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Editor: CHAPMAN COHEN

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VIEWS AND OPINIONS

Humanism

CONSIDERABLE interest was shown when the B.B.C. announced that it had arranged for three "talks" on Humanism, and when it was made public that Professor Huxley—who has no belief in, and no use for, gods of any sort—the interest was intensified. But those who knew and understood the policy of the B.B.C. waited for an exhibition of its inevitable double crossing. And it came. To begin with, there were not *three* talks in exposition of "Humanism" but two. For one of the three—the last—was by J. H. Oldham (a religious preacher we fancy), and while the other two speakers were confined strictly to an exposition of their own beliefs, the Christian speaker was permitted to criticise the other two, who were given no chance of replying. This means, we take it, that while the Christian speaker was permitted to see the script of the unbelievers, the unbelievers were not permitted to see that of the Christian. And, as we shall see, so long as we use the term Humanism with regard to its historical origin and influence, Christianity—real Christianity—has only one link of association therewith, and that is enmity. But one cannot expect the B.B.C. to deal in religious matters with a great degree of honesty. Only the other day Mr. Tom Harrison, the regular writer in the "Observer" (January 2) on Radio matters, after rapping Mr. Thurtle over the knuckles for obediently championing the methods of the B.B.C., pointed out that in the case of one of his own manuscripts, the "comparative intelligence of children enjoying public school education and those who had no opportunity of higher education," was deleted as unsuitable for broadcasting. Presumably, it might strengthen the demand for all schools, high and low, being open to all without respect for either money or position. We do not sympathise with Mr. Harrison; the cure is at hand if he and others will apply it. The insult by our modern censorship—the most cowardly that exists—should be met by responsible speakers refusing to be censored by a body of men whose capacity appears to be greater for mischief than for anything else. But the Reith policy still holds and principle must give way to advertisement.

The article by Dr. Murray does not call for much comment. It was pleasant and amiable, but said nothing that a modern Christian would not endorse, with the saving and, in the circumstances, nullifying lesson that man is groping his way towards "the good," an opening which a Christian advocate would not fail to take advantage. The better phrase would be the *search* for truth. That implies strength and intelligence. The other is apt to mislead as to the nature of truth and to over-emphasise the weakness of man. We can get quite enough of the weakness of man from any clergyman. And "Humanism" was born in a burst of human courage and daring. It was that which

aroused the hostility of the mediæval Church, and which has excited Christian leaders ever since. Having looked at the texts of his two opponents, Mr. Oldham naturally found room for an attack.

Professor Huxley's article is on the whole very good, and if we offer criticism it is not without appreciation of its quality, and while we believe that he will agree with the criticism offered, that criticism is necessary for the sake of others. Take this sentence:

Most members of the Humanist Movement in America and the old-established Rationalist Movement in this country would agree with me. The Humanist is one, whose real faith is in the possibilities of human experience and achievement, rather than in a Supernatural Being or a revealed religion. There were Humanists in the Renaissance, and also among the Greeks.

Criticism here turns on the terms chosen rather than on the speaker's belief and meaning. But that does not rob the criticism of its value. There is, for example, the phrase "old-established Rationalist Movement in this country." But Rationalism had its origin, not in its opposition to religion, but to the attempt to use reason in the interpretation of Christianity, as against the blind acceptance of the interpretation given by the Catholic Church, an authority that passed from the Roman to other branches of Christianity. The oldest form of organised opposition to religion, or at least to the demand to attend to affairs of this world and leave those of the next alone, is in this country little more than a century old, and the historically correct term here is "Secularism." Rationalists might be found inside or outside the Established Church from the fourteenth century onward.

One must pause again at the phrase "There were Humanists in the Renaissance" (14th century). Bearing in mind that the Renaissance was in its essence a throwing-off of the shackles of the Church and a return to the art, philosophy and science of ancient Greece and Rome, and with the additions of the science, philosophy and art of the Mohammedan world, it is rather startling to be told that there were Humanists in the Renaissance, as though there were but few. The Renaissance *was* Humanism—take that away and there is nothing left worth bothering about. More, but for the discovery of the ancient learning, backed by the art and science of the Mohammedan world, it is difficult to see from whence the awakening of Europe could have come. As the Christian Church borrowed its mythology from the ancient pagan world and afterwards struggled to destroy the sources of its teachings, so it became the set policy of Christian writers and preachers to do what they could to prevent the real sources of Christianity being known by the public. With the older Church, the hatred of the ancient learning was very strong, and by the twelfth century a knowledge of the ancient learning seemed as near extinction as the civilisation of parts of Europe looked under the rule of

Hitler. By that time there were only two roads from which relief might come. There was the living and progressive section of the Mohammedan world, where the learning of old Greece had been cherished and developed, and there was the Christian-buried treasure of Greek science, art and philosophy. And, as Addington Symonds puts it, "The culture of the classics had to be re-appropriated before the movement of the modern mind could begin; before the nations could start upon a new career of progress, the chasm between the old and new world had to be bridged." He continues:

The Church recognised her deadliest foes in literature: . . . Not only were the Greek and Latin masterpieces the stronghold of a mythology that had to be erased from the popular mind; not only was their morality antagonistic to the principles of Christian ethics, in addition to these grounds for hatred and mistrust, the classics idealised a form of human life which the new faith regarded as worthless. What was culture in comparison with the salvation of the soul? Why should time be spent upon the dreams of poets when every minute might be well employed in pondering the precepts of the gospels? What was the use of making this life refined and agreeable by study when it formed but an insignificant prelude to an eternity wherein mere mundane learning would be valueless? Why raise questions about man's condition on this earth when the creeds had to be defined and expounded, when the nature of God and the relations of the human soul to its Creator had to be established? It was easy to pass from this state of mind to the belief that learning in itself was impious. "Let us shun the lying fables of poets," cries Gregory of Tours, "and forgo the wisdom of sages lest we incur the doom of endless death by sentence of our Lord."

Gregory's voice was one in myriads, and in disguised form one can hear the same teaching from the Churches of to-day.

It was this kind of teaching that ruled Europe for centuries and which had to be broken down. As one writer puts it, the work of the Humanists was to disinter the buried classics, to restore a lost means of culture, to recapture an ancient charm of style, and a broader humanity of spirit. And in this task no country contributed so much in those early centuries as did Italy. A word of recognition ought to be made in this direction to our own Roger Bacon, who was rewarded by the curses of the Church, and might have ended his life in prison had it not been for his friendship with the Pope, who was probably as great a sceptic as himself.

The very term "Renaissance"—the awakening—was in itself significant. It was a veritable re-birth, a new manifestation of the power of man, of the value of learning, of the right to inquire, of the ability of man to carve out his own destiny. What is called by the Christian historian the Reformation was an offshoot of the Renaissance, but an unfortunate one. For the Roman Church was forced to undergo a bastard reformation of itself. Some of the more glaring scandals were not abandoned, but they were not flaunted in the face of the people. It is not a too wild speculation to say that the Protestant Reformation saved Roman Catholicism from a rapid decay to extinction. As it happened, the Reformation and Counter-

Reformation gave Christianity a new lease of life. The intolerance of Rome was replaced by the intolerance of the Protestant Churches. And the net result was a drag placed on independent thinking that we have not yet outgrown. The B.B.C. is a proof of that. Measured by the Roman Church, the Protestant Churches may appear more liberal, but, in saving Christianity, enlightened progress was retarded for at least two centuries.

Some of our readers may think that what has been said is a little out of place when dealing with Professor Huxley's broadcast. But the rather startling remark that "there were Humanists at the Renaissance" distorted the facts. Humanism was the very heart of the movement. The issue raised was the issue which exists to-day, the power of man by his own strength and his own knowledge, or the whining to an imaginary God about the weaknesses and helplessness of man, of which the B.B.C., through its paid preachers, furnish examples every day. Humanism is a challenge to religion in all its forms and to the Christian form in particular, and it should be presented as such.

The Power of Words

I hardly think that Professor Huxley would raise a serious objection to what I have said; on the other hand, one cannot expect that the B.B.C. would have permitted the publishing of the significance of the Renaissance on the lines I have followed. The "Anvil" would have arisen in anger, the Brains Trust would have been shocked, and the public would have been reminded that the B.B.C. cannot do or say anything that conflicted with the "Christian tradition." It may even be that the B.B.C. would say that Professor Huxley's script was not interfered with. But there is an old saying that one needs a long spoon when dining with the devil, and when a man writes for an organisation such as the B.B.C. he is apt to play the part of censor to himself. He recognises the situation and acts accordingly. He leaves out much that he would like to put in, and puts in things that he would rather leave out. We have the authority of the Bible that one cannot touch pitch without being defiled.

To what other situation can we accord the closing words of Professor Huxley that Humanism "seems to me a truly religious point of view, and one which, when time and place and the right men combine, could become the basis for a definite organised religion"? That may be so, but in that case all the goodness, all the propulsive quality that Humanism possesses will be taken from it. For words are more than the *expression* of thought; they are also the condition of sustained thought, and without them abstract thought would be impossible. Words form the material by which we are able to talk to ourselves. Words are at once the idol of the mob and the servant of the exact and fearless thinker. They may be the instrument of progress or chains that forbid movement. Words lead and mislead. And the world has surely seen enough evil flowing from the use of "religion" to desire a better term, one that shall be free from the hatred and brutalities that "religion" conjures up.

We will deal with some other points in our next issue.

CHAPMAN COHEN.

By the way, if anyone wishes to see how much faith a Christian has in religion, when he tells you that he is full of sin and uncleanness, tell him that he looks as though he is, and see how he takes it.

THE ANCIENT DAYS OF ERIN

THE eminent archæologist, Professor R. A. S. Macalister's "Ancient Ireland" is not one of those romantic volumes which magnify the achievements of the Emerald Isle in days of old. As a matter of fact, this work (Methuen, 1935; 10s. 6d.) claims that the exalted opinions of Irish scholarship and culture so frequently expressed are almost devoid of foundation.

With the departure of the frigid conditions of the Ice Age, a few plants and animals that had survived in Southern Ireland slowly spread over the desolated north, and Erin was gradually repopulated. Climatal conditions more favourable than those of to-day supervened and were, for a time, operative in this island of anomalies, but in subsequent centuries an enervating climate, according to Dr. Macalister, accounts for the fact that the Irish who emigrate almost invariably do much better than those that remain in their native isle.

"Nature," he observes, "was surely in a jesting mood when she fashioned this wonderful island. The people of Ireland appear incomprehensible to their neighbours; it could hardly be otherwise, for they live in an incomprehensible country of paradoxes. Nature has here doubled the parts of the spendthrift and the skinflint. She bestowed rivers upon the country which are great, but just not great enough for the demands which modern industry would fain make of them. She was niggardly in coal but lavish in its heartbreaking and wasteful substitute peat." Again, there is much rich soil, but a superabundance of barren land, and the copious rainfall restricts most of the soil to pasture.

It is only in the north-eastern region of Ireland that the climate proves stimulating, and there the most energetic and enterprising of her people continue to dwell. As our author intimates: "It was the north-eastern quarter that was first divided into shires, so that the rigours of local government might the more easily be applied to its turbulent inhabitants. It was the north-eastern quarter which, in desperation, England finally cleared of its inhabitants and filled with colonists pledged to her own service."

So far as at present known, the first human settlers in Erin dwelt on the Antrim coast. Rude food collectors of molluscs, nuts and fruits, perhaps the presence of flint for their implements proved attractive. These people lived in a period intermediate to the Old Stone Age and the New—in Mesolithic times. Unfortunately, however, no human bones have so far been associated with the finds in the implement-bearing deposits.

As later evidences indicate: "It has ever been the fate of Ireland to be the cockpit of two opposing peoples, which, after they have come together and fused into one, presently find themselves obliged to meet a fresh opponent." One invading stock after another has occasioned bloodshed, devastation and slavery, and Macalister views even the future of Ireland with grave misgiving. For whatever alien power may invade Ireland for the purpose of overthrowing England, the conflict "would bring upon the land a destruction that would stamp her flat." The present and impending devastation of Italy certainly suggests the fate of an "independent" Republic, such as the Free State, with no natural defences comparable with those of the Italian peninsula.

Dr. Macalister constantly deplors the absence of materials for the reconstruction of Ireland's past, and this deficiency has been intensified by the shameful destruction by fire of the Dublin Public Record Office in 1922, as its archives contained a wealth of irreplaceable documents awaiting examination. Also the disgraceful incendiarism of the time of troubles occasioned the loss of many artistic treasures and other invaluable records stored in country mansions, indispensable to archæological investigation.

The conversion of Ireland to Christianity was no astounding

miracle, for it extended over four centuries and, even then, left the peasantry in possession of a fondly cherished array of pagan survivals which they treasure to this very day. The traditions of the earliest Christian missions are vague and unconvincing, but apparently Palladius, Cælestius and, above all, St. Patrick, played a prominent part in Ireland's conversion to Catholicism. But even in those later periods of which we possess the fullest information, the truth is shrouded in uncertainty. As our author observes: "The Bronze Age in Ireland is illustrated by a rich store of relics. . . . The Pagan Iron Period is less well 'documented.' But when we cross the borderline into the time of Christianity we are met at first with a rebuff. So far as tangible monuments go, an almost deathlike silence shrouds the first centuries of Christianity in Ireland. We hear of the establishment of churches and monasteries, of schools of art and of learning: but we seek in vain for actual evidence of their existence. No recognisable monument marks the graves of Cormac, Loigueire MacNeill, Patrick . . . or any other of the men who made history at this time."

The Professor concludes that, despite all the efforts that have been made and the hypotheses advanced concerning its genesis and development, "the true history of Christian art in Celtic Ireland is utterly unknown."

Macalister's chapter on "The Men of the Bays" is a deeply instructive account of the Norse invasion of Erin. Owing to unrest in Scandinavia, the Danes in their piratical expeditions plundered the coastlands of North-West Europe and sometimes established settlements. The portable property of Erin seems to have been stored in the monasteries, and the sea rovers plundered the religious houses unsparingly. From the 9th to the 11th centuries of our era, life on the coasts was ever insecure and the rivers afforded ample scope for Norse incursions into the inland regions.

Nevertheless, as Cardinal Newman himself admitted, the Danes were not so black as they have been painted. Culture certainly increased in Ireland, and the Vikings built Dublin, Limerick and Waterford and established their kingdom in the capital. Yet, according to the monastic chronicles, the country had never known such dire distress, although Dublin remained for a prolonged period the centre of a Norse dominion. As Dr. Macalister shrewdly says: "A plundered monastery is not the place to which we should go in search of an impartial description of the plunderers. And the histories which we possess are monastic records or based on monastic records." In truth, it appears probable that many of the raids were those of the Irish themselves, while many of the Nordic newcomers settled peaceably in Ireland and intermarried with the native population.

"Ancient Ireland" contains many other interesting, informative and suggestive features. Erin's monuments, churches, castles and other antiquities are reproduced in 24 plates and in nearly a score of other excellent illustrations, and the work as a whole constitutes an important contribution to archæological history, and supplements its author's earlier volume on "The Archæology of Ireland."

T. F. PALMER.

A LETTER TO A SENSIBLE YOUNG LADY STILL "UNDER THE INFLUENCE"

DEAR ISOBEL,—It was a pity that our interesting conversation a few days ago had to be cut short. There were so many points that needed to be thrashed out, and we had only really managed to get the points clear, without discussing them in detail when you had to go.

You will remember what you said about inspiration? You had been to hear a parson speaking on the colour-bar question the night before, and you said that he, as a minister of religion,

was able to speak with an inspiration no Atheist could enjoy. When I put it to you that you had never heard an Atheist speaker, to make you competent to judge, you admitted this to be so, which goes to show how easy it is to make statements—quite sincerely, of course—without evidence to support them.

That is the difficulty with a great number of intelligent young people like yourself. Being brought up in the traditional Christian atmosphere (fortunately, in your case, not the Catholic one), this atmosphere inevitably colours your judgments. Although science teaching during your recent schooldays convinced you that much of the Bible is not only untrue, but grotesquely so, being the work of people who were little better than savages in their knowledge of our world and the universe, you were, nevertheless, impressed by the exaggerated importance of the so-called Book of God.

This duality of teaching—modern science, alongside the ancient fables of the Bible—causes difficulty for many of your own age. You are impressed by the modern scientific way of investigating life, and all that goes with it, yet you are (I hope loosely) chained by the obsolete religious idea that behind it all is the hand of God. When you think that a parson can speak with inspiration, but an Atheist cannot, you display traces of another obsolete idea—the idea that good and God are necessarily associated.

Good and God are associated, of course, in the moral teaching that is given in most of our schools, but this is only because the clergy have a grip on our schools and they won't let go until they are forced, because they know that if good and God are allowed to be separate ideas in the minds of children, those children will grow up to prefer good rather than God; and that would be bad for the Churches. But many men have proved that they can be good without God, and as inspiration, especially in a speaker, comes from the belief that one is doing good to somebody, or to something, perhaps you can now see that an Atheist can speak with the same inspiration as a parson.

Or you may be asking, "What good can an Atheist think he is doing?" Let me tell you. When the parson talks, he often thinks he is doing good by asking people to put their trust in God, and he often asks people to do good, or to do right, for God's sake. Many ask it "for Christ's sake," which is a common ending to many prayers. But the Atheist believes that it is better for men and women to do good, or to do right, for the sake of other people, rather than to please God, who doesn't seem to care much for people, if one looks around the world. The Atheist thinks it better to do good for the sake of others because one is then more likely to do the right sort of good. It is fairly easy to know what people want and need, but nobody knows really how to do good for God's sake, because nobody knows anything about God.

The same remarks apply to inspiration. One can be greatly inspired to do good work by the secular outlook. The secular outlook means an attitude to life which teaches men to depend upon themselves rather than upon a God they know nothing about. Let me draw a little picture.

On one side we see a parson, preaching to a man who is in difficulty. He urges the man to go down on his knees and ask God for help. Remember, please, that nobody knows anything about God. But the parson evidently blames God for the man's difficulty, by what is known as innuendo, for he suggests that God might remove the difficulty if the man will cringe on his knees and ask God nicely. On the other side we see the man again, still kneeling in prayer, his difficulty unsolved. At his side an Atheist urges him to get up on his feet, to stand up like a man and overcome his difficulty by grappling with it. Which picture inspires you most, Isobel; which attitude is most likely to succeed in solving the difficulty?

Most parsons know quite well that facing difficulties is the only way to overcome them. The parson doesn't really believe

that grovelling on one's knees can solve our problems. But he likes people to do it, because when they grovel before an imaginary God they are also grovelling before the parson. A lot of parsons like that. It gives them a sense of importance. But it would be better for the world if parsons developed a sense of importance in more useful ways. A little story might help to show that even parsons do not really believe in prayer.

A lorry driver was trying to change his wheel after having a puncture, but he could not get the spare wheel on. While he was cursing pretty warmly a parson came along. "My good man," he said, "why not stop swearing and get on your knees, and try a prayer to the Lord?" The driver decided he would. After praying a few seconds he grabbed the wheel again, and on it went, quite easily. The parson stared in astonishment, and exclaimed, "Well, well. That's the first time I've known it work!"

Another habit of parsons and religious people is to wait until inspired Atheists have done the donkey work in putting over new ideas, and then to rush in and claim the ideas as their own. Your minister at the colour-bar meeting was doing this. Christian folk did not start the movement to treat coloured people as human brothers. Their religion strongly upheld the idea that white people were superior and that coloured people should be their slaves—until other people, who cared more for men than for God, compelled them to modify that idea. Even now, many Christians are not very fond of the "brotherhood" idea.

In sex matters, too (by the way, I am glad to see you have got a copy of my book), parsons have been very much against letting young people understand themselves. They have saturated the subject with "sin," and it has taken years of hard work by Freethinking people to make this subject popular. It is barely respectable even to-day but, thanks to Freethinkers, you are much better informed than your mother was at nineteen.

But the Editor is frowning now, because he hasn't a lot of space, so we will hope to talk over some other points another time. Meanwhile, I shall be happy if, as Jack Warner would say, what I have written in this letter just "makes you think."

F. J. CORINA.

THE END OF AN IDYLL

"I GET rather tired of Percival," said the dowager Lady Elizabeth Love de Boys, as she languidly unfolded the ample pages of the "Morning Courier." Suddenly her eye sparkled on sight of this notice under the rubric "Personal":—

"Young gentleman, public school and university, slightly incapacitated in the late war and now without reliable source of income, would like to make the acquaintance of a charitable lady willing to supply him with the necessary funds for poultry farming or any other occupation. Advertiser is tall, handsome and athletic, with dark hair and pale complexion.—Address, "Algernon," Box 129,580,023, Office of this journal."

With a toss of her bobbed tresses and a twirl of her short skirts, Lady Elizabeth seated herself at her escritoire and indited on perfumed, ivory paper, with a golden pen, the following missive:—

"Lady Elizabeth Love de Boys, 999, Berkeley Square, would be pleased to meet the inserter of the enclosed advertisement at her residence next Thursday afternoon between 3 and 5 o'clock. If unable to call at this hour he is requested to name one that would suit him."

Like Julius Cæsar, whom in certain respects he resembled, Algernon came, saw and conquered. It was in the sweet, caressing spring of 1924, and the tender heart of Lady Elizabeth Love

ACID DROPS

THE organ of the licensed victuallers, the "Morning Advertiser," has become of late a frenzied advocate of the Christian religion. In a leading article in the issue dated December 20, the writer says: "Since this is still a Christian country, every step possible should be taken to see that a definitely Christian atmosphere should prevail in the smaller schools." But this has reference only to the small, but respectable smaller, *Christian* sections. But why give this preference to the Christian sects? We are a democratic people—of a kind—and since the war began such red-hot revolutionists as Lord Halifax has officially assured the world that we are *real* democrats. We prove it also by the existence of a bench of bishops in the House of Lords and also of counting a title as enough to provide entrance to our Second Chamber. Of course, some of the ancient peoples had "elders" who had their voice in the management of the country, but we improve upon that by providing hereditary legislators who had moss round their ears before they reach manhood.

It was perhaps a burst of unconscious sarcasm that led the "Advertiser" to say that "we do not want to turn out our children as so many mass-produced units." But in the name of sobriety, what is the aim of our Minister of Education and of all the Churches but that of turning out, so far as Christianity is concerned, so much "mass-produced" units? What are all the clergy, from Archbishops downward, aiming at but turning out mass-produced living creatures who shall automatically repeat certain formulæ without understanding what it is all about. There are many ways of earning a dishonest living, but surely the meanest of all is that of handicapping the young generation with misdirected education.

We have pointed out scores of times that Fascism finds its earliest and most complete example in the Roman Catholic Church. (Nazism is just a special development of pure Fascism marked by the operation of greater brutality and a stupid Race theory.) An illustration of the identity of the two systems is the formation in Mexico of a "New Christian Order," which we take to be Fascism with a dash of German Nazism. At any rate, it is reported that the organisation has been suppressed by the Mexican Government.

Another sidelight, which points to the truth of what has just been said, is the Pope's affection for the existing Fascist Spanish Government. The other day a message was received from the Pope expressing his "particular affection for Spain, the Generalissimo, and the Spanish Government." The Government of Spain is essentially Fascist in character.

The Rev. F. Hughes, Assistant Chaplain-General to the Eighth Army, says there is a growth of religion in the Eighth Army, and the Atheist is a "rare bird." We suppose that one lie more or less does not matter to these servants of the Lord, but we can only retort that the sales of our literature to the Armed Forces is much greater than in the last war, and our reports of the growth of Freethought are quite cheerful. We should be pleased to hear from Mr. Hughes what proportion of the men in the Forces would go to church if attendance was not compulsory.

And we must not forget the women who are doing work in the Home Forces. Very many are entered as "No religion," and we are constantly receiving letters asking the procedure to be registered and the obstacle placed in the way by their "superiors." We have many shams to fight, and among them is the obstacles—thanks largely to chaplains and to officers, who where religion is concerned are about a century out of date.

George Meredith is credited with saying that woman will be the last thing civilised by man. That is a debatable question, since man owes so much of his real civilising to women. What is remarkable is that so many men should treat women as though their intellectual possibilities falls short of that offered by men—particularly religious men.

do Boys opened in his presence with the grace of a flower unfolding itself to the kisses of the sun.

"Bad lookout for Percy. The old woman's gone this time and no mistake," remarked the butler to the housekeeper some days later, as they discussed the love affairs of their mistress over a bottle of ancient port.

"If Mr. Algernon keeps coming here I shall have trouble with the maids; and her ladyship is so frightfully jealous," said the housekeeper.

"I believe you'd like a turn yourself," observed her companion.

"You ought to be ashamed to say such things at your age, Mr. Jenkins," she replied, leaving the room with dignity.

After a few weeks the reserve imposed even by the indulgent conventions of Berkeley Square became so irksome to Algernon, and to the queen of his heart, that one beautiful day as they were walking in the park, he suggested that she should close her residence in London and go with him to some place on the Continent where they could be altogether without danger of exciting the attention of indiscreet or impertinent domestics. He added that to one of his sensitive disposition the suppressed irony of servants was peculiarly painful. True, the retainers of her ladyship were admirably well disciplined; yet still, beneath their imperturbable exterior, he could not but discover a certain want of respect towards himself, and alas! also towards their mistress. Hence it seemed to him that it might be for the best if she took the present opportunity as a suitable occasion for discharging her entire staff. In days when all save the newly-rich studied economy, the retrenchment would be an appreciable advantage; whilst subsequently another and more discreet retinue could be appointed.

He thought, however, that the house should not be left empty, but committed to the charge of a reliable pair. Fortunately, at that moment he happened to know of such a couple. The man had been in the Army and he and his wife were in search of some responsible position, having a perfect horror of the disgraceful dole.

This proof of affection and solicitude filled the heart of Lady Elizabeth with rapturous delight; and the summit was reached when Algernon, with an adoring glance, expressed the desire that she should leave toilets and jewels behind her at Berkeley Square and share with him the simple life at a village on the coast of Brittany. There a month passed swiftly as a blissful dream. Then an urgent message came from Paris requesting Algernon to visit the couch of a dear and dying friend. Under the circumstances he deemed it best for Lady Elizabeth to remain behind, awaiting his return.

For a week or so she received letters, some of which occasioned her no small surprise because of their irrelevancy to her own communications. At last a time came when her fervid epistles excited no reply. She flew to the gay city, only to find that the address to which she had been writing was that of an agency for the reception and transmission of private correspondence.

The next boat assisted her journey to London. Arrived in Berkeley Square she found her mansion deserted. "We haven't seen anybody there since the removal three weeks ago," said the caretaker of a neighbouring house in answer to her astonished exclamation.

C. CLAYTON DOVE.

DEMOCRACY

It is agreed that we are democrats. We have the vote and in the present circumstances we all have the privilege of voting for a candidate who has been selected by someone else. Perhaps one day it may be recognised that a real democracy must be based on something different from the liberty to cast a vote. A democracy—a real democracy—must rest upon a sense of *social* equality. Given that, we shall be more likely to secure nobility of worth than ever existed in this or any other country.

History as presented by the daily or weekly Press must be read with many reservations. Their main utility will be to provide the historian with examples of frames of mind rather than narratives of fact. For example, we take the following from two papers of standing in the U.S.A.—the New York "Herald Tribune" and the "New York Times"—describing a visit of King Victor. From one comes: "King Victor visited Naples this afternoon, receiving on the crowded Via Roma a rousing welcome." From the other paper: "King Victor came to a sullen Naples. There was no mistaking who that unhappy little man was, but the Neapolitans did not care. The King drove by amid sullen stares of a few passers-by." We could cap this with British descriptions. The modern Press takes up much more space in informing us what we ought to feel and what we ought to believe, and in their reports the "ought" generally becomes the actual.

An illustration to the same end may be found in the appointment of the new Roman Catholic Archbishop of Westminster. His intelligence is high-grade, he is filled with love for the people—his people; he is filled with divine grace, and so forth, and so forth. But the Pope appointed him, and God is behind the Pope. What more can anyone want? The qualities of the man follow as a matter of course. They go with the job. Just as so often do the characters of our political leaders when they are in office.

We do not often agree with the Archbishop of Canterbury, but in a recent number of the "Christian News Letter" he roundly tells his brother Christians that "A vague Theism is futile." We have said so in these columns a thousand times. Watering down the full-blooded beliefs of the Apostles, the Church Fathers, and the mass of Christians through the ages, to a nebulous creed with heaven, hell and miracles, abolished, to say nothing of reducing Jesus from God Number One to a mere ethical teacher (with not even the usual capital letters), fully deserves the wrath of the Primate. Christianity must be presented in all its ancient and primitive beliefs if it is to live honestly. A vague Theism is no honest substitute for the Bible God, and cant about the good moral life is, well, just cant when it is not plain dishonesty.

But we have noted that since Dr. Temple became Archbishop he has become more rigid in his beliefs. He has become more "primitive" in the form of his religion, and less accommodating to what is called "liberal Christianity." In a sermon in Canterbury Cathedral he cried: "Jesus was the Son of God and therefore he *must* have been born of a virgin. . . . He is a man, but he also is God. He is the only begotten son of God." This is good, plain, historic Christianity. It is absurd, but that only makes it more suitable to doctrines of its kind. Christian doctrines were not given because they were true, and were never accepted because they represented historic facts or possibilities. The famous "It is impossible, therefore I believe" Tertullian is nearer honesty of thought than all the modern apologetic sayings put together. Dr. Temple appears to be developing backwards. And the farther he goes back the nearer to real Christianity he will get. But we know the kind of Christianity that the Ministry of Education and clergy are getting ready for the schools.

Professors Reid, Niblet and Jeffries, all engaged by Durham University, and all good Christians, contribute an article to the "British Weekly" pointing out why Durham should serve as a model for others—Christianity is so well looked after there. The probability is that had they not been good Christians, or professing to be good Christians, they would never had appointments to Durham. Durham recalls a story told of Jowett, of Oxford University. In the old days a student came to him with a confession that he could not find a God. Well, replied Jowett, if you don't find a God within twenty-four hours you will be expelled the college. God was duly found. There are large numbers of people who find god under similar circumstances.

But these three brilliant lights are not without sarcasm—of the unconscious kind. They say, "There is one and only one living God." So far as this gallant three are concerned, we accept that as a psychological fact. But there are a multitude of dead Gods, who once lived and whose followers would have echoed the language of the pious three. And these gods had all the

claim to be as much alive as the Durham specimen has. But their followers ceased to pray to them, to burn incense to them, and so they became dead gods. We hope the three can read the moral of our story.

Success leads to success, and whether the success be that of goodness or evil, sense or nonsense, freedom or slavery, the rule applies. So noting the movement to force religion upon children, and the greater energy expended in attempting to make our men serving in the Armed Forces attend church—the men, not the officers—there has been an appeal in the Press that care should be taken that those young men who are conscripted into the mines should be induced to attend religious services before going down the pits. Many years ago we spent long spells with Durham and Northumberland miners, and a fine body of men they were. We know what would have happened then if any coercion of that kind had been attempted. We hope the present generation of miners have not become softer-brained with the passing of the years.

Perhaps with the intention of proving to the world that Nazism is not Atheistic, Himmler has ordered his S.S. men to become regular attendants at church. We have often said, even before the war began, that German Nazism was in its inmost nature essentially Christian. Of course, Christian leaders, even Roman Catholic ones, will deny the justice of the claim, but the fact is too glaring to be successfully denied. From the "chosen people" of God to the superior race, to the torture and killing of dissenters (heretics), the two systems step side-by-side. The precise number killed, or the more elaborate tortures imposed, are not to the point. Nazism, like religion, is running to seed.

Sometimes our highly placed clergymen are quite humorous. (Mark, we do not say "witty," for that is a different thing. Wit implies intelligence, where humour may have no better basis than an exhibition of the absurd.) Here is an example, provided by the Bishop of Liverpool. "The goodwill of God towards men will always remain a mystery." Put into plain English that might be: God is very good to us, but we do not know when, or why, or whether he means to do good (he so often blunders), or whether there is a God to be good, bad or indifferent.

Another gem from the same source. "It would be wrong to expect that the Christian faith, attractive as it is, would be accepted by everybody at first sight." In the name of all that is sensible, why not? Here is a God who sends a part of himself to be born on earth—at the risk of getting a young lady into trouble—and afterwards submits to seeing that one-third of himself is crucified; he raises men from the dead to prove his authenticity, and all he asks is that man shall believe in him. One would think that the quicker, the simpler the way of salvation, the more rapidly people are "saved" the better. And now one of his representatives—a well-paid one—says that we must not expect God to have made himself so attractive that he would be accepted at once! We are inclined to think that Bishop David is looking at the matter from a personal point of view, for if everyone accepted God at once the need for parsonic preaching would shrink into nothing.

Another point made by Bishop David is that God was "testing his hearers." But as God he already knew what the people were like, what they thought, and what they would do. He was not like a tradesman who puts a new thing on the market and wonders whether the public will respond. He knows the end from the beginning, and all that lies between. Really, in the face of such almost inconceivable stupidity, it looks as though, if there is a future life and the Bishop gets to Heaven, he is likely to get kicked out because he presented God as unbelievably foolish.

After all, if there is God it is his chief business to save us. For if he does not save us as believers, as God he is likely soon to disappear from the scene. All the ancient gods have died from a single cause—shortage of worshippers. It is a fact that man can live without God. It is an historic fact that never yet was there a God who could continue without worshippers. The statement that God made man is a mere theory. The statement that man makes his own gods is an established and demonstrable fact. "The Freethinker" is open for a reply.

"THE FREETHINKER"

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Telephone No. : Holborn 2801.

TO CORRESPONDENTS

M. W.—Certainly we will read your note-book. That is the farthest we can go, although we appreciate your desire to help us. But religiously, we are pleased to say, we are past all hope.

W. B.—Thanks. Shall appear. It is very useful.

"Emx."—Much obliged for interesting excerpt. Will be used.

C. H. THOMPSON.—Mr. Cohen hopes to resume his Christianity series very soon. We are pleased to say that Vol. I is selling very well, and we believe is being well used in propagandist discussions.

THE General Secretary, N.S.S., gratefully acknowledges the following donations to the Benevolent Fund of the Society: Mr. and Mrs. S. Miller, £3 3s.; H. A. Walker, 10s. 9d.; S. C. Merrifield, 10s.

Orders for literature should be sent to the Business Manager of the Pioneer Press, 2-3, Furnival 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, 17s.; half-year, 8s. 6d.; three months, 4s. 4d.

Lecture notices must reach 2 and 3, Furnival Street, Holborn, London, E.C.4, by the first post on Monday, or they will not be inserted.

SUGAR PLUMS

FROM a U.S.A. reader:—

TO THE PRIESTHOOD.

You shall never rid your rigmorole
Of what it might well lose,
Until you be rid of dogmarole
And something saner use!

We fancy that a good story waits for the telling in the shape of the pressure, financial and otherwise, that has been brought to bear on the newspapers of this country. We have often commented on the family likeness of all the leading articles of the English Press that were written when the Churches and the Board of Education commenced its crusade to re-establish the Churches in State schools. The identity of both material and structure were too striking not to have sprung from a common source. It was a great plot well carried out. Our "Free Press" justified its name by giving free space to the Churches, and the Churches, having frankly given up hope of capturing the grown-ups, concentrated on the children. The clergy are doughty fighters—where under nine and over ninety are concerned.

But here and there are to be found newspapers that rise above having their comments on Christianity controlled by the parsonry, and we were pleased to see the "Doncaster Free Press" has been rebuked by some of the local clergy for not giving greater help to the Churches of the district. The editor rejects the notion that it is the place of a newspaper to assist in a religious revival, and says bluntly that the only kind of revival that "Free Press" is that of working for "is the greatest good of the greatest number on earth." He also objects to the clerical demand for free advertisements. We hope the editor will stick to his guns.

Good news from the clerical camp. Rev. C. T. H. Dams, Rector of Theale, says, in the "Windsor Express," "It is not unduly

pessimistic to say that, unless some great change occurs, in fifty years from now Christianity in England will be represented by a few old people, and by the year 2043 it will be virtually disintegrated." But, on the other hand, all the Christian ministers with the army—at a good salary—tell us, mainly through the B.B.C., that all our soldiers are rushing to receive the gospel of Christianity, and numbers of our home parsons dilate upon the new revival of Christianity that has set in. Of course, Mr. Dams points to the empty churches, but with the eye of faith the highly placed clergy can see the churches filled, and with the assistance of the government looks forward to see more Christians turned out—or roped in—at school.

Mr. H. L. Leich rightly asks us why does the government release preachers of religion from military service. The answer is influence, and the impudent claim that the clergy are in the service of God, and, we presume, that God cannot protect his own against modern weapons of war. It is only fair to say that some clergymen give up their religious offices and join as ordinary soldiers. But the Bishops are down on them for doing so. And there are some clergymen who are really good as civilians.

The following from "The Sunday School" illustrates so well what we have said concerning the education ramp and the Roman Church, that we print a message from the December 23 issue:

"The Roman Catholics are extremely dissatisfied. They want nothing less than schools that are 100 per cent. Roman Catholic, and they want them to be provided and maintained entirely by the State. We can understand and sympathise with their point of view without admitting that their claims should be met. The Roman Catholic interpretation of the Christian faith does, in the opinion of Protestants, contain errors, and although in this country they speak of religious toleration and evince a considerable interest in education, in other countries in which they hold the upper hand—notably in Spain—their record is not one to encourage others to trust them very far. In England they are offered support for their schools on the same terms as all other sections of the Christian Church. They want more than this."

We welcome this plain talk to, and about, Roman Catholics. All we have to add is that the Roman Catholics are asking for what the Protestants will get if this Tory Government of ours has its way. There is not an argument used against the one that does not apply to the other.

Keighley (Yorks.) Freethinkers interested in the movement and in the formation of a local branch of the N.S.S. are reminded that Mr. F. J. Corina will lecture in the I.L.P. Hall, Russell Street, Keighley, at 3 p.m. to-day (January 16) on "Youth, Sex and Religion." Mr. Corina has just published a book on the subject, and we have no doubt his lecture will be an interesting and instructive one.

We have been unable to supply all the cloth-bound copies of "We Are Sixteen"—but are expecting a fresh supply from the binders. Meanwhile, those who would like paper-bound copies can be supplied at 4s.; postage 3d.

In the Leicester Secular Hall, Humberstone Gate, Mr. R. H. Rosetti will lecture to-day (January 16) at 6-30 p.m. on "Religion in Russia and the Churches in England." N.S.S. speakers are certain of a warm welcome from the local Secular Society, and with a topical subject there should be a good gathering and an interesting evening.

Salisbury has set a good example by opening cinemas at 2-15 p.m. on Sundays: This is avowedly in the interests of good behaviour all round. It is to be hoped that other places will follow suit, and not merely in the interests of the Forces. No one is prevented going to church who wishes to go, and there is no other reason given even by Christians than the hope that in the absence of other entertainments people may go to church. It is high time that the superstition of a "sacred" day was left for those who believe in this stupidity.

THE TRIAL OF SIR OSWALD MOSLEY

NOW that the dust and din raised by the Home Secretary's release of Sir Oswald and Lady Mosley is abating, it may be useful to see what the legal position really is—and ought to be.

Of course, that abominable Regulation 18B—alien entirely to the whole spirit of English law and a flat antagonism to all those rights for which our fathers fought, as enshrined in Magna Carta, the Petition of Right, the Habeas Corpus Act and the Declaration of Right—makes the Home Secretary's acts, both in imprisoning Mosley and others without trial and later in releasing Mosley, perfectly legal. The unfortunate position is that any subservient House of Commons can, by a vote of its placemen at the whim of a Cabinet, jettison any or all of an Englishman's liberties—either on the excuse of war or upon no excuse at all.

In technical law, Morrison's acts are quite unassailable. But in equity (which is supposed to reside in English law) and in justice (not necessarily supposed to guide our law), what a double blunder! First in imprisoning any Englishman without trial, and second in releasing him (with a gag in his mouth and an iron on his legs, as Shaw put it). I hope Bernard Shaw, when he lunched with Morrison recently, told the Home Secretary what he thought of such a release.

What should Morrison have done?

He could, and should, have brought Mosley to trial at the Central Criminal Court. Morrison told an audience, apropos of this, that if they could frame an Indictment against Mosley he would consider it. But this is fooling a popular audience. Indictments are framed by criminal counsel or clerks of criminal courts, not by laymen and not out of the blue, but upon evidence submitted to them. Any competent counsel at the criminal bar would, for a modest fee such as the State usually pays, frame an Indictment.

And of what offence could Sir Oswald be accused? There are plenty. There are High Treason and Treason-Felony. There is "Treachery within the meaning of the Treachery Act, 1940." There is Sedition. There are offences against the Official Secrets Acts. There are other offences. Presumably the Government have evidence, for they have never said that there is none.

And the trial, like other trials held during the war concerned with war-time offences, could be held *in camera*. For, sad to relate, secret criminal trials are now legal again and fairly frequently held in England. So Mr. Morrison cannot pretend that Mosley cannot be tried because secret information would reach the enemy.

Then what hindered the indictment and trial of Mosley? What hinders it now?

Intelligent persons will have no difficulty in answering that question. Mosley on trial would defend himself. He would subpoena witnesses for his defence; i.e. compel the attendance (possibly) of members of the Government or both Houses of Parliament, and he might ask the trial Judge's permission to cross-examine them as hostile witnesses. He might accuse others—big industrialists and persons of importance—of being in exactly the same position as himself. The late Lord Rothermere and his "Daily Mail" once publicly backed Mosley and his organisation. And—horrible thought!—a free and independent British jury, after hearing Mosley speak, might acquit the prisoner, as juries have been known to do, even in the teeth of adverse judicial summing-up. Mosley, too, as a defendant, would be entitled to counsel, and British counsel are often courageous and utterly unpredictable in the zeal with which they put a client's case, showing no respect for the State or Government Departments, or even politicians! Counsel in court can, and do, speak fearlessly.

Consequently, the trial of Mosley might be excessively awkward—for the Government or for well-known Government supporters. Suppose, for instance, Mosley read out a membership list of peers and M.P.s who belonged to Captain Ramsay's "Right Club," or gave a list of prominent folk who gave money to his own organisation, the "British Union"?

Mosley himself, I feel sure, would welcome being tried properly by a Judge and jury. The British people would like to see him tried properly. None of us likes a man kept in prison without trial, and Mr. Beverley Baxter, M.P., has, in December, 1943, written a newspaper article in the strongest possible terms protesting against the "intolerable outrage" of Regulation 18B. Mr. Manningham-Buller, M.P., has put down a motion demanding its repeal.

By a judicial trial Mosley would either be condemned and sentenced to punishment or acquitted and entitled to freedom. A proper trial would end the dispute between Morrison and a suspicious public opinion, but a trial by popular clamour with the defendant officially silenced and prevented from saying a word in his own defence, is the entire negation of justice.

C. G. L. DU CANN.

THE ARABS IN SPAIN

ARABIAN knowledge began at an early date to percolate into Christian Europe. . . . Under absolute religious tolerance, Christians enjoyed complete freedom in the Spanish Khalifate: they had their own bishops; several monasteries existed in the outskirts of the capital which served as hostels for travellers, and monks were commonly seen in the streets of Cordova. From all parts of Europe numerous students betook themselves to the great Arab seats of learning in search of the light which only there was to be found. Alvaro, a Christian Bishop, writes in the ninth century: "All the young Christians who distinguish themselves by their talent, know the language and literature of the Arabs, read and study passionately the Arab books, gather at great expense great libraries of these, and everywhere proclaim with a loud voice how admirable is that literature." The famous Gerbert of Aurillac brought from Spain some rudiments of astronomy and mathematics, and taught his astonished pupils from terrestrial and celestial globes. . . .

During the next two centuries the process of diffusion assumed an extensive scale. An African monk, Constantine, who had acted as secretary to Robert Guiscard, devoted himself with enthusiasm to the translation of Arab text-books and to introducing the new learning into the mother house of the Benedictines at Monêt Cassiono, when the path lay open for its transmission to the far-flung houses of the order. Another Benedictine, Adelhard of Bath, brought with him from Cordova a large collection of books and much doctrine, which he and his nephew actively spread abroad in France and England. From his copy of Euclid all subsequent editions down to 1533 have been published. Daniel de Morlay likewise proceeded to Cordova to learn mathematics and astronomy, published the fruits of his studies and lectured at Oxford. Plato of Tivoli translated Al-Batani's astronomy and other mathematical works. At the end of the twelfth century a young Pisan merchant, Leonardo Fibonacci, while travelling in Spain, became aware of the new mathematical sciences of the Arabs, and after several new journeys issued a translation of Al-Khwarismi's great work on algebra. He definitely popularised the perfected decimal notation, which became known with the perfected arithmetic from it as *algorism*, from the Arabian writer's name. Fibonacci, whose work had a wide influence, must be accounted the founder of modern mathematics in Christian Europe and the

first of the long line of Italian mathematicians. Gerard of Cremona was the most industrious among the popularisers of Arab literature; he spent fifty years in the Khalifate of Cordova and brought forth no less than sixty translations, among which were the *Almagest* and the *Astronomy of Al-Haitham*. Michael Scot repeatedly visited Cordova for the purpose of obtaining manuscripts and making translations. The influx of students into Spain and the activity of translators went on until the last days of the Khalifate. Arnold of Villeneuve and Raymond Lully, the friend of Bacon, studied in Spain and taught at Montpellier, Campanus of Novara studied mathematics at Cordova and taught in Vienna, and systematic schools for the translation of Arab text-books were established in Toledo by Alfonso the Sage.

The Jews shared under the complete tolerance of Moorish rule in the cultural evolution of the Khalifate; and as they scattered over Europe . . . became the carriers of that culture to the remotest barbaric lands. . . . They established numerous schools, such as that of the Kimbis and of Ben Ezra at Narbonne, where Arabian science was popularised and Arabic books translated. Numerous Jews followed William of Normandy to England and enjoyed his protection, building there the first stone burgher houses which may still be seen at Lincoln and St. Edmundsbury; and establishing a school of science at Oxford. It was under their successors at that Oxford school that Roger Bacon learned Arabic and Arabic science. Neither Roger Bacon nor his later namesake has any right to be credited with having introduced the experimental method. Roger Bacon was no more than one of the apostles of Moslim science and method to Christian Europe . . . and he never wearied of declaring that a knowledge of Arabic and of Arabian science was for his contemporaries the only way to true knowledge. . . . In the hands of Jewish doctors trained in Arab schools, where medical art had been carried far beyond that of the ancients, the practice and teaching of medicine remained during the Middle Ages. The pharmacopoeia created by the Arabs is virtually that which, but for the recent synthetic and organotherapeutic preparations, is in use at the present day. The medical school of Montpellier was founded on the pattern of that of Cordova under Jewish doctors. . . . Down to the 15th century whatever scientific activity existed in Europe was engaged in assimilating Arab learning without greatly adding to it. Prince Henry of Portugal established Arab and Jewish teachers at his great nautical academy at Cape St. Vincent, which prepared the way for Vasco da Gama, and for the expansion of Europe to the uttermost ends of the earth. The first mathematical treatise printed in Europe (1494) is but a paraphrase, and, in part, a transcription, of Leonardo Fibonacci's translations by Luca Pacioli, the friend of another Leonardo—Leonardo da Vinci. It was from Al-Batani's tables that Regiomontanus constructed the Ephemerides which made the voyage of Columbus possible; Kepler carried out his work by means of the Hakemite tables of Ibn Yunis; Vesalius translated Al-Razi. Science is the most momentous contribution of Arab civilisation to the modern world.

The Arabs opened up the land-routes to India, to China, Malacca and Timbuctoo, the emporium of the central African trade; and sent their caravans to the rich lands beyond the Sahara long before the Portuguese doubled Cape Verde. They held the monopoly of the sea-routes to India, and the Emsiads founded along the eastern coast of Africa a line of trading colonies from the Soudan coast and Socotra to Mombaza, Mozambique, Zanzibar and Madagascar.

They improved the art of shipbuilding, taught Mediterranean seamen to construct lighter sailing ships or caravels, to caulk their boats with tar . . . to handle sails and cables. Moorish merchants established their fundaks in the Christian ports, plied between the great sea-ports of Provence and the South

of France, brought their wares to the markets of Montpellier and Narbonne. . . . They introduced the system of bills of exchange, and the commerce of the Mediterranean was regulated by the institution of sea-consuls first adopted at Barcelona.

The fine linens, the cottons, the silks, the delicate and gorgeous fabrics of the Saracenic world, satins and sarcenets, Persian taffetas, Damasks from Damascus, Baudekin from Baghdad, Muslin from Mosul, Grenadines from Granada . . . created a demand for fine raiment among the coarsely-clad populations of Europe. . . . The looms of Syria and Spain, of which 16,000 were at work in Seville alone, and where 130,000 silk-workers were employed at Cordova, wove the materials for the garments of nobles and the sacramental vestments of Christian prelates; and it was not an uncommon spectacle to see a bishop celebrating mass with an ayat of the Kuran elegantly embroidered on his chasuble. The women of Europe learnt to wear an Arab Kamis (chemise) and jubba (jupe, jupon). The warriors were eager to wield blades forged in Damascus, Almeria or Toledo, and to ride in Cordovan saddles. The sugar-cane was introduced, and Europeans first tasted confectioneries, sweetmeats and sorbets. By and by the manufacturers of the East were introduced and imitated in Christian Europe. Silk looms were established in Norman Sicily. Venice copied with the aid of native craftsmen the glassware of Antioch; Lyons the damasks, Paris the "tapis sarasins," and Rheims the looms of Syria. The rich dyes of the East were brought to Bruges, where they were used to prepare English wool for the market. The wares of Spain and Majorca led to the establishment of Italian factories for the manufacture of majolica. Sugar factories were transferred from Sicily to Italy, from Spain to the South of France.

The Arabs introduced three inventions into Europe, each of which was to bring about a world-transforming revolution; the mariner's compass which was to expand Europe to the ends of the earth; gunpowder which was to bring to an end the supremacy of the armoured knight; and paper which prepared the way for the printing press. The revolution brought about by the introduction of paper was scarcely less important than that brought about by printing. The extreme scarcity of books was in a large measure due to the scarcity of parchment; we know how the texts of ancient manuscripts were erased again and again to supply materials for writing missals and legends of saints, so that scarcely a manuscript older than the eleventh century survives to-day. The price of books was consequently prohibitive . . . the Arabs first adopted the manufacture of paper from silk as practiced in China, and silk paper was manufactured at Samarakand and Bokhara; for silk they at first substituted cotton, Damasc paper and later linen. The linen paper industry was long a monopoly of Xativa, near Valencia, whence it was introduced into Catalonia and Provence, and later to Trevisa and Padua.

The first parts of Europe to emerge from barbarism were those directly under the influence of Moorish culture; the Spanish Marches of Catalonia, Provence and Sicily.

—"The Making of Humanity," by ROBERT BRIFFAULT, pp. 198-202 and 204-7.

AN ITALIAN PATRIOT

"Nick Machiavel had ne'er a trick,
Tho' he gave his name to our old Nick."

—SAMUEL BUTLER.

THE above quotation from "Hudibras" may not be strictly true to fact, but it certainly expresses the popular idea of Machiavelli. No man has been more maligned, yet his importance cannot be doubted, and to-day, with the political affairs of Italy in so turbulent a state, the infamous name springs to mind.

More so as the modern Fascist regime has not hesitated to make use of methods which he advocated for a much earlier and entirely different stage in history.

Mistaken traditional ideas take a great deal of killing, but to-day there is no excuse for the continued vituperation of Machiavelli, because of the easy access to a just view of the Florentine and the times in which he lived. "The Life," by Pasquale Villari and J. A. Symonds' "History of the Renaissance in Italy," present the requisite historical picture, while Macaulay's Essay is available in every public library. In addition, there is a splendid essay of 41 pages by J. M. Robertson,¹ and, more recently, a longer study by Ettore Janni,² which should not be overlooked by the interested student.

This does not mean that one should of necessity accept the portrait of Machiavelli which any of the above writers puts forward. Almost inevitably—in such an instance—virtues are liable to be over-stressed, but none of these writers has indulged in "whitewashing," and they give the background to a reading of Machiavelli's own works, for, as J. M. Wheeler said: "Every man must be judged by his age and his life purpose."

Whatever else he may have been, Niccolò Machiavelli (1467-1527) was a realist. It is the outstanding feature of his political work, and it is this, and his patriotism, for which he has been most hated. Had he been less practical and less original he would not have suffered so much calumny, but then he would not have been Machiavelli. As it was, he dealt with problems as they were and sought for effective solutions, thereby earning the right to be regarded—in the words of J. A. Symonds—"among the founders or precursors of the modern scientific method."

Like many writers, however, he is generally known by one work only—"The Prince"—but at least one of his other political works, "The Discourses on Livy's Decades," should be read also. Ettore Janni has expressed the distinction between the two, as Machiavelli himself might have done, viz:—

"You give me an age like ours, with events such as those that we have witnessed and are still witnessing, and I give you the prince that is needed; give me a people worthy to make history, and I will provide you, not with something different, but with something more: the standards set forth in my "Discourses."³

It must also be remembered that, whereas "The 'Discourses' were written for the wisest and most cultured men of Florence . . . 'The Prince' was dedicated to a stupid Medici who knew not what use to make of it."⁴

The regrettable fact is that "The Prince" has been misused on many occasions since, for it was expressly dealing with the corrupt times in which it was written, and its ruthlessness was not by any means exceptional for the period. Furthermore, it is not merely ruthless or even primarily so; it is first of all practical, and indeed, it never purposes to be more. The "Discourses," on the other hand, present his ideas for a strong government, and it is not surprising that he goes back to Ancient Rome for his model. He admired the old paganism which encouraged brave and noble men of mind and body, but he was hostile to Christianity. He ridiculed the teaching of humility and contempt for worldly things which, he pointed out, has made the world feeble and an easy prey to scoundrels.

Most of all, however, Machiavelli—with his friend Guicciardini—hated the Papacy, regarding it as the chief cause of Italy's disunity. "The Church has ever kept and keeps our country divided," he wrote in "The Discourses," and he was undoubtedly right. The Papacy always opposed those who might have unified Italy, because a disunited country was obviously more conducive

to the power of the Roman Church. Naturally, it opposed Machiavelli, and Lord Acton tells us that "when the Index was instituted in 1557, Machiavelli was one of the first writers condemned, and he was more rigorously and implacably condemned than anybody else."⁵

It is to be hoped that those who undertake the rebuilding of Italy after the war, will bear in mind the advice of Machiavelli and throw off forever the shackles of the Christian Church. The abolition of temporal power was passed in 1871, but it was not complete, and the Fascists undid what good had been done by working hand in glove with the Vatican and fostering the foul creed.

Machiavelli was essentially a secularist, and a great figure of the Renaissance. His greatness, says J. M. Robertson, "consists in his having possessed an intellect unenfeebled by his environment, superior in total grasp and balance to any of his time, of any country; and in his having drawn light for men's paths from the very darkness of his world."⁶ The same writer also draws our attention to the fact that: "A century and a half after the production of his (Machiavelli's) "Florentine History," Cromwell, the practical Englishman, imposes theosophy on every step of his action and his experience: Machiavelli at the end of the 15th century is already a Naturalist."⁷ He dealt, not with Heaven, but with the Earth; not with gods, but with men; and in dealing with men he considered the circumstances which determined their actions. He would have agreed with Shakespeare's Cassius, that: "The fault, dear Brutus, is not in our stars, but in ourselves, that we are underlings." That is what Machiavelli was continually demonstrating, and, though his politics are out of date and his historical examples not always reliable, the powerful simplicity of his writing backed by his scientific method, has a lasting quality, while—with all his faults—he was a true pioneer, and he had the welfare of Italy at heart. It is very doubtful whether this can be said of the present Italian leaders!

C. McCALL.

⁵ Preface to Machiavelli's "Il Principe," edited by L. A. Burd; Oxford.

⁶ "Pioneer Humanists," p. 31.

⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 27.

DID JESUS EXIST?

ACCORDING to its own premises, this story is impossible. The main premise is, of course, that a man with supernatural qualities, a god or demi-god, walks around day after day, quite openly, in a certain city and its surroundings. He cares so little to hide his movements that a while earlier he had entered that city by full daylight, and it is even said that he had been greeted with enthusiasm by the people, so that he was known by everybody, to every woman and every child. He walks around in the company of his disciples, preaching by day, and sleeping in the open air at night, with those same disciples around him. Nevertheless, it is supposed to be necessary to bribe one of these disciples into betraying him, and for the sake of greater dramatic effect this is done by a kiss. Imagine the police authorities of Berlin in 1888 bribing a Socialist into revealing the whereabouts of Bebel. The police might just as well save their money by using the city directory.

If we had been told that Jesus had sought refuge in a cave or cellar, there might, after all, be some sort of feeble sense attached to the story. But under the circumstances related to us, those looking for Jesus had only to ask, "Which one of you is Jesus?" And he would certainly not have attempted to deny his own name by a lie.

¹ Reprinted in "Pioneer Humanists" (Watts and Co., 1907).

² "Machiavelli"—Ettore Janni (Translated) (Harrap, 1930).

³ *Ibid.*, pp. 162-3.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 10.

Not only is Judas more superfluous than a fifth wheel on a cart, but he is an absurdity, explicable only as a manifestation of the hatred felt by Gentile Christianity against the Jewish Christians during the second century, when it had become expedient to forget or deny that Jesus himself, Mary, Joseph, all the Apostles, all the Disciples, all the Evangelists, had been Jews.

Jesus calms the storm and walks on the water. But Moses had already divided the waters of the sea (Exodus xiv. 21). Joshua had already mastered the waters of the Jordan, so that the bearers of the Ark could walk across dryshod (Joshua iii. 13). Elijah had only to smite the waters with his mantle in order to divide them hither and thither so that Elijah could cross the Jordan as on dry ground (2 Kings ii. 8). Jesus ascended to heaven, but already Elijah had been taken up to heaven in a chariot of fire, drawn by horses of fire (2 Kings ii. 11).

It is impossible to overlook the extent which miraculous actions ascribed to Elisha in the Old Testament have become attributed to Jesus in the new one. At Nain Jesus recalls the single son of a widow from the dead (Luke vii. 12). But this miracle had already been performed by Elijah (1 Kings xvii. 17). When he was dead, Elijah carried him up to his own bed, cried unto the Lord, and the child came back to life again. Elisha forestalled the miraculous feeding credited to Jesus. With only 20 loaves of bread he fed 100 men, and they "left thereof." The Gospels have to overbid. Jesus feeds 4,000 men on a few little fishes and seven loaves, and there are seven baskets of food left behind. In John vi. 5, this overbidding is carried still farther. There are 5,000 men and only two fishes.

. . . . As late as the beginning of our era, Elijah stood in the popular imagination side by side with Moses, and it is not likely that he was placed below Jesus. This is made clear in the 17th chapter of Matthew and the 9th of Mark, where Jesus becomes transfigured on the mountain, and it is said that his face shone as the sun, and his raiment was white as the light. . . . The whole story of the Passion is so saturated with mythology that the sifting out of any historical foundations may be regarded as out of the question.

Thus, for instance, there is evidently some sort of mysticism hidden behind the story of Barabbas as told in Matthew. The meaning of Barabbas is simply "the son of the father." The original version of the name in the oldest Christian Church was even Jesus Barabbas. The evidence seems to be that Jesus and Barabbas are identical. The name Jesus has been dropped from the text because readers were offended by having that name applied to a prisoner who perhaps was a murderer. The likelihood is that an animal sacrifice of the son of a father, or a Barabbas, formed an established feature of Semitic life. In the same manner the scene where the soldiers are mocking the captive Jesus seems to point to a pagan ritual custom of some kind. Such is the suggestion made by Abbe Loisy, the great French Bible student, who is sceptically inclined. . . . Philo Judæus tells about a piece of mummery staged at Alexandria and aimed at King Agrippa, the grandson of Herod, which seems to have represented the survival of a local Jewish custom. A crazy man named Barabbas is said to have paraded as a make-believe king, with a tinsel crown, a sceptre, and purple robes. . . . Thus the story of a prisoner mocked by Roman soldiers, quite out of keeping with Roman discipline, and the equally fantastic story about a Jewish mob's preference for Barabbas, would become harmonised as a reminiscence of a sort of Semitic carnival, which in its turn carried reminiscences of very early human sacrifices, of the sacrifice of the first-born son by his father, which ancient custom was replaced by the sacrifice of the paschal lamb.

—"Jesus a Myth," by GEORGES BRANDES (pp. 105-12).

CORRESPONDENCE

A QUESTION OF METHOD.

SIR,—A religious speaker in Hyde Park, discussing a question as to the universe, said in my hearing ". . . and there must have been a first cause." As this speaker's theory of a "first cause" can only be proved by a course of patiently working backwards through the data of the past ages, he unknowingly invalidated the Book of Genesis, the writers of that book having begun their history of the universe at a point where an inquiry on this subject normally would end.

A speaker at another platform, who was fired with enthusiasm and who bore the fixed look of the zealot, said animatedly: "No, I will not take any questions from an Atheist!" Yet another speaker, a man of powerful frame on ground level near the kiosk and who had a habit of stepping quickly sideways, making little springs backwards and forwards before a large semi-circle of the curious, shouted in tones of deep reproach: ". . . But an *Atheist!* Ah! an *Atheist!*" Alas! what hopes are there of any light penetrating this fervent darkness.

As to reaching the truth by these several means, well might an astronomer, intently studying the vastnesses of stellar spaces, content himself by peopling them with hobgoblins of his fancy, write a book about it, prefix the word "Revealed," as like as not array himself in fantastic garb (in the midst of life to look like death), and then indignantly refuse any questions of a sceptical nature.

In religion's attitude towards proper inquiry, is not its "Way" like a cul-de-sac, its "Truth" an open question, and its "Light" more in the nature of a black-out?—Yours, etc.,

J. EDWARDS.

SUNDAY LECTURE NOTICES, ETC.

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"Six Great Englishmen (4) Jeremy Bentham."

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Mr. F. J. CORINA: "Youth, Sex and Religion."

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