the case as her husband had won against her.

Oh! The irony of Fate! In her case it was a parent who won and regained his own children—but in this second case it is a stranger, namely Mrs. Annie Besant, who succeeds in winning the children of others from the rightful possession of their parents.

For what purpose? To make one of them into a brand new up-to-date Messiah! She was to decide which of the two should be the right one by watching their conduct and capacity.

But her pride was pricked, for Buddha called one of them home to Nirvana, and the left one thus became the right one.

So under the special stage management of Mrs. Annie Besant, the once weeping mother, this new Messiah is to have a good start in the *shape* of a ready-made and orthodox set of twelve apostles, and these same are to be theatrically arranged in a perfect circle of golden houses with the real live ready-made Messiah planted in a golden house thickly studded with precious stones in the very centre of the sacred circle.

Mrs. Annie Besant has managed to get into the magic ring of the twelve apostles, and she has cunningly chosen the wilds of Scotland for the calm habitation of this lucky gang of merchants in wisdom and philosophy from the misty East.

One wonders if this new discoverer of new Messiahs ever felt any twitch of conscience spring up within her from the bitter memory of those days of terrible agony when she had her own darlings torn from her by the cruel law. Some of us vividly remember the weeping-voiced Mrs. Besant and the tearful multitudes that hung on her scorching eloquence of those stirring days.

But the River of the mighty Limbo is deep and wide, and it is perhaps merely a matter of time for even some of us to witness the going down to this new Light of Asia among the other foolish lights of the world, and the ages that have had their short flickering shine, and have at last snuffed out into the darkness of Hades. Oh! this wonderful crop of easy promising reformers! Great is the crowd thereof.

Oh! wonderful good-tempered old world to stand them all as they appear with such wonderful patience.

These lights that fail!

(Reprinted) EUREKA

The Crusaders consumed with heedless prodigality their stores of water and provision; their numbers exhausted the inland country; the sea was remote, the Greeks were unfriendly, and the Christians of every sect fled before the voracious and cruel rapine of their brethren. In the dire necessity of famine they sometimes roasted and devoured the flesh of their infant or adult captives. Among the Turks and Saracens the idolaters of Europe were rendered more odious by the name and reputation of cannibals; the spies who introduced themselves into the kitchen of Bohamond were shown several human bodies turning on spits.—Gibbon.

Correspondence

DETECTIVE FICTION AND THE WAR

SIR,—“S.H.” apparently concedes the point I set out to establish, namely, that if the sum total of public energy devoted to solving murder mysteries had been directed to such reading channels as I exemplified, that public would have been better fitted to influence pre-war policy. Surely there is more social and humanistic value in trying to discern why the world is moving towards war than in guessing who committed imaginary murders. He makes no attempt to refute this, and says some people, deprived of their dope, would not read anything. If that is so, it substantiates my remark that those who predicted the decline of detective fiction overestimated public intelligence.

Running away from the point, he make a feeble counter stroke, saying it requires some intelligence even to read murders. So it does to read *Comic Cuts*, but the question is whether life offers more fruitful channels for its use.

His concern for “logical conclusions” is rather belated, since I have already convicted him of the travesty “all fiction is dope”. He now travesties me a second time, saying that according to me “one novel in 100 has value.” The remark of mine which presumably gave rise to this logical conclusion (of his own brand) was that 99 per cent of fiction is dope. Since when was fiction synonymous with novels? It is wide enough to embrace a message-bearing play like *The Apple Cart* (to give one example of one useful type only).

“I do not see that escapist reading affects me adversely,” he says (*italics mine*). At last we agree.

G. H. TAYLOR

FREETHINKERS AND CHURCH PARADE

SIR,—On Sunday, March 23, the National Day of Prayer, I was compelled to go on Church Parade, so I had no option but went. On arrival at the church I refused to enter, as this is the rule in the army. On my refusal to go in I was told to take a walk round the town, till five minutes to twelve—just one hour. I did so, went into a forces' canteen had a couple of cakes and a cup of tea, started, or got drawn into, an argument on religion in general, and Christianity in particular, and finished up by having my tea and cakes paid for by somebody else. I went back to the church gates, and marched with the Christian Soldiers back to camp; when I told them what I had done. You would have laughed to see the expressions of surprise on their faces; evidently God had treated me better than they, and they are greatly concerned about it, as they, while in Church, had been imagining, my standing outside awaiting them. What a joke!

I am very pleased to receive my *Freethinker* every week, as it is good to see one paper still telling the truth without fear or favour both to people and them who call themselves leaders of the people.

S. W.

[We congratulate the writer on his firmness. Soldiers and sailors must obey the order to appear on parade. But no officer has the power to force them into Church or to take a part in any church service. And a firm, respectful, assertion of one's legal right usually has its effect.—ED.]

TO THE MEN OF THE FORCES

All men joining any branch of the military, naval or air services, and who have no definitely religious belief, have the legal right to register as Atheist, Agnostic, Freethinker, or Rationalist, without giving any explanation whatsoever. If they are already registered under some religious heading they have the legal right to apply for a suitable alteration. If difficulties are put in the way of their avowal being registered as requested, appeal should be made to the superior officer. The armed forces will be the better for men placing a value upon intellectual integrity.

Should difficulties be experienced, or the right to be registered as desired refused, a man joining any branch of the services is justified in refusing to sign what to him is a false declaration, and information should be forwarded to the General Secretary, National Secular Society, 68 Farringdon Street, London, E.C.4.

West London Branch, N.S.S.

THE Annual General Meeting of the West London Branch of the N.S.S. was held at 24 James Street, W.1, on Saturday, March 29.

The following officers were elected: Mr. E. C. Saphin, re-elected President; Mr. J. Horowitz, Hon. Treasurer; Mr. G. Barnes, Hon. Secretary, 1 Jerdan Place, S.W.6. The Standing Committee was re-elected.

The Report showed that evacuation and the calling-up to the Forces have seriously affected the membership; but in spite of these war conditions, meetings were held in Hyde Park on Thursdays and Sundays from May to September, while during the winter, Sunday afternoon lectures were given once a month at the house of one of the members—Miss Woolstone. Several new members have been enrolled.

Three prominent West London members have died during the year—Mr. C. Tuson, who was the Hon. Secretary, Mr. G. Bedborough, and Mr. Dunn, the Literature Secretary, who was killed by enemy action.

The late Secretary, Mrs. Buxton, an indefatigable worker for the Society, has left the neighbourhood.

The financial position of the Branch gives grounds for satisfaction.

Obituary

MR. ABRAHAM AARON COHEN

It is with deep regret that I have to record the passing, on March 24, of Mr. Abraham Aaron Cohen, late of Princes Avenue, Liverpool. Mr. Cohen was very well known in Liverpool as a forthright militant Freethinker and Atheist. Though lacking platform experience; by his ability in debate, and unflinching courage as a protagonist of the Freethought cause, he has cleared away most of the deadwood from the minds of a great many of his opponents; a goodly number of whom (myself included), have since become adherents to Rationalism.

He spent freely of his money and time in the Rationalist cause, and although he took a rather grave and pessimistic view of the human trend, he liked to style himself an “Isimmist”: his definition of the above being “a pessimist with a sense of humour.”

His passing at the early age of 48 has created a gap in the ranks of Freethought this city can ill-afford, and although some concession was given or taken with regard to funeral rites (after cremation) his death-bed was truly infidel.—WILLIAM A. EVANS

ERNEST ANDERSON

WEST HAM Freethinkers, especially of the older generation, will regret to hear of the passing of Ernest Anderson, a veteran with many years of service in that area. He was doing duty during the days of Charles Bradlaugh, and was one of the earliest members of the Plaistow Branch of the N.S.S. He took an active part in the Trade Union movement, being one of the founders of the Clerk's Union, and a voluntary member of the General Workers Union. In 1922 he was elected to the West Ham Council, and during the whole of his public life never hid his Freethought opinions. A regular reader of the *Freethinker* for many years he occasionally contributed to its pages. His remains were cremated at the City of London Crematorium, on Saturday, April 5, where before an assembly of relatives a Secular Service was read by the General Secretary of the N.S.S.

SUNDAY LECTURE NOTICES, Etc.

LONDON
OUTDOOR

NORTH LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (White Stone Pond, Hampstead): 11.30, Sunday, Mr. L. Ebury.

COUNTRY
INDOOR

CHESTER-LE-STREET (The Bridge): 11.0, Mr. J. T. Brighton—A Lecture.

DARLINGTON (Market Steps): 7.0, Mr. J. T. Brighton—“Easter.”

NEWCASTLE-ON-TYNE (Bigg Market): 7.0, Monday, Mr. J. T. Brighton—A Lecture.

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