

FREE THINKER

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DRESSED NOT TO KILL: BRIGID BROPHY WELCOMES NEW TREND IN FASHION

Brigid Brophy is a passionate defender of freedom and tolerance: a forthright advocate of secular humanism: a novelist, essayist and critic of consummate artistry. Last week Miss Brophy appeared in a rather unusual rôle when she opened a fashion show at the Rembrandt Hotel, London. This is a duty she is not likely to be asked—nor, I expect, be willing—to perform many times. Fashion shows are usually occasions for the designers to show their offerings to potential customers whose capacity for spending is, alas, often equalled only by their lack of taste and judgement. But this show was arranged by the Beauty Without Cruelty organisation, and the collection of elegant dresses, coats, and jackets and capes were all made of simulated material. Their manufacture represented a combination of skill, imagination and humanitarianism. Miss Brophy predicted that Beauty Without Cruelty will become a big trend in fashion; let us hope she is right, for increasing demand for clothes, footwear and cosmetics threatens the continued existence of many species. Mr Brian Davies, executive director of the International Fund for Animal Welfare, told the *Freethinker*: "Since the 17th century 130 life forms have disappeared. At the moment, over 800 different species are threatened with extinction. Man has probably no longer than the first half of this decade to make those changes in human behaviour that are required if wild animals are to survive".

Brigid Brophy's Speech

I am delighted to be opening a fashion show because I am so beautifully the wrong person to do it. Very early in my life I realised that I lacked both the talent and the dedication necessary to the pursuit of fashionableness. Not for me the nun-like austerity it requires: the days of fasting, the mortification of the flesh by rolling, curling, plucking, hot-tonging and the like—to say nothing of the vast book learning involved in fashion: for of course in fashion as in every other branch of scholarship you are always struggling to, as scholars put it, "keep up with the specialist publications". I early decided that to devote myself to those things would leave me too little time for another vocation I have, and I abandoned any small hope that ever existed of achieving elegance in my person in favour of achieving elegance in my prose.

That was no great loss to the world of fashion—or, indeed, to me. If there should be a woman present who feels, as I do, that to achieve fashionableness is utterly beyond her, I hope she will accept my reassurance that as a matter of fact it is perfectly possible to get by without. The proof is my own tremendous success in equipping myself with one close friend of extreme, if idiosyncratic, elegance and one husband of whom virtual strangers write me letters asking where he gets his shirts.

I am, therefore, a woman of fashion at second hand: by virtue of the company I keep. Fashion is an activity, at least as practised by others, which has my 100 per cent approval. It seems to me one of the prettiest and most exciting of the fruits of civilisation: half way between an art and a perversity—and could anyone say more enticing than that? Fashion takes the naked human body and, with its owner's consent, treats it as a canvas or a lump of clay—on which fashion imposes shapes and colours at the utmost, perverse cross-purposes to the material's natural disposition.

In fashion, life and art I am a devout disciple—so devout that I seldom venture into the Café Royal without wearing a green carnation in his honour—I am a devout disciple of



This simulated chinchilla coat by Lister & Co., London, was modelled by Celia Hammond.

(Continued overleaf)

(Continued from previous page)

Oscar Wilde, saint and martyr. And in fashion as in other branches of life it is wise to obey the Oscar Wilde scriptures, which say: "The first duty in life is to be as artificial as possible. What the second duty is no one has as yet discovered".

Although I can pose as a fashion expert only at second hand, I am prepared to speak on my own authority on the subject of art and on the subject of perversity. As an artist, I will tell you this about art: it is all artifice. If it isn't make-believe, if it isn't the result of imagination, it isn't art. And as a moralist, I will tell you this: there is nothing wrong with any perversity under the sun or the moon—providing it is done with consent.

Fashion makes beautiful perversities and absurdities out of the shape of the human body with the consent of the human who owns the body. But if, in doing that, it uses the bodies of animals and violates their consent, it ceases to be art or perversity or fashion and becomes mere butchery. Art is imagination. To kill or hurt an animal



Brigid Brophy

wantonly is a failure of imagination. It means you are too emotionally stupid to understand that though the life of a seal or a panther might not seem much of a life to you, it is the only life which the seal or the panther has, and if you take it away the deprivation is as great as if someone took away your life.

If your husband or lover wants to hang a dead animal on you in order to demonstrate to you how much he loves you or what a virile caveman of a lover he is—or in order to demonstrate to his friends how rich he is—don't be deceived. He is demonstrating nothing but his own lack of imagination. He hasn't understood that *he* has a right to live, simply because he is alive and sentient, and that exactly the same goes for the animal's right to live. Beware of him if he tells you *you're* beautiful: he may mean he'd like to see your beauty shot or trapped and made into a coat.

But if your husband or lover offers to drape you in a beautiful and witty fake, a coat of simulated fur—on which he can, though he needn't, spend almost as much money—then his love's worth having, because it is the love of an imaginative and tolerant person: accept his love, praise him for his imaginative appreciation of the cunning of human technology, and enter with him into the world of artifice, the world of mythology, the menagerie of the imagination, where you can be his tiger woman or his seal wife. And in return you can buy *him* a fun fur and thereby get yourself a fun-caveman-lover.

If women put corpses on their backs and the fat of dead animals on their faces, and if they anoint their skins with chemicals tested by torture on live animals in laboratories, then fashion is conniving at atrocity. It ceases to be artifice and becomes merely the real thing mangled. Beauty Without Cruelty is an organisation designed to avoid this affront to human conscience and human imagination. It was founded by Lady Dowding and other women who, being truly interested in fashion, are truly imaginative. It sells, and gives information about, cosmetics and clothes which have been made without infringing the rights of the other animals and which can therefore be used by human animals without infringing their self-respect. It will even, generously, give you a list of cosmetics made by other manufacturers which you can buy without lending your support to massacre. Beauty Without Cruelty recognises that the first duty in life of a fur coat is to be as artificial as possible.

The existence of Beauty Without Cruelty marks an advance in civilisation; and after the thousands of years in which we have unimaginatively butchered mutilated and exploited the other animal species who share this planet, civilisation, I have confidence in prophesying to you, is about to become the big trend in fashion. I cleared my conscience and became a customer of Beauty Without Cruelty several years ago: nothing could give me more pleasure, as a satisfied customer, and as a vicarious fan of fashion, than to open—as I now do open—its fashion show.

SECULAR EDUCATION APPEAL

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'COMPEL THEM TO COME IN'

One of the notable non-events in the educational field in recent weeks has been the publication by the Department of Educational Studies, Oxford, of a report on a survey entitled *Aspects of Worship in Boarding Schools*. This has been done at the behest of the Bloxham Project Research Unit which seems to be largely composed of Public School headmasters, chaplains and educationalists sympathetic to them. The findings are based on a questionnaire sent out in February to 252 boarding schools, of which 198 were returned after being completed "by assistant chaplains, ordained schoolmasters, etc." The schools, all of which took boarders but some of which were in part day schools, included those run by the Catholic, Anglican and various Free Churches, together with the Society of Friends (Quakers), 12 State, and three "progressive" schools.

I think it fairly safe to say that almost all Humanists, even the most ecumenically minded, will be disappointed with this survey; frankly, I found it pretty depressing. It says virtually nothing that we can regard as either hopeful or fundamentally new. I am sure that the questionnaire was well laid out and that the replies were processed with professional expertise, but the basic premise of the survey was to accept the status quo as it applies to the vast majority of these schools—that is, the authoritarian, orthodox system. The nearest the survey came to questioning the moral basis of compulsory religious worship was to ask if the chaplains (etc.) agreed that "there is too great a degree of compulsion in arrangements for school worship". (The pupils were never directly asked.) The results, breathtaking as they may seem, show that the older the chaplain (or whoever) was, the more likely he was to answer "no". A similar, but less marked trend, showed itself when the chaplains/teachers were asked: "To what extent do sixth-formers . . . object to compulsory religious services?" However, the findings do tend to show that the school staff who were "much" or "to some extent" influenced by the New Theology, were also more aware of pupils' objections to compulsory services. I suppose we infidels should be thankful for small mercies, at any rate.

In a sense, I am judging the survey rather harshly as it is clearly only intended to be of use or relevance to committed Christians anxious to improve their techniques of turning young captive audiences to "personal commitment"; the report was not, in all fairness, intended for consumption by the "enemy" (my words; and if we are not, we ought to be). By the way, they now have readings from "humanist writers" at some Friends schools by way of experimental worship. Big deal!

An Authoritarian System

One part of the survey might amuse readers of this journal (in a sick sort of way) and bears quoting: it is headed, ". . . It is said that they [the pupils] are increasingly reluctant to sing traditional hymns".

When the *Sunday Times* recently published its "ABC of Education", it referred, in its entry for hymns, to "dragging tunes" and "incomprehensible words" (the latter said to be concerned mainly with "abatement, sin, and fountains of blood"), and it conjectured that the effect of hymn-singing has been "to corrupt poetic taste, and to destroy musical interests". Judging by the results of this survey however, such a view is not held in boarding schools.

NIGEL SINNOTT

They wouldn't dare, would they? A year ago I was invited to a traditional Public School to put the Humanist point of view to their sixth form. This resulted in a remarkably frank (and at times, fierce) discussion, but afterwards the organising master, an otherwise charming Anglican, commented that he thought the questions were good, ". . . but I'm glad no-one asked silly questions like 'Why do we have compulsory chapel?'" The answer, as far as he was concerned, was: "Because your parents have sent you here".

I find it very difficult, virtually pointless in fact, to discuss the question of religion in boarding schools in isolation. A system whose whole philosophy is authoritarian, where almost everything is either compulsory or forbidden, is not going to get squeamish about a pupil's right of individual religious dissent. "Your parents don't have to send you here, do they?" No, indeed, which is why it behoves sensitive and tolerant men and women, of whatever ideological persuasion, to see to it that the system is publicly discredited.

FREEDOM IN EXILE

Robert Cazden's superb bibliographical study of the free German press and book trade, *German Exile Literature in America 1933-1950*, has been published by the American Library Association. This book illuminates an important chapter in the history of German-American cultural interchange.

Beginning with an analysis of the nature and structure of the anti-Hitler emigration, this vividly written chronicle describes the rise, on an international scale, of a dynamic press and book trade. Great names of German 20th century literature such as Thomas and Heinrich Mann, Bertolt Brecht, and Franz Werfel were involved as were thousands of others—writers, scholars, journalists, politicians, labour leaders, entertainers, for whom the German language was a necessary medium of expression.

These three perplexing and intriguing questions are explored: How were thousands of German language books and journals published outside the Third Reich imported and distributed in the USA? Who was responsible for the printing and publishing of Free German literature in the United States? What was the fate of the German emigré author in America? Appendixes list and describe, in many cases for the first time, the German language literature of the emigration; more than 350 imprints from 76 publishers and 82 newspapers are also identified.

This pioneering bibliographical study adds a new chapter to the history of books, and librarians, literary historians, book collectors and dealers will find it fascinating reading. It costs \$10, and is obtainable from the American Library Association, 50 East Huron Street, Chicago, Ill., 60611, USA.

FREETHINKER

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ANNOUNCEMENTS

National Secular Society. Details of membership and inquiries regarding bequests and secular funeral services may be obtained from the General Secretary, 103 Borough High St., London, SE1. Telephone 01-407 2717. Cheques, etc., should be made payable to the NSS.

Humanist Postal Book Service (secondhand books bought and sold). For information or catalogue send 6d stamp to Kit Mouat, Mercers, Cuckfield, Sussex.

Humanitas Stamps: Help 5 Humanist Charities. Buy stamps from or send them to Mrs A. C. Goodman, 51 Percy Road, Romford, RM7 8QX, Essex. British and African speciality. Send for list.

EVENTS

Leicester Secular Society. Secular Hall, Humberstone Gate, Leicester, Sunday, 4 October, 6.30 p.m. W. Bryn Thomas: "Secular Thought and Contemporary Problems".

Nottingham and Notts Humanist Group. Adult Education Centre, 14 Shakespeare Street, Nottingham, Friday, 9 October, 7.30 p.m. Jack Parsons: "Population v. Liberty".

South Place Ethical Society, Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, London, W1, Sunday, 4 October, 11 a.m. Richard Clements: "J. A. Hobson".

South Place Ethical Society, Conway Hall, Tuesday, 6 October, 7.30 p.m. The Conway Memorial Lecture; Professor Leopold Kohr: "The Breakdown of Great Britain". Chairman: Dr Schumacher. Admission 2/6.

Welwyn Garden City Humanist Group. 70 Attimore Road, Welwyn Garden City, Saturday, 10 October, 8 p.m. Discussion: "Is Humanism Anti-Religious or Non-Religious?"

NSS SUPPORTS OAP's

The National Secular Society was well represented on the recent London demonstration in support of the demand for higher pensions for the aged. Kevin Page—in his capacity as political information officer of Bromley Young Liberals—handed in a petition at Downing Street with a letter which stated that in view of the current inflation in wages and prices, pensions should be reassessed more frequently.

David Tribe (president) and Martin Page (general secretary) also handed in a petition calling for adequate pensions and benefits to enable the aged to enjoy a good standard of living and security. The NSS Working Party on old people will soon publish its report.

NEWS

RUDI DUTSCHKE

The Home Secretary has refused to receive a deputation from the National Secular Society to discuss the proposed expulsion from Britain of Rudi Dutschke. No reason is given for the refusal, and Martin Page, the Society's general secretary has written to the Home Office raising a number of questions regarding the appeal which Dutschke is to lodge.

David Tribe, president of the NSS, issued the following Press statement: The National Secular Society regrets that the Home Secretary has declined to receive a deputation from us (which we hope would have included Lord Annan, Mrs Fanny Cockerell, Lionel Elvin, William Hamling, MP, the Rev David Head, Maurice Hill, Tony Klug, Professor Hyman Levy, Professor Julius Lewin, Martin Page, Lord Sorensen, David Tribe, and the Rev Basil de Winton) regarding his proposed expulsion of Rudi Dutschke.

It may be that the Home Secretary is awaiting the result of Dutschke's appeal or that he is already regretting his own decision. This he may well do. For it is an action which runs counter to the great liberal traditions of Britain and her reception of overseas refugees and others unpopular in their own countries from the time of the Huguenots in the 16th century. A land which has survived the residence and studies of Karl Marx and V. I. Lenin is unlikely to collapse during the studentship of Rudi Dutschke.

Continental-style "student protest", with which Mr Dutschke's name is associated, has often shown a robustness out of keeping with British traditions. The Home Secretary is entitled to ask for assurance that "Red Rudi" will organise no violent demonstrations during his stay at Cambridge, and such assurances, I understand, he is ready to give.

LAST EXIT

The pattern of funerals has changed dramatically during the last 25 years, particularly regarding the adoption of cremation as the method of disposal. In 1949 there were 58 crematoria in Britain; now there are 204, and Mr K. G. Prevette, general secretary of the Cremation Society, predicts that, by the year 2000, nearly all disposals will be by cremation.

There has also been a marked increase in the number of non-Christian funerals, and with the growing indifference to the churches this is likely to be accelerated. Planners and architects should remember this when a new crematorium is envisaged, and if there must be religious statues or pictures they should be easily removed or covered. When plans for the new Chichester crematorium were recently unveiled it was stated that an "ecclesiastical atmosphere" was being aimed at. Local clergy were being consulted and the Bishop of Chichester indicated his willingness to dedicate the building.

Is it too much to hope that the time may come when local Humanist groups will be invited to submit suggestions, and officially participate at ceremonies when a crematorium is opened in their area? After all, the churches strenuously opposed cremation, and the Bishop of Rochester vetoed Sir Henry Thompson's first plan to erect a crematorium. Church opposition to cremation persisted for many years, although Christians—including Roman Catholics—now seem to accept that it does not endanger the prospects of resurrection. You can't beat the churches when it comes to jumping on the band-wagon!

AND NOTES PUBLICATIONS

SANCTUARY

The League Against Cruel Sports have made a magnificent contribution to European Conservation Year—and a novel one, too. They have bought a piece of land in North Devon which, together with other land they acquired some time ago, will be a haven for wild life. This is a smack in the eye for the notorious Devon and Somerset Staghounds, and should have a profound effect on bloodsports in the area. A special feature of the sanctuary will be the growing of food for wild animals both to encourage their presence and prevent them marauding on farm land in times of scarcity.

The arrogance of hunters was recently illustrated when a follower of the Devon and Somerset Staghounds was bound over for two years in the sum of £25, and ordered to forfeit a similar sum for a breach of a previous recognisance. He was Desmond Roger Sharp, and the case arose from the banning of hunting activities on a farm owned by Stuart Saunders who brought a private prosecution. Mr Saunders and his sons, Philip and Keith protected a hunted stag which had taken refuge on their land. A large crowd of hunt followers lined the boundaries of the Saunders farm, and in an altercation with Philip Saunders, Sharp threatened to "get him". A spokesman for the LACS said: "This is a classic example of rough hunt followers using threatening behaviour to anyone who has the temerity to oppose stag hunting, and giving the stag no peace even after the hunt".

The Saunders family deserve the thanks and congratulations of everyone who is opposed to the activities of vicious morons who indulge in bloodsports. These cowards on horseback (and the subservient scum who follow them) are revolting specimens of inhumanity. When the National Secular Society organised a debate on bloodsports last year, it was impossible to find a representative of the hunting fraternity with the guts to defend their activities in public. And no wonder.

The League Against Cruel Sports need more members; the annual subscription is ten shillings; their address is 17-21 Chandos House, Buckingham Gate, London, SW1.

SPES REUNION

Hector Hawton, editor of *Humanist* and a former secretary of South Place Ethical Society, was guest of honour at the Society's annual reunion in London last Sunday. Mr Hawton, who is due to retire in March 1971, said: "If I am asked what should be the main concern of an ethical society, my answer is simple: it should be ethics. It certainly shouldn't be politics. As individuals, the members of an ethical society will naturally take an active interest in politics and in various organisations campaigning for specific reforms. But an ethical society is a forum in which the basic principles of social activity can be discussed".

There were speeches by representatives of the National Secular Society, Rationalist Press Association, British Humanist Association and the Progressive League. The singer was Derek Wilkes.

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RI and Surveys	Maurice Hill	1/0	4d
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Religious Education in State Schools	Brigid Brophy	2/6	4d
Ten Non Commandments	Ronald Fletcher	2/6	4d
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BOOKS

THE LEFT BOOK CLUB

by John Lewis. Gollancz, 36s.

If you are puzzled why Labour lost the recent election ask yourself whether the leaders of the last Government saw it as an excellent opportunity for explaining to the public the serious issues that faced them. Did the electors understand the currency system of the country? Did they realise that the value they had attached to the £1 note in their pocket was a thing of the past, and had now become faith without substance? Were they made aware of the extraordinary contradiction that while modern technology had made it possible to flood the world with commodities of every kind, prices everywhere were soaring, and workers were striking so that their purchasing power might at least keep pace with the mounting financial instability? Was the meaning of the flood of take-over bids in relation to international monopolies, faced with contracting markets, linked in the minds of the electors with the fact that regions of colonial exploitation are disappearing as their inhabitants achieve liberation? Formosa, Korea, Vietnam, the Middle East and above all the H-bomb, the militarily camouflaged flight to the moon, the disillusion of modern youth and all that this means for the immediate future—where was the red-hot election oratory that might have set the minds of men and women aflame, alive to the gathering dangers? No, these things are not brushed aside by handshakes.

It is true that problems of this sort are not resolved by words alone, but understanding of, and the vital need to deal with, these burning issues are essential. In *The Left Book Club*, by John Lewis (with a foreword by Margaret Cole); Dame Margaret Cole sounds strange in my ears), is a symbolic model of what might have been expected from Labour in power had its leadership not become so absorbed in its own personality cult that the men and women on the shop floor, and the citizens in the street, became literally mere figures of speech. The Left Book Club, initiated by a stroke of imagination on the part of publisher Victor Gollancz at the critical moment in history when just such a vision was required as a call to action against the growing menace of Fascism and of Hitlerism, the annexation of Austria, Mussolini and his war in Abyssinia, the rise of Franco and the destruction of Republican Spain, appeasement at Munich, and against the thousand and one horrors that were later to be let loose in the incinerating chambers of Nazi Germany. These were not simply books that were read in the seclusion of one's study. They were that indeed, but they evoked rousing calls to action. There were huge and enthusiastic meetings in the organisation of which John Lewis himself played a key role. And I shall never forget the joy with which I heard Lord Haw-Haw announce that I was one of the "chosen people" who were to be liquidated when the Germans had occupied Britain.

The storm clouds are gathering again, but this time the technology of the New Industrial Revolution has already outmoded the war of 1939-45. Weapons of destruction have become weapons of self-destruction, and the poison gases and bacteria that can be let loose attack friend and foe alike. National frontiers that have to be defended by force of arms have become a stupidity in the world of radio, television and radar, in a world of H-bombs and anti-ballistic missiles, in a world that is prolific in its productive capacity, in a world of machines that can simulate all but the creative capacity of man. Today we need little more than the elimination of stupidity, the recognition that a

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human being whatever his outward colour has infinitely greater creative value, when refined, than the purest of gold, and that humanity is one single family capable of carving out its own conscious future. Read this book, and if its lessons be learnt there will be no need to sit on one's bottom in Trafalgar Square in protest against the curse of nuclear energy, nor to imagine that one has escaped from a hypocritical world by strumming one's guitar on the Isle of Wight.

HYMAN LEVY

WILLIAM HAZLITT : Selected Writings

Edited by Ronald Blythe. Penguin New English Library, 10s.

Ronald Blythe in his lucid and sensitive introduction to the selected writings of William Hazlitt pays this tribute to the enduring qualities of the great essayist's matter and style:

He has an uncanny ability to involve us across the generations in his hopes, hates, enthusiasm, fury and sensuality. It is also to see in him the warring extremes of the Puritan nature. He is a writer who must always remain more than "works" and it is both thrilling and sobering when one investigates the latter to find so much flesh and blood, so much anger and so very much love. For him, writing never took the place of living.

In other words, he was a great humanist writer.

It was art, not literature, that was first stirred to power in the mind of the young Hazlitt, and for some years he studied and copied the pictures of Rembrandt, Titian and Raphael. His dream in early manhood was to become a great painter. He was encouraged by the fact that members of his family possessed artistic gifts, and that his elder brother had established himself as a successful miniature painter. "Till I began to paint, or till I became acquainted with the author of the *The Ancient Mariner*, I could neither write nor speak." This reference to the meeting with Coleridge at Shrewsbury in 1798, serves to remind us not only that it stirred Hazlitt to become an art student, who in due course painted his father in "the manner of Rembrandt and Charles Lamb in the style of Titian", but was also the beginning of his association with many eminent writers and artists in the opening decades of last century.

William Hazlitt (1778-1830) was the son of a Unitarian minister who was driven out of his pastorate at Maidstone on account of his heretical and radical opinions. In fact, his parents were Deists, and subscribed to the views of Paine, Godwin and Priestley. The boy William shared the hardships inflicted upon his family—including an unhappy spell in the United States—and was brought up in the strict non-conformist tradition.

It was the wish of his parents that he should be trained for the ministry. This was not to be, for, when William was 15 years old, he abandoned the idea of becoming a Unitarian pastor. The act was indicative of his independence of mind and strength of character. These traits became pronounced as time went on, and when he was driven to writing for the newspapers and magazines to earn a bare living, enabled him to survive in a violent and reactionary period in our national history. Characteristic of him was the saying: "When I see a spirit of intolerance I see a great Devil!"

REVIEWS

Hazlitt was throughout his life a complex personality. His non-conformist parentage and early training played their part in his intellectual growth; but there were also other influences from heredity factors and the play of economic, social and political forces during the years 1789-1830. Then, too, he owed much to his literary contemporaries, especially Coleridge, Lamb and Leigh Hunt. The combined influence of this group of writers re-created and extended the role of literary and dramatic criticism in English literature.

The love life of Hazlitt, as portrayed in his book *Liber Amoris*, bared to the public gaze a sad and pitiable story. Some of the details of his affairs, infatuations and sexual madneses were known to his acquaintances and friends, for he seems to have been unguarded in pouring out his troubles to them. It is said that Robert Louis Stevenson once planned to write a biography of Hazlitt, but abandoned the idea on reading the *Liber Amoris*. But times have changed: the present-day attitudes are more tolerant and compassionate.

Hazlitt may have been "the fool of love", and there were certainly periods in his life when he was strangely desultory and unsettled in the affairs of ordinary life, but nothing could exceed his raptures in a picture gallery or his genius when he took his pen in hand to write his incomparable sketches and essays on literature, politics and the theatre. He thrilled to the passion and poetry of everyday life. ("All that is worth remembering of life is the poetry in it.")

This book merits a wide readership in Humanist and progressive circles.

RICHARD CLEMENTS

DO YOU CARE ABOUT HISTORIC BUILDINGS ?

Greater London Council, 10s.

To anyone of a generally progressive way of thinking, the problem of preserving old buildings is a particularly complicated one. What is the social value of preserving such buildings? The sentimental talk of people clinging to the old, merely because it is old, has little appeal. There is no question that a great deal of our cities, housing in particular, still needs to be replaced and the idea that London was a more attractive city in the last century is solidly based on ignorance—the miles of ramshackle slums and narrow lanes are no loss. Added to this, there is virility and excitement in new buildings and in some areas the tower blocks of the last 15 years have increased the visual pleasures of the district as a whole. Unfortunately, too many new buildings are disappointing when finished and the large-scale estates of towers and slabs are mostly vile to live in both socially and visually. This reviewer is involved in the matter both as one concerned with social reforms and as an architectural historian, and over the years has come to the rather obvious conclusion that the best places to live are those with a rich mixture of buildings with different styles and ages. Such ideal places should constantly change little by little, but wholesale demolition and rebuilding (though inevitable sometimes) rarely lead to happy results—system-built slums for the future are still being churned out.

Quite apart from this consideration of the living environment, a large number of our old buildings are among the finest works of art ever produced by this country. We spend millions of pounds on preserving our finest paintings, and our architectural heritage is no less valuable. So on two different counts we should preserve worthwhile buildings, whether they were built in 1600 or in 1900.

The Historic Buildings Board of the Greater London Council, its Clerk, Laurie Beckles, its Surveyor, Ashley Barker, and its Architect, Norman Harrison, have set a fine example to other local authorities and their work is recorded in this splendidly illustrated booklet. It tells of the achievements, failures and difficulties of working in this field and explains the intricacies of the present preservation system.

The pages are large enough (12 in. x 7 in.) to illustrate on a worthy scale the many examples of buildings mentioned in the text, including a small proportion of 19th century building. What it does not do is to explain why some of these buildings are of importance, architecturally as well as historically. Most people have been brought up to appreciate Georgian buildings as "beautiful", but still desperately need to be educated about Victorian and Edwardian ones. One notices that even in this book the Victorian illustrations tend to be variations of the Classical style, rather than Gothic or in the free styles of Norman Shaw's followers—so perhaps the members of the GLC Board (who are listed) need a wider education themselves. The book includes sections headed "Saved" and "The Ones that Got Away", but I would have been happier if there had also been a section called "At Risk", including New Scotland Yard and some of the other threatened Victorian riches of London. And it is a pity that the ideal of preserving complete streets and groups of buildings was not expressed more clearly, although it is obvious that the Board shares this ideal.

This brings us to the question of what sort of person the booklet is aimed at. It is not of much interest to laymen already interested in the subject except that it will show Amenity and Preservation Societies what they can do and how to do it. Although the contents are rather bitty, the book would be valuable if left around in schools for children to pick up themselves and, of course, it should be left on display in every London Public Library. Distributed to Councillors and Planners it should help to set new standards in preserving worthwhile buildings. Sent out to property developers, it would show what they could do with the interiors of their preserved buildings. Most important of all, the book should be thrust down the throats of the Government department redevelopers who have now become the most dangerous vandals still threatening the texture of our cities. We must hope that the GLC sees that the book gets to these people, or the money spent on producing it will be wasted.

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LETTERS

Sex and Freedom

My review of Benjamin Spock's *Decent and Indecent* did not please Connaire Kensit, but I do not apologise for attempting to give *Freethinker* readers an objective outline of views I do not myself hold, without recourse to the abusive clichés he seems to favour. To clear up any misunderstanding I will say that I very much doubt the existence of "penis envy". In patriarchal societies—such as that in which Freud grew up—little girls will naturally tend to envy their brothers when they see them preferred. But it seems unlikely that this emotion should be centred on that item of masculine equipment, unless the girl is specifically told, "He can do things you can't because he is a boy, and he is a boy because he has a penis".

I maintain that child rearing is "an exciting and highly skilled job of enormous social importance". (Perhaps Connaire Kensit would agree with this if we were talking about teachers and not about mothers.) It is comparatively recently that psychologists and educationalists have discovered the extent to which a child's future intellectual potential depends on the provision of a stimulating environment before it reaches school age. But mothers often chastise two-year-olds who are not content to sit still and not touch anything. Mr Kensit does not say precisely what he objects to in my statement about child rearing. Does he think it is not exciting, not highly skilled, or not of enormous social importance? Is it possible that he has not thought at all, but merely reacted?

Connaire Kensit's refusal to recognise the cost of sexual freedom to some people is largely wishful thinking. Unfortunately there can be no kind of social set-up which doesn't lead to suffering for someone. A sexual relationship which does not mean the same to both partners inevitably leads to suffering, and as the average girl wants a permanent home and children before the average boy does, it is most often the girl who suffers. So thoughtless boys say it's all the girls' fault for not taking their pleasures casually. However, girls are just not the same as boys, even allowing for these differences caused by upbringing and social expectations, and love exists, however distasteful the idea may be to Connaire Kensit, and a girl who is inveigled into bed by a man who wants her today and wants someone else tomorrow, can suffer greatly. How glib it is to say, "She will at least have enjoyed a pleasant and educational experience, one which is worthwhile for its own sake".

MARGARET MCLROY.

May I throw into the discussion of sex behaviour (Kensit v. McIlroy) the concept of *human dignity*?

I have seen mothers who followed the psychoanalytically based advice of permissiveness given in Spock's earlier book; they were the slaves of their tyrannical child. Less well-read people with common sense pitied them.

I know people for whom sexual intercourse is sought mainly for fun. In reducing it to a trifle, or to an experiment like smoking tobacco or pot, they fail to get the great human experience of an enhanced intimate relationship which should be the goal. This is nowadays often called "alienation".

The freethinker and sociologist Marx dealt with this problem intensively and extensively, and penned in his younger years the following lines which show that he was a fine humanist:

Assume *man as man*, and his relation to the world as a *human* one, and you can exchange love only for love, confidence for confidence, etc. If you wish to enjoy art, you must be an artistically trained person; if you wish to have influence on other people, you must be a person who has really stimulating and furthering influence on the other people. Everyone of your relationships to man and to nature must be a definite expression of your real, individual life corresponding to the object of your will. If you love without calling forth love, that is, if your love as such does not produce love, if by means of an expression of life as a loving person you do not make of yourself a loved person, then your love is impotent, a misfortune.

Brecht mocked alienated bourgeois with verses in which he said: Instead of doing something which has meaning and purpose, they make fun—and of course end in the dirt.

PAUL ROM.

Connaire Kensit, refers to the small space in your sixpennyworth, then takes up one-twentieth of it to criticise a critique of Spock. He makes further assertions, including one not essential to the argument, i.e. that "most people already knew" that most American males had their first sexual experience with an experienced woman". Ma' I take a thirtieth of your space to ask how he (let alone "most people") know this? Does "experienced woman" include any girl who has "had it before", or only mature middle-aged women?

Why does your correspondent assert that there "are no snags to sexual freedom—only advantages", without mentioning the one great snag we do know about and have so far failed to remedy effectively—venereal disease? Perhaps a researcher will tell us whether the unmentionable disease was not as powerful a factor as the social stigma of an illegitimate baby underlying the insistence (at least by women) on chastity even 30 years ago? The property-conscious Victorian male may have had other reasons, but he was also concerned with risk to himself. Not so long ago he was being advised that violation of a virgin was a cure for VD. That must have been an educational experience for the girl, but surely not usually pleasant and worthwhile for its own sake!

MARJORIE MEPHAM.

The Long and the Short Of It

Your criticism (News and Notes, 12 September) of the headmaster who ordered 70 boys to get their hair cut or stay away from school was sound and well merited in principle, but in form was as bigoted as the headmaster's own attitude. He doesn't like long hair, and was objectionable about it. It seems you don't like short hair, and are equally objectionable. I quote: "So long as people with a short-back-and-side mentality are allowed to act in a petty authoritarian way . . . etc.". What on earth has the style of hair, long or short, to do with mentality of the person? Surely that was your very point about the boys.

F. J. CORINA.

Nationalism

In his article *Centenary of the Risorgimento* Nigel Sinnott says: "It seems incredible that the Italy of the Garibaldi should, within two generations, have started along the tawdry path of empire-building in Africa . . ."

Anyone who has grasped the fact that Nationalism is a thoroughly evil thing will not find it incredible. Italy got a lot of romantic sympathy while she was struggling for unity; but on becoming a nation found she had to have power or go under.

It proves what I said in a letter I wrote to the *Freethinker* earlier this year: Nationalism causes Imperialism. The answer is World Government.

I. S. LOW.

Repression in the USSR

What a relief it was to read Martin Page's condemnation of Russian brutality towards their intellectuals (*Above all Liberties*, *Freethinker*, 19 September). Those of us who are not hypnotised by Russian propaganda know that since the Communists seized power in Russia there has been endless repression and brutality. There is nothing new in what has been happening to brave men like Bukovsky, Amalrik and Daniel, who have dared to criticise the regime. Political prisoners have rotted in dreadful labour camps for acts which no civilised country would consider a crime at all.

Even more horrifying about the latest report is that the medical profession has been dragged into this ghastly charade, and compelled to pretend that these wretched men are insane and should be confined in lunatic asylums. Could anything be more degrading than this prostitution of a noble profession?

CLAUD WATSON.

Incomprehension

I appreciate the patience in Peter Crommelin's attempt (19 September) to clarify further his experience of "something that (he) must call (his) own free will". It matters to me that despite his granting of an "apparent" contradiction, his "free will" position becomes for me further confused rather than clarified. His letter implies a division between "mind" and "will" in which their qualification of being "free" or "determined" is mutually exclusive; moreover, there is an important sense in which "free will" is subordinate to "mind". Thus: with the "dominated mind" "no amount of free will" would have effected a choice to liberate the mind; however, after the mind had liberated itself(?), the choice "to be a freethinker" was effected independently by "free will".

Rather than elaborate my incomprehension of the relative "free" and "determinist" factors involved in Mr Crommelin's interpretation of the above, I would cite the enlightening article *This Freedom* by A. A. H. Douglas (*Freethinker*, 27 June).

CHARLES BYASS.