

# THE FREETHINKER

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## VIEWS AND OPINIONS

### "Mens sana in Corpore sano"

THE week that sees these lines appear in print marks the official commencement of the Olympic Games, held this year in Helsinki, the capital of the Republic of Finland. Already, as we write these lines, the fiery torch originally kindled at the ruined Greek temple on the mountain from which the Games derive their name, Mt. Olympus, is being carried by fast runners to the Finnish capital to mark the official and dramatic inauguration of the Games.

The modern Olympic Games, as revived at the end of last century, represent an international athletic festival pure and simple, with no religious significance, either pagan or Christian; for the solemn lighting of the torch in the ruined Greek temple is symbolic only and implies no belief in the archaic deities of ancient Hellas, who hurled their thunderbolts in playful anger against erring mortals from the cloudy summit of Mt. Olympus and who, alternatively, sported and sang amid the leafy groves of Parnassus. For, to-day, "the oracles are dumb," the ancient divinities have gone the way of all flesh—and of all gods!—and Mt. Olympus has ceased to be the abode of the gods and the ante-chamber to Heaven and has become just another mountain in the rugged landscape of Hellas—Greece.

However, this was not always the case. For the symbolic lighting of the torch amid the ancient temple ruins, and even the classical title of the modern athletic festival, recall a world and a culture very different from ours: they take us back to the classical culture of ancient Hellas, the birthplace of autonomous human reason, the cradle of, alike, Western art and Western philosophy, to, all told, the most brilliant single episode in the chequered annals of human culture. For Mt. Olympus, under whose towering crags the Olympic Games themselves were originally held, was the physical and chronological centre of the life and culture of the ancient Hellenes, just as the Delphic Oracle, under the shadow of Mt. Parnassus, represented its spiritual centre. For the ancient Hellenes did not measure Time by the Virgin Births of their numerous gods, but by the occurrence and repetition of the recurring four-yearly athletic festival, the Olympic Games. Greek chronology was based throughout on the "Olympiad"—upon the recurring cycle of the Games.

The modern athletic Games are, however, but a truncated version of their ancient prototypes. For the modern Games are physical only; they mark that permanent separation of soul and body which represents one of the most pernicious legacies of Christianity to human psychology. The ancient Hellenes made no such artificial distinction between mind and body; the thought of ancient Hellas was, if not formally monotheistic, at least thoroughly monistic and unitary in its fundamental psychological analysis of the human personality. The ancient, unlike the modern Olympics, reflected this basic conception: that fundamental conception of the classical

culture, later to be expressed in a phrase of genius by the Roman poet, Juvenal (first century A.D.), "*mens sana in corpore sano*"—"a healthy mind in a healthy body." In pursuance of this unitary conception of the human personality—a conception, the inspired summary of which, quoted above, may almost be termed the motto of ancient pagan, as distinct from modern Christian culture—the ancient Olympics were cultural in the widest sense, as well as athletic; art and poetry, the contests sacred to the "nine Muses" being afforded an equal standing with the concurrent athletic contests. The greatest poets of ancient Hellas competed on an equal footing with the greatest athletes; whilst the prestige which accrued from an Olympic victory constituted success in the Games as the "blue riband" of the ancient *Greek-speaking* world.

The above linguistic limitation must be added; for in one point only, at least to a modern view, did the ancient Olympic Games fall below their modern successor: they were exclusively—rigidly exclusively!—the festival of the *Greek-speaking* peoples alone. No "barbarian"—that is, no non-Greek—could compete. For the "master-race theory," long before Hitler or Malan, was universally accepted amongst the ancient Hellenes, and, in stating it emphatically, Aristotle only stated what was a commonplace to his countrymen—no "mongrel" even, of mixed blood, could participate in the sacred Games held under Mt. Olympus, the abode of Zeus and of the other Greek gods, held, that is, in the very shadow of the Hellenic Heaven, in the very heart and cradle of Hellas.

The day, indeed, came eventually when Roman Emperors, such as the megalomaniac, Nero, were to contend, and even win the formerly coveted Olympic prize. But, by that date, the Games, along with the whole *Greek-speaking* world, had sunk into political ignominy and concurrent cultural decay: the "Greeks" were succeeding, and superseding, the authentic classical "Hellenes."

(Footnote.—The Roman conquerors of Hellas—2nd century B.C.—disdainfully described the conquered Hellenes as "Greeks," after a tribe of barbaric Albanian highlanders: the "Yankees" of the ancient world; like its modern American antitype, the abusive name stuck!)

The classical Olympic Games date back beyond the classical age, properly so-called, to the almost prehistoric Greek "middle ages," the "heroic" era, still familiar to us in ancient legends recorded in the immortal lines of *The Iliad* and *The Odyssey*, which, indeed, were actually written or, at least, edited in their present form, about the time that the Olympic Games first emerge as a recognized and continuously recurring athletic festival in the culture of the classical world—at the time when the great Greek epics were first written down, Olympus was still the sacred mountain, the abode of the gods, of "all-Father Zeus" and the rest, where those bright creations of the Hellenic imagination caroused and made love amid the eternal snows of Olympus, as uninhibited and



unchequered by "the pale cast of thought" as their terrestrial worshippers below, the bold and bibulous warriors who live for ever in the immortal pages of Homer, the congenial gods of a primitive nature-worship, the dramatic personification of the elemental forces of nature, typically and awesomely symbolized in the snowy Olympian peak, set amid its rugged surroundings.

The earliest "Olympiad" is said to have begun in 776 B.C., about the date usually ascribed by classical scholarship to the Homeric poems themselves. The games continued uninterruptedly down to the very end of antiquity, to "The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire," A.D. 393. During this long era of nearly 12 centuries the Games were celebrated without interruption, many of the greatest names were associated with them in the evolution of the greatest of civilizations; whilst the International Law of the Greek-speaking world officially recognized the Games, as, also, the Delphic Oracle, by decreeing a "sacred month," a solemn "truce of God" for their entire duration.

The ancient Olympic Games did not die a natural death along with the classical world that begat them. Contrarily, they were extinguished by Christian bigotry so hostile to the free culture of the ancients, in particular to their reverence for and cult of the human body. The age and religion which systematically destroyed public baths as the work of the Devil, and exalted dirt and debility as virtues pleasing to the Christian God, had little use for the pagan cult of "The healthy body in the healthy mind." In any case, the Games were held in honour of "Devils," of the gods of the pagans!

Such, no doubt, were the thoughts of the gloomy Spanish fanatic, Theodosius, Christian Emperor of Rome, who forcibly ended the millennial run of the Games, A.D. 393. So, also, reasoned the Christian fanatics who, soon after, deliberately destroyed the temples of the Olympian deities in whose honour the Games had been held since the dawn of Greek history. The Gods of Olympus did not survive the ancient world.

The name, at least, of the ancient Games has now been revived, along with its picturesque memories. Let us hope that in a saner world than ours is, in one which has recaptured the best of the ancient spirit of Hellas, the lighted torch of the Olympic runner may still traverse a world in which the God of Christianity has long since gone to join Zeus and Apollo in the common oblivion of the capacious grave that is the final resting-place of all gods.

F. A. RIDLEY.

### THE NEWEST MORAL PROBLEM

JESUS CHRIST told certain of his disciples: "Follow me and I will make you fishers of men." Now, no one will suggest that Dr. Fisher, the present Archbishop of Canterbury, is a fisher of men, or that he will, if he can help it, be a fisher in troubled waters. It would be a miracle indeed if Jesus did turn Dr. Fisher, that acceptable after-dinner jester and hardened worldling, from fishing for the loaves and fishes of worldly material success in his office to fishing for the souls of men.

The world moves on, however. And worldlings must move with the world—religious worldlings as much as others. Of late years adultery, that favourite topic of ecclesiastics since the days of pretty Susannah and the Elders, has taken a wider scope. With the advance of science—if science it may be called—we have extended Artificial Insemination from the beasts to the human beast. A new moral problem has arisen.

Or rather, to be strictly accurate, a variant upon the old one of straightforward natural adultery. We have artificial silk, artificial teeth, and many artificial other gadgets. And now, a kind of artificial adultery. Why not? Anything, even rice-puddings, for a change, as Compton Mackenzie's landlady said.

Everyone gets quite excited over it. Lawyers must overhaul their legal concepts. Husbands and wives arrive at opinions upon it and in some cases, at actions—and as spouses quarrel over anything and everything, marital quarrels are sure to arise here. Doctors discuss their duties in the matter. And of course—the clergy are not going to be left out, for adultery and sex have long been aspects of human behaviour in which they are genuinely interested.

So Dr. Fisher, as Head of the Anglican Communion, faced by this problem, has felt constrained to talk about it to the Royal Commission on Marriage and Divorce.

But let us, before hearing the Archbishop, talk to ourselves about it. Clearly in Human Artificial Insemination there are two main classes. The first is where the female is inseminated by her own husband's seed instrumentally by a doctor. Well, if she prefers it that way, that is her affair. Or if her husband cannot perform properly so as to impregnate her, artificial insemination with her husband's seed for child-bearing again is her own affair.

Surely this is one of the most personal and private of all private matters. It is the concern of the spouses alone. Upon it Dr. Fisher says: "I think the Church is ready to accept Artificial Insemination (Husband) as legitimate procedure."

As Carlyle said to the lady who declared herself ready "to accept the Universe": "Gad, she'd better," so may we say of our cautious Archbishop. By "the Church" his Grace means the Anglican Communion, for he has no title to speak for the Roman or Greek Catholics, or for the Nonconforming Protestant sects. For if the Church refused to accept Artificial Insemination, husbands and wives would still, at need and at desire of progeny, practise it.

And indeed it is difficult to see any valid, ethical or moral or religious objection, though the performance of this operation may be repugnant and unpleasant on æsthetic or similar grounds.

So much for the first class—the less difficult of the two. But what of the second class: Artificial Insemination by someone other than the husband (either with or without the husband's consent)? This *ersatz* adulterer, who may be a complete stranger veiled in anonymity, is euphemistically called by doctors and others: The Donor.

Dr. Fisher is not reported as yet giving his Church's view upon this. Clearly it raises new and grave problems in law and ethics. Apparently this time "The Church" is not "ready" to accept, or even to pronounce upon, this difficult and complex question.

We had better look at it for ourselves. There are two different cases here: the husband's consent, or absence of the husband's consent. If the husband consents, then surely it is the spouses' own affair. (But an impotent husband may be blackmailed into consent by a desire to retain his wife, and surely the right remedy for the wife desiring a child is divorce by a decree of nullity.) However, here again, when the Church of England is "ready," the Archbishop and his fellow-Bishops may have to proclaim the spiritual lawfulness of this. But will the Church of Rome? One doubts it. And the Church of England will shrink in dismay from not following that Church.

If the husband has not consented or has refused consent, what is to be said of the wife receiving into her womb



the seed of another man? That is surely adultery—*ersatz* adultery, if you like, but as morally indefensible as natural adultery with the male organ. In the long run neither the Anglican, Roman nor Greek Churches, nor any of their offshoots, is likely to countenance this new type of marital misconduct, which strikes at the very root of "Christian marriage," which is monogamous.

If the wife requires the aid of A.I.D. (as it is delicately called) she had better get divorced. The so-called "donor" may be diseased in mind or body. He may be a being repugnant to her flesh. To my mind, a female who voluntarily risks the semen of an unseen stranger is a fool, and she may deserve the child she conceives. The decent thing for a woman to do with an impotent husband is to divorce him and find another who is potent.

When that lawgiver of ancient Judah called Moses brought down the Ten Commandments from Mount Sinar he failed to foresee anything more upon adultery than a simple prohibition of it. Jesus Christ failed also to provide anything more as a remedy for this new kind of adultery, unknown to the ancient East but practised by the modern West.

Where Moses and Jesus have failed to provide, must we accept provision made by Dr. Fisher after consulting the present-day Bishops of whom, by the way, Crockford's gives no very flattering account? Dr. Fisher will keep one eye, if not both, on Rome, of course. But we shall surely do better if we make up our own minds about it, as most members of the Protestant Churches, including the Anglican, certainly will.

For my part, I am all for natural copulation, and if I had the misfortune to be a woman I would have either the real thing or nothing. Fancy answering your dear little toddler: "Darling, I have no idea who your daddy was. Except that he lived in a test-tube and came to me in a glass squirt." It requires the pen of a poet to celebrate such a romance as that. Nor does one like to think of such an orphan's childish humiliation and agony. Children are such children, after all, thinking far more of themselves and the love they need than the advances of science and the modernism of their mothers—the wretched little brats!

And meditation on this problem inclines me to say that some women can endure anything, while some men can endure nothing—not even some modern women. Fortunately the newest modern problem affects very few of us directly. In a decently civilised country, where divorce is obtainable at no expense at the will of either party, the problem would not exist at all.

C. G. L. DU CANN.

### A MODERN CLASSIC

A PIN TO SEE THE PEEPSHOW. By F. Tennyson Jesse. (Penguin Books at 2s. 6d. net).

MISS JESSE'S important novel created a stir when originally published nearly 20 years ago. A dozen years previously the notorious Thompson—Bywaters trial had cast a grave slur upon British justice in the eyes of a number of eminent jurists, as well as scores of legal dignitaries and criminologists, including learned counsel at the Bar (notably Sir Henry Curtis Bennett, K.C., who defended Mrs. Thompson and who, according to his son, Mr. Derek Curtis Bennett, K.C., believed in his client's innocence up to the end); Sir Bernard Spilsbury, and the author of the novel under review. A Notable British Trial volume edited by Mr. Filson Young had already contained the case when Miss Jesse,

herself the editor of a number of criminal cases in the Notable British Trial series, wrote a thinly veiled sketch of the leading characters in what the *Daily Telegraph* of the day described as a novel to be recommended.

Since that time this sad and sorry business has been the topic of much discussion, and more than one novel, short story and play has been written dealing with the murder of the Ilford shipping clerk and the extravagantly theatrical trial which followed, resulting in the execution of the wife and her lover. Last year a dramatized version of *A Pin to See the Peepshow*, by Miss Jesse and Mr. H. M. Harwood, was seen upon the London stage; this year the same version will be seen in New York. A few years back, Frank Vosper's play dealing with the same subject in a vastly different and—according to Mr. J. C. Trewin, the noted dramatic critic—inferior manner, was shown publicly in the West End. But Vosper's piece, *People Like Us*, failed to cause the stir of Miss Jesse's banned piece which was seen only, because of the Lord Chamberlain's ruling, at a small club-subscription theatre, the New Boltons, in South Kensington. At the time there were scores of requests urging the lifting of the ban which had been imposed because of an objection by a relative to the character of the husband being represented in a certain fashion. But although the same character in Vosper's play had been unsympathetically drawn (which was not the case in Miss Jesse's play) *People Like Us* went its way in the West End and *A Pin to See the Peepshow* was confined to the intellectual wilds of S.W.10, to be seen there only by a membership audience. Fortunately the novel had not been banned in 1934 and went on to become in a short while a tremendous best seller, the finest and most moving human document that the author of *Secret Bread*, *Tom Fool*, *The Lacquer Lady* and *The Alabaster Cup* (which I reviewed in these columns upon its publication) had ever written.

Certainly Tennyson Jesse is possessed of a unique versatility. Not only is she a remarkably fine story-teller, an immaculate prose writer who can have few equals among popular novelists, but also a satirist of the first order. In *A Pin to See the Peepshow* (at last republished in a conveniently inexpensive edition) the tragedy of a bewildered and romantic little woman's quest for a romance, which brings her to the gallows, is dealt with in a compassionate yet unsentimental way. The "powers that be" are castigated in their inhuman treatment of a pathetic victim of circumstance in much the same way that the phoney religionist and spurious miracle worker were lampooned in the same writer's *Act of God* (Thinkers Library). *A Pin to See the Peepshow* is the more telling because of its blend of laughter and tears, humanity and satire, little events and majestic tragedy. Miss Jesse's novel, like the case upon which it is based, leaves itself permanently imprinted upon our minds in much the same way as Shakespeare's

But man, proud man!

Dressed in a little brief authority . . .

Plays such fantastic tricks before high Heaven

As make the angels weep . . .

with which it has so much in common, is permanently engraved upon our memory.

A champion of unhappy people, fighter against injustice wherever it may be, and a major novelist living in an age of literary mediocrities, F. Tennyson Jesse uses her pen as a sword in order to slay superstition, illiteracy and "proud men." She has the courage of her convictions and the conscience of a Freethinker. PETER COTES.



## ACID DROPS

One of the best known stories the Bible tells us for our salvation is that which relates how Peter killed off Ananias and Sapphira, and then immediately blamed God for it—making out, in fact, that God Almighty was a murderer. We recalled this delectable yarn when reading how Sugar Ray Robinson reacted on being defeated recently by Joe Maxim. Ray immediately and indignantly denied that either the heat or the superior prowess of Maxim had anything to do with it. It was God alone—"It was God," he cried, "he wanted me to lose." And who are we to argue with Sugar Ray!

Those dear old days when the Lord looked after little sparrows and when he fully provided for every mouth that came here from the mysterious nowhere and immediately wanted feeding, appear to have vanished for ever. The World, we are told by many economists, is growing hungrier, and in this, the *World Economic Report 1950-51* fully agrees. The economic and social gulf between "rich" and "poor" countries is growing wider, there is less food for everybody these days than there was 15 years ago, and what there is goes more to America, New Zealand and Australia, than to Asia. We suggest that there can be only one true reason for this discrimination—Americans, New Zealanders and Australians are Christians; Asiatics are "pagans," and God Almighty has little time these days for non-Christians.

Leaving aside the question of Dr. Malan's fierce Fascism in South Africa, and how much this may be contributing to the increase of crimes, there can be no doubt that the spread of armed violence there is increasing by leaps and bounds. Terrorism by both black and white criminals makes it impossible for the whites to pass through certain districts; but the most interesting aspect of this is that they are at the same time well provided for by churches. In Johannesburg, which has a tenth of the inhabitants of London, has now twice as much crime, and needless to add, Freethought is almost non-existent. The thorough Fundamentalism of the old Boers still is rampant—and crime is increasing, but we never hear what a precious example South Africa shows in its devotion to the Word to the rest of the world.

Phials of Lourdes water have long been known to perform miraculous cures of incurable diseases especially after crowds of sick people have first washed in the water; but water taken from the Shrine at Fatima is putting it into the shade. Although Fatima water is very limited, any full-believing Catholic can obtain some from the Dominican Fathers, who run *Saint Jude Chronicle*, for a small "offering," and to egg them on to apply they are told of the latest cure—"a doctor has testified under oath to the complete cure of a repulsive mouth disease after a young woman patient had prayerfully applied Fatima water to her lips." We just love the operative word—"prayerfully."

But it isn't only on Fatima water that the Church concentrates. You can buy all kinds of articles blessed by Fatima—medals, statues, and prayerbooks, for example. Moreover, there are "shrine books" which help you to believe, with titles like "Rosary Meditations," "Shrine Devotions," and a special booklet, "Our Lady of Fatima Booklet," designed for "popular Fatima devotion." In case you are still hesitating to buy, you are assured that each article or book has been touched by a St. Jude relic, and Rosaries "will receive the blessings for obtaining all indulgences." And yet there are many reverent "unbelievers" who think that our forthright attack on Roman Catholicism has now become superfluous!

## THEATRE

"The Trial of Mr. Pickwick." By Stanley Young. Recently at the Westminster Theatre.

WHEN coping with volumes of the magnitude of *The Pickwick Papers*, dramatists are wise if they refrain from dealing with it in its entirety, for it would be so unwieldy that it would not be theatrical. Stanley Young, an American, has capably dealt with some of the leading people in the book. He has succeeded in bringing them to life and has given us the atmosphere that Dickens so vividly created.

The actual trial is only one incident or scene among a collection of others, but all the time we are aware of a case being formed against Mr. Pickwick which ultimately brings him to court as the defendant. He has only contempt for their red tape and semblance of justice, and the scene finishes chaotically.

The cast as a team have entered into the spirit of the play. Bartlett Mullins is absolutely a lovable Pickwick, and Victor Maddern gives a fine performance as Sam Weller. Kathleen Boutall is Mrs. Bardell, Basil Cunard is Buzfuz, Wensley Pithey is Mr. Weller, and Christie Humphrey Mrs. Weller. Peter Copley is the false Mr. Jingle and Gordon Littman the Fat Boy who is always sleeping.

There is much character and humour in the play, and it has been greatly helped by John Burrell's production and Roland Pym's clever settings.

RAYMOND DOUGLAS.

## URGENT BOOKS

HENRY HAZLITT, in *Time Will Run Back* (Benn, 15s.), uses a brilliant device to frame an apology for contemporary conservative economics. He sets his scene in the year 2100, when that "great indiscriminate monster distraction," the State, has taken complete control of life. The hero is a dictator with a difference who dares to experiment in order "to set the people free." Books and history have been destroyed in purges, and the dictator has to work it all out for himself, and he arrives at official economics as we know them. It makes a horribly fascinating story.

The pay-off is that when the conventional so-called "economic freedoms" of to-day have been rediscovered the world finds itself once more facing the problems of war, inflation, "the yellow peril" and a host of similar discouragements for crystal-gazers. So the thoughtful freethinker will be stimulated to study the anarchist solution, seeing that imposed government (totalitarian or socialist-conservative) seems to lead to slavery or war. The implicit moral must be that we will never have a world of peace and plenty by imposed sacrifices or privileges: freedom must be guarded by voluntary endeavour.

How the world could voluntarily combine to spend its assets to save its capital (which is now being squandered on armaments) is indicated in *War On Want* (Gollancz, 1s.) This report has been prepared by a panel of experts headed by the Rt. Hon. Harold Wilson, M.P., and Sir Richard Acland. Freethinkers may feel that the drafting committee has been a shade too careful to protect certain contemporary taboos; yet the authors do outline proposals which, even at this twelfth hour, might create a world-wide ferment of hope and resolution out of which courage and achievement could grow.

OSWELL BLAKESTON.



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## TO CORRESPONDENTS

PETER E. NEWELL.—There are, no doubt, several small groups like the S.P.G.B., chiefly on the extreme left, which are anti-clerical. Our editorial referred to *national* politics, where anti-clericalism is, as we stated, absolutely non-existent.

FRANCIS J. GOULD. — We are always pleased to consider contributions.

THE FREETHINKER will be forwarded direct from the Publishing Office at the following rates (Home and Abroad): One year, £1 4s.; half-year, 12s.; three months, 6s.

Correspondents are requested to write on one side of the paper only and to make their letters as brief as possible.

Lecture Notices should reach the Secretary of the N.S.S. at this Office by Friday morning.

Will correspondents kindly note to address all communications in connection with "The Freethinker" to: "The Editor," and not to any particular person. Of course, private communications can be sent to any contributor.

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

## SUGAR PLUMS

We do not expect that the resolution unanimously passed by the Executive Committee of the N.S.S. at their meeting this week will be put into effect by the Foreign Office, but we hope that it may focus public opinion on the present deplorable state of affairs in Spain. It stated that:—

"The Executive Committee of the National Secular Society demands the immediate rupture of this country's diplomatic relations with the Franco Government of Spain on the grounds that the barbarous massacre of political prisoners now being perpetrated in that country constitutes a flagrant violation of the Charter of Human Rights agreed on by the United Nations as an elementary condition of membership of the community of civilised nations."

Copies have been sent to the Prime Minister, the Foreign Secretary and the Leader of the Opposition.

The 18th edition of "The Culture of the Abdomen," by F. A. Hornibrook, largely revised and re-written, was published by Messrs. Wm. Heinemann Limited, 99, Great Russell Street, London, W.C., at a price of 10s. 6d. plus 6d. postage. This book has also been published in several countries—U.S.A., Sweden, Australia, Finland, etc. Its first edition was published in 1924, and its continued success must naturally be a matter of pride to its author. Mr. Hornibrook is well-known to readers of *The Freethinker* as a contributor and lecturer.

## CATHOLIC PERSECUTION OF HERESY

IN its infancy the Latin Church was powerless to inflict the drastic suppression of dissent which it so mercilessly manifested in later centuries. Yet even St. Paul denounced any departure from his special teachings. For in his Epistle to the Galatians i., 8, he asserted: "But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel to you than that we have preached, let him be accused." This intolerant utterance found many adherents as the years rolled away. For, during the first six centuries of our era, bitter animosity was displayed between contending sects, until the more powerful party established a despotism from which there was no appeal.

As Lea points out in his elaborate study, *The Inquisition in the Middle Ages*, when the wealth and potency of the orthodox Church increased: "A hardy disputant who questioned the dogmatic accuracy of his ecclesiastical superior was a mutineer of the worst kind; and if he succeeded in attracting followers they became the nucleus of a rebellion which threatened revolution, and every motive, good or evil, prompted the suppression of such sedition at all hazards and by every available means."

Opposition to schismatics became more pronounced when Christianity was adopted by Constantine as the cult of the State and, when the Council of Nicea endeavoured to create uniformity, heretical and schismatic assemblies were prohibited and heavy burdens were placed on dissentients. But unanimity was unobtainable, and the Emperor Julian observed "that he had found no wild beasts so cruel to men as most of the Christians were to each other." Constantine had vainly striven to lessen the bitterness that prevailed between the discordant sects, although he had ordered the destruction of all known copies of the writings of the heretical Arius.

After a brief interval of restraint the Church adopted a drastic policy of repression and the heretic Priscillian and his adherents were put to a shameful death. The alliance of Church and State furthered the growth of intolerance. The superstitions of Christian Emperors were exploited, and Imperial edicts procured which sentenced heretics to exile, hard labour in the mines and even to death. God had given the Church powers, it was said, not to remain unused, although her punishments were to be inflicted by the secular power exclusively. Moreover, when the civil authorities proved lax the clergy were constantly admonishing them for their negligence, while the Popes asserted that the purity of the faith was the Empire's most urgent care.

Burning alive for heresy was first introduced at the Council of Constantinople. Nor were the Arian Vandals in Africa unwilling to pursue the fiendish methods of their Athanasian adversaries. Yet, the Arian Goths, Burgundians, and other Christianised barbarians, were usually far more tolerant than their orthodox foes.

That the death penalty for heresy instituted by the Church must be carried out by the secular power was a custom dating back to early times. Also, no cleric was to be present, either at an execution, or during the torture of the accused. Lea notes that: "This sensitiveness continued and was even exaggerated in the time of the bloodiest persecution. While thousands were being slaughtered in Languedoc, the Council of the Lateran, in 1215, revived the ancient canons prohibiting clerks from uttering a judgment of blood or being present at an execution. . . . Had this shrinking from participation in the infliction of human suffering been genuine, it would have been worthy of all respect; but it was merely a device to avoid responsibility for its own acts. . . . It merely found the defendant to be a heretic and 'relaxed' him, or relinquished him to the secular authorities with the hypocritical adjuration to be merciful to him, to spare his life, and not to spill his blood." The plain truth of this is clearly seen in the procedure of the Inquisition in first condemning, and then surrendering the heretic to the civil functionaries to be incinerated alive.

The degree of Pope Lucius III in 1148 commanded all princes to take oath in the presence of their bishops to strictly observe all the spiritual and temporal laws concerning heresy, while disregard of these enactments incurred ex-communication, loss of rank and removal of



the right to occupy any other office. Cities infested with heterodoxy were to be completely boycotted and outlawed.

The Church virtually compelled the sovereign to persecute. No excuse for exercising clemency was accepted. Any monarch who estranged the Church risked the usurpation of his dominions by the first unscrupulous adventurer who was armed by the Church for his deposition. This theocratic system was invoked in the time of Innocent III during the Albigensian crusades when the then ruler of Languedoc, Raymond, forfeited his possessions "simply because he would not punish heretics, and those which his son retained were treated as a fresh gift from the Crown."

The so-called Holy Roman Empire was intended as a secular agency of the Papacy, and the elected Emperor's coronation ceremony conferred lower priestly powers when he swore to silence all opposition to the Church. The ring presented to Frederick II symbolised his mission to extirpate heresy, while his sword signified his duty to overcome all assailants of the Church. From the Emperor to the poorest peasant, everyone was pledged to suppress heresy under pain of impoverishment or death. Although he himself was more than suspected of extreme heresy, Frederick, who knew only too well the danger of incurring the hostility of his subjects, who were stultified with superstition, promulgated ferocious edicts against heretics. And as Lea states: "The Church took care that this legislation should not remain a dead letter. Frederick's decrees in all their atrocity were required to be read and taught in the great school of Bologna as a fundamental portion of jurisprudence and were even embodied in the canon law itself."

There was the further danger that officials who failed in the rigid enforcement of anti-heretical decrees were liable to be charged with heresy themselves. All Catholics were told that their supreme duty was to discover and denounce heresy. No relationship between husband, wife, children or other kindred excused the concealment of heterodoxy. No faith was to be kept with heretics and as Pope Innocent III phrased it no faith was due to "him who keeps not faith with God."

Nor did the spiritual order spare the dead who had successfully hidden their heresy during life. Their remains must be exhumed and burnt, lest they contaminate consecrated ground, while their property—if any—was usually confiscated.

Apologists have striven to prove that the fiendish treatment of heretics was that of the secular power. But, as Lea pertinently remarks: "We can imagine the smile of amused surprise with which Gregory IX or Gregory XI would have listened to the dialectics with which Comte Joseph de Maistre proves that it is an error to suppose, and much more to assert that Catholic priests can in any manner be instrumental in compassing the death of a fellow creature."

T. F. PALMER.

#### LOOSE END

I was once a busy clergyman,  
I'm at a loose end now,  
And, like my gentle Master,  
I was meek and all-forgiving;  
But they kept a stringent hold  
On their bags of shining gold,  
And I've got to live somehow,  
So I've given up my living.

A. E. C.

#### JOSEPH MAZZINI WHEELER

*He wore the white flower of a blameless life.*

J. M. WHEELER was the close companion of G. W. Foote and for years was the sub-editor of *The Freethinker*. He was not a lecturer, but a widely-read man and a writer of great ability. His weekly articles in *The Freethinker* were always looked forward to with great interest. He knew the Bible from Genesis to Revelation and the origin of the rites and ceremonies of not only the Christian religion, but of others as well. Young Freethinkers should read his *Footprints of the Past*; it is full of very valuable information. I have often thought that lecturers, both indoor and outdoor, should devote more time to this subject. Most people like to know how things originate and how beliefs were instituted. The Bible contains many such, and its superstitions belong to primitive man and should be explained. It is an interesting subject and it effectively undermines Christianity. Mr. Wheeler's *Biographical Dictionary of Freethinkers, Crimes of Christianity* are splendid works and should be on every Freethinker's bookshelf. During Mr. Foote's imprisonment J. M. Wheeler and Dr. Aveling took charge of *The Freethinker*, and it appeared regularly every week and never missed an issue in the whole of its career, which is most remarkable. It is reported in the New Testament that when Jesus was arrested all his disciples "forsook him and fled." How very different when a leader of Freethought is attacked. Freethinkers rally around, which shows that they are made of sterner stuff and, as John Milton says, "Injustice to one is menace to all." Mr. Wheeler passed away with a smile on his face and met the night of death as tranquil as a star meets morning.

His companion and great friend, Mr. Foote, had been hurriedly sent for and was at his bedside when he died. "After life's fitful fever he sleeps well."

JOSEPH CLOSE.

#### CORRESPONDENCE

##### RACE DISCRIMINATION

SIR,—I enclose a letter for publication which has been rejected by thirteen newspapers on the grounds that it is "abusive" and "irrelevant" I enclose one of the latest of these for you to judge for yourself. Personally my view is that we have no "free Press," but a priest-ridden Press.

The letter is as follows:—

I am surprised at what seems to me to be the effrontery of Father Patrick Peyton of U.S.A. in leading a crusade in England, with its world-wide Empire and Commonwealth where the race-bar is unorganised (except where Malan holds sway), while the *Manchester Guardian* stated as long ago as 1942, that a large number of churches, both Protestant and Catholic, were closed to negroes in U.S.A. Even dogs are not allowed to be buried in "white" cemeteries. I suppose "white" dogs are superior to those belonging to negroes!

In Washington one third of the population (260,000 negroes) are living in squalid conditions known as "black" belts, and they only have a twelfth of the expectation of life compared with that of the white population.

My advice to Father Peyton is "Physician, heal thyself."  
—Yours, etc.,  
ARTHUR H. CLARKE.

##### BOREDOM AND WAR

SIR,—I have already explained that the only way to persuade the people of the world to stop fighting is to show them the example of fulfilled lives. The work begins with oneself, then with one's neighbour, and so on. But perhaps Mr. Renton, like so many today, is too busy to read. I cannot believe, if he really bothered to read my article and correspondence, that he would persist in confusing the causes of war (operated by the high-level boys) and the reason, which I was discussing, why the masses allow themselves to be sacrificed in conflicts which can never bring them any benefit. If Mr. Renton is too impatient for argument, I feel he should not be



surprised if I point out that he is ignoring my points and making emotional statements in some context of his own.—Yours, etc.,  
OSWELL BLAKESTON.

[This discussion must now cease.—EDITOR.]

#### QUOTATION REQUIRED

SIR,—The following paragraph occurs in *One Man's Mind*, by John Rowland (page 91), (so ably reviewed by Bayard Simmons):—

I continued to write for *The Freethinker*, though with an increasing distaste for a good deal of what was being written by my fellow-contributors. I particularly disliked the way in which a hard core of elder statesmen (anti-Socialists, for the most part) were inclined to speak, almost with a tone of approval, of the fact that in a future war it might be advisable to use atomic bombs against an eastern enemy. I was astonished that anyone should be so blind as not to see that an atomic war in which Britain was involved would lead to the end of Britain.

Perhaps Mr. Rowland would give us the exact words used by the "elder statesmen." In passing, it may interest readers to learn that he accused me of this, and when I asked him for "chapter and verse," he hastily apologised, admitting he had misread my article.—Yours, etc.,  
H. CUTNER.

#### BIRTH CONTROL

SIR,—The comments roused by my letter to you are illuminating. I do not find myself in complete agreement with Rupert L. Humphris. One of his statements brings a protest from H. Cutner, but rather as a question of looseness of language than of fact. Without a definite quantity attached to it the word "few" means nothing and the first part of R.L.H.'s letter may be taken to mean that unless contraception is practised food supplies at some future unspecified date will be insufficient to meet the needs of the population. This is only guessing.

The really dangerous word is "must," which you have italicised. "Must" suggests compulsion of some sort. Too frequently it means interference in the form of enactments and their enforcement. The frivolous mind conjures up visions of a Compulsory Contraception Act, with ration cards for cohabitation and bedtime kit inspection.

I should not like to be called upon to define the word "fit" although I have used it. The test of fitness to survive is simply survival. The individual most fit to survive one set of circumstances might be the least fit in another.

It may be allowed that the mere reduction of numbers is in a sense selection, but unless governed by some weeding-out principle reduction is akin to deciding important issues by the toss of a coin.

Percy G. Roy says that I cannot compare the human species with frogs, etc., but I can because I do! He also says that "Man" is not exposed to the mercies of Nature. What exactly is to be understood from this? Individual men and women are drowned, burned to death, frozen, and even without these calamities men and women are daily dying because of some failure of their bodies.

Without seeming too self-contradictory I would like to point out that contraception has a selective action in dividing the community into two sections, those who practise and those who do not. The effect of the Papal ban putting all Roman Catholics in the "not" category is likely to be an increase in the actual number of Catholics and a higher percentage of Catholics to total population if non-Catholics are all in the "practising" category.

To be as clever as the Pope all the arguments for birth control should be levelled at the "other fellow" while continuing to procreate abundantly one's own kind.—Yours, etc.,  
C. N. AIREY.

#### THE NATURE OF HUMAN NATURE

SIR,—"Human nature" is a subject of encyclopaedic dimensions. What I am writing here is just a critical note that at once springs up to the rational mind when one reads a statement that carries all the force and all the weakness of a dogmatic dictum:—

"All metaphysical concepts and ethical values conceived and created by 'homo sapiens' are *physically* determined: the psyche is a daughter of Mother Earth."

It occurs in an article by M. N. Roy, "*The Rhythm of the Cosmos*" (and has been italicised and approved by our esteemed Editor). The statement is no doubt intended as a friendly challenge to all and sundry.

To begin with, may I point out that "ethical values" are not entirely created by man. They have in their nature a "given" element. They are *discoveries*, rather, by man of the *essential conditions* of good and sane living. The only sense in which man can truly become a "creator" is surely by the resolute setting aside of the half truth that man is the product of the society (the economic and material conditions) in which he lives. The torch-bearers of human progress, mental and moral, have been the noble

army of men and women who by their life and work have given the lie to the assertion that man is merely the physical product of the environment in which he was born.

The notion of "freedom" is born of conflict arising out of material conditions of living and stretching always *beyond* present attainment. We read in "The Light of Asia":—

Pity and love are man's because long stress  
Moulded blind mass to form.

—Yours, etc.,

R. J. JACKSON.

#### N.S.S. EXECUTIVE REPORT, 3rd JULY

Present: F. A. Ridley (in the Chair), Mrs. Venton, Messrs. Griffiths, Ebury, Johnson, Hornibrook, Woodley, Tiley, Cleaver, Corstorphine, Barker, Taylor and the Secretary.

New members were accepted for the Parent Branch. Permission was given for the formation of a new Branch to be known as the Glasgow Secular Society (Branch of the N.S.S.) and members were admitted.

Mr. Kenyon's resignation from the Committee on the grounds of pressure of other work was accepted. Requests from the N.E. Group that Mr. Gibbins should join Mr. Johnson in representing them, and from Branches in the N.W. that Mr. Taylor should be their representative were agreed to.

Details of a debate to be held at Queen Mary's College (London University) in November, at which the motion "That the age in which we live no longer needs Christianity" would be proposed by Mr. Ridley, were announced.

A resolution moved by the President, denouncing the barbarous massacre of political prisoners in Spain and calling for the severing of diplomatic relations, was passed, with instructions for copies to be sent to the Prime Minister, the Foreign Secretary and the Leader of the Opposition.

A scheme for distributing the Society's new Membership Application Forms was approved. The date of the next meeting was brought forward from 7th August to 31st July.

P. VICTOR MORRIS, Secretary.

#### A VICTORY FOR FREETHOUGHT

The decision of the U.S. Supreme Court to reverse a judgment of a New York State authority on the right of "sacrilegious" films to be shown on the screen is a major victory for Freethought in the U.S.A.

The film industry has thus won the right, together with the Press, of producing any film and distributing it to cinema circuits throughout the vast expanse of the U.S.A., irrespective of its merits or demerits from any denominational point of view. The film in question was Roberto Rossellini's "The Miracle," which told the story of a demented peasant woman being seduced by someone she thought was St. Joseph. The poor woman believed her child "holy." This is the slender theme around which this film is weaved.

The fact that Archbishop Spellman has failed in his attempt to ban the film as "immoral" and "sacrilegious" represents a significant defeat for the Roman Church and a significant victory for the Protestant Church and Freethinkers of all shades of opinion.

(Sent in by AKIBA.)

#### LECTURE NOTICES, ETC.

##### OUTDOOR

Bradford Branch N.S.S. (Broadway Car Park).—Every Sunday evening, 7 p.m.: H. DAY.

Kingston-on-Thames Branch N.S.S. (Castle Street).—Sunday, 7-30 p.m.: J. W. BARKER and J. O'NEILL.

Manchester Branch N.S.S. (St. Mary's Gate, Blitzed Site).—Lunch-hour Lectures every weekday, 1 p.m.

North London Branch N.S.S. (White Stone Pond, Hampstead Heath).—Sunday, 12 noon: G. STEAD and L. EBURY.

Nottingham Branch N.S.S. (Old Market Square).—Saturday, July 12, 7 p.m.: T. M. MOSLEY.

Sheffield Branch N.S.S. (Barker's Pool).—Sunday, 7 p.m.: Mr. A. SAMMS.

West London Branch N.S.S. (Hyde Park, Marble Arch).—Sunday, 4 p.m.: Messrs. WOOD and F. A. RIDLEY.

##### INDOOR

South Place Ethical Society (Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, W.C.1).—Sunday, July 13, 11 am.: S. K. RATCLIFFE, "A Time for Reflection."



## AT EUROPE'S HIGHEST OBSERVATORY

"Four American military planes have dropped food supplies to the Sonnblick Observatory, Austria's highest weather station, situated 10,000 ft. up in the Grossglockner range. The station has been isolated by the recent avalanches." (News item.)

FROM Taxenbach (Salzburg) a bus takes you up a solitary lane via Rauris to the *Bodenhaus*; from here, a smaller bus waits on week-ends to take you further up to *Kolm-Seig*, but only once a day. *Bodenhaus* is already deep in the Tauern ranges; from there, the last stretch winds up through dark highwoods to an altitude of 5,000 ft. to world's end. There are steep hairpin bends where the driver has to stand so as to watch the wheels to see whether they are still on firm ground; it seems incredible that vehicles can tackle such goat paths!

It is August, yet the mountain walls around you show you snowy faces; from everywhere glacial waters thunder down. Then the road comes to an end—you are in the *Kolm-Seigurn* cul-de-sac. We spend the night in one of the two houses. Next morning, Loisl, the warden of "Naturfreundehaus," has got to climb up the Sonnblick—the giant on whose rocky bosom the house seems to lean—to see the weatherman up there on business. Would I go with him? He usually takes the ridge, but if I were not free of dizziness we could go across the glazier, though it means a longer way. We decide to take the chance whether my surefootedness has remained.

At 3 a.m. we are up and start on the climb that usually takes five hours. We both are silent, there is only the rhythmical stamp of our heavy boots. Time and again the bare, rugged rock disappears and we have to cross vast, slanting snow fields; their edges have caved in, and under the remaining snow crust you see icy water shoot downwards. "Two years ago," says Loisl, "a girl broke in and was carried away from the floods underneath the snow layer. She was never found."

After three hours' climb we reach a little uninhabited chalet and make a rest for breakfast. In front of us the sun rises, whilst opposite the moon is still in the sky. The rocky waste looks eerie, like a moonscape.

At last we tackle the ridge—big rocks thrown about by a giant's hand. "Once I had a stout lady with me," tells Loisl, "who became frightened and giddy. She just sat down and told me, 'Here I die rather than venture another step.' I had to carry her up in my arms—no less than 20 stones!"

When the sun starts blazing we have merely to skirt the tip of the glazier. It is 8 a.m. when we reach the *Zittel-Haus*, one end of which is the Sonnblick Observatory. "Jolly good time!" comments Loisl.

There are not many tourists up here, and they are not allowed to enter the part of the weather station. However, Loisl goes in and introduces me to the weather warden, who welcomes us with a hot cup of coffee. He rings my wife, down in *Seigurn*, and I tell her that we have safely arrived, up to schedule.

The meteorologist is a little man in the thirties, without anybody to help. Every three hours he has to give a report over the phone, provided that the wires are still intact. When they are not he takes his skis and has to find and repair the damaged parts. One of his predecessors lost his life while on repair tour, through an avalanche; he must not tarry—the world at large waits for his regular reports.

A sort of ladder leads into a turret, with instruments registering snowfall, sun radiation, velocity of wind, etc. The latter is measured by a horizontally moving spoon wheel on top of the turret. The weatherman's immediate

predecessor was killed when he had to climb up to put the wheel right; a gust of storm swept him clean into an abyss. The solitary weather outpost 10,000 ft. up from the inhabited earth is a hero without knowing it.

From the top of Sonnblick you have a grand view as far as Bavaria, Italy and Yugoslavia—a frozen sea of rigid waves and rocky hunchbacks. There grows no tree, let alone food; every bit has to be brought from the next inhabited valley, several hundreds of miles away. Weather permitting, two porters have to carry on their backs food and fuel, oil and spirit to keep the instruments and their watcher going.

"I've sent my wife with the baby—it's three months old now—away to her parents in Heiligenblut; life is too hard for them. But I'm going to fetch her next month; she must give me a hand when I'll be stranded here in winter."

That was six months before the avalanche disaster struck Heiligenblut and isolated Sonnblick Observatory. Soon after the liberation of Austria food and other supplies had to be dropped by American planes; no relief parcel reached its destiny. They slipped into precipices or disappeared in the mass of snow.

P. G. ROY.

## SECULAR EDUCATION IN FRANCE

Our readers will be interested to learn that, at its annual conference on May 24, 1952, the French Socialist Party (S.F.I.O.) unanimously endorsed the following resolution on secular education in France:—

"The Socialist Party strongly condemns the incessant intrigues of clericalism both in France and in her overseas possessions. In particular, it denounces the reduction of expenditure on education at a time when 1,400,000 additional children are deprived of teachers and schools and thus will compel the State to violate its own law of compulsory education.

"The Party declares that, once in power, Socialism will destroy the shameful policy of the present Parliamentary regime, and will fully investigate the whole problem of secular education and of the secularisation of the State, and will always regard the maintenance and expansion of education facilities as the most valuable and permanent investment of the State."—(Translated by F. A. R.)

## SUN WORSHIP

An interesting survival of sun worship is brought to our attention by the arrival in this country of Yma Sumac, the Peruvian singer who can sing through a range of four octaves.

Yma Sumac is a descendant of the Inca Emperor Atahualpa, and is intensely proud of her royal lineage. The fact that even in "Latin" America the Indian population preserves its ancient religion is proof of the essentially reactionary character of Roman Catholicism.

(Sent in by AKIBA.)

## Sign on for SECULARISM!

The Executive Committee of the N.S.S. has arranged that a Membership Application Form be inserted in every copy of this paper this week, hoping that:—

- (a) Non-member readers will study it and decide to join, and
- (b) Members will use it to persuade a friend to do likewise.

## NATIONAL SECULAR SOCIETY THE ORGANISATION of MILITANT FREETHOUGHT

41, Gray's Inn Road, London, W.C. 1

The Secretary will gladly send more forms to readers who can place them to advantage.