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DEVOTED TO THE RELIGION OF SCIENCE.

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AN APOSTLE OF SCIENCE.

BY DR. FELIX L. OSWALD.

IF THE worship of Truth for her own sake can be called a form of religious enthusiasm, the nineteenth century may be said to have already solved the problem of reconciling religion and science. Humboldt, Goethe, Renan, and Darwin ventured and labored for the cause of knowledge as much as any missionary for the cause of faith, but it may be questioned if since the days of Voltaire any individual thinker devoted himself more successfully to the task of carrying the torch of truth into dark places than the self-made scholar and independent investigator John Tyndall.

Like his countryman Bacon, Tyndall was an apostle of popular science. His love of truth made research its own reward in a sense that enabled him to ignore the opposition of envy and bigotry, and he possessed in an almost unparalleled degree the gift of interesting the masses in the results of his inquiries. It has often been said that Robert Ingersoll owes his popularity to his rhetorical gifts, rather than to the attractiveness of his doctrine; but let an Ingersoll or a Moody announce a lecture on such topics as "Calorescence"; "The Transmission of Heat through Gaseous Bodies"; or on "Sounding and Sensitive Flames," and see if they can still keep a mixed audience spellbound for hours together.

Tyndall has repeatedly wrought that miracle. At the Royal Institute and the School of Mines his lectures on the most abstruse subjects were attended by crowds of workmen, and deserved to be studied by teachers and orators from a subjective point of view, since to an intelligent observer an hour's attendance revealed the secret of his success. With an unerring instinct he gained the attention of his audience by selecting the most generally-interesting points of his theme, and maintained that interest by a discursive chat in which wit, humor, and amusing anecdotes were strangely blended with philosophical revelations and sarcastic sallies against non-philosophical dogmas. He could play on an apparently one-sided topic like a virtuoso on a one-stringed harp, and in the lecture-hall his motto of "Low Fare and High Sentiments" was supplemented by the maxim of acute thought and blunt speech. He detested scholastic pedantry as he hated

obscurantism in all its forms, and could make the language of the Swiss peasants express his theories on complex geological problems.

Professor Dryasdust: "The metamorphic strata of this defile are specially fit to illustrate the erosive action of descending glaciers and sub-glacial waters, the transverse section being characteristic all along the southwestern boundaries of the chasm,"—and so on, till even his educated hearers wish him at the bottom of that chasm, and themselves back to the tavern of Pfeffer's.

Professor Tyndall: "Hasn't this river washed out a wonderful kettle! Wouldn't a railroader prefer to tackle a job of that kind by day's wages, rather than by contract—unless he could get hold of that consecrated wheelbarrow at the Rigi Chapel your friend was telling us about."

Farmer: "Yes, and with a receiver to control the paymaster of the Rigi tramway. For my part I shouldn't like the contract. Wonder how many years it took the river to finish the job?"

Tyndall (feeling his way): "I would give something to know. Anyhow it seems clear that the water did it, and nobody else; or do you think it possible that every river in the country found a ready-made gap on its way to the sea?"

That Socratic method of interrogation could in case of need give way to a quick-fire of irresistible arguments, or a rocket-swarm of humorous sallies that reconciled the most unscientific hearer to the weightiness of the topic.

But the consciousness of his conversational abilities did not prevent Tyndall from pursuing his philosophical inquiries into the depths of solitude. During the two years following his return from Berlin he often passed weeks in his London laboratory, stinting himself in meat to preserve his clearness of mind, and in favorite intellectual diversions that might interfere with the concentrations of his thoughts. On such occasions he locked his doors against gossiping idlers, and thus avoided the alternative recommended by Ernest Renan, who informs us that he had often to "make himself tedious on purpose," to shorten the visits of troublesome friends.

In the Alps, too, Tyndall frequently dispensed with

the society of his countrymen, in order to follow a train of geological speculations, with the echoes and the whispering winds for his only respondents, and on one memorable occasion he gave a personal friend and even his guides the slip and picked his way alone across the crevasses of the G6rner Glacier to the slopes of the Matterhorn and back to the hostelry of Breuil, a twenty-mile trip over ground where the survival of the traveller constantly depended on the choice of the trail, but where the risk of the vast precipices seemed for once preferable to the deadly bother of small-talk. "There are moods," says the perpetrator of that escapade, "when the mother is glad to get rid of her offspring, the wife of her husband, the lover of his mistress, and when it is not well to keep them together. And so at certain intervals, it may be good for the soul to feel the full influence of that 'society where none intrudes'; the peaks wear a grander aspect, the sun shines with a more inspiring fire, the blue of heaven is more deep and awful and the hard heart of man is often made as tender as a child's."

Tyndall's analytical talents were now and then applied to the task of self-study, and he may have asked himself if his fondness for communion with Nature, had not an ultra-scientific significance, like the homesickness of an exiled Highlander. "I have sometimes," he says, "tried to trace the genesis of my interest in fine scenery. It cannot be wholly due to my own early associations, for as a boy I loved nature, and hence, to account for that love, I must fall back upon something earlier than my own birth. The forgotten association of a far-gone ancestry are probably the most potent elements of the feeling. There was a time when the pleasurable activities of our race were among the mountains, woods, and waters, and I infer that the hereditary transmissions of that time must have come with considerable force to me."

As a consequence, Tyndall had become so much at home in the Alps that, in the words of one of his Swiss friends, "he could have fallen back on the chance of being able to make a tolerable living in the r6le of an Alpine guide, if the British bigots should have contrived to expatriate him for his sins of heresy." He ascended the Jungfrau twice, was the first foreigner to reach the pinnacle of the Weissshorn and all but forestalled Sir Charles Whymper in his triumphant attack on the cloud-castle of the Matterhorn. Johann Bennen, the explorer of the Lepontine Alps pronounced him the only Englishman able to *climb* a first-class peak to the very top and long after the rest of his countrymen are merely able to stagger (*wanken*) along," and Joseph Jenni, the veteran of the Pontresina guides, once went fifty English miles out of his way to compete for the honor of accompanying the famous Briton on a specially perilous glacier expedition. Their mu-

tual friend, Bennen, had been killed by an avalanche a few months before, and Professor Tyndall came very near sharing the fate of his old companion, but in the very crisis of the terrible *glisade* had sufficient command of his mathematical faculties to calculate the chance of neutralising the momentum of his sliding travelling companions by a well-timed sideward pull, but to recognise the difficulty of checking the impetus of their descent, *plus* that of the sliding snow!

During a forced march across a gap of the Aegisch horn, he found time to stop and shake with laughing at his guide's anecdote of an honest Tyrolese who had been informed by his father-confessor that the hope of attaining the kingdom of heaven could not be reconciled with a passion for the fair sex. "Herr Pfarrer, es *muss* gehn," replied the Tyrolese.

Tyndall did not class his memoirs of those diversions under the head of wasted time, but held that a clear brain and even a clean bill of morals, were products of physical health as directly as health itself is a product of fresh air and exercise. "Take what hypothesis you will," he says, "consider matter as an instrument through which the insulated mind exercises its powers, or consider both as so inextricably mixed that they stand or fall together, from both points of view the care of the body is equally important. The morality of clean blood ought to be one of the first lessons taught us by our pastors and masters. The physical is the substratum of the spiritual, and this fact ought to give the food we eat and the air we breathe a transcendental significance. In recommending this proper care of our physical organism," he adds, "it will not be supposed that I mean the stuffing or pampering of the body. The shortening of the supplies or a good monkish fast at intervals is often the best discipline for the body."

That discipline enabled him to preserve his health under circumstances of peculiar difficulty: A man of naturally feeble lungs and sensitive digestive organs obliged to breathe the tainted atmosphere of crowded lecture-halls, and exposed to the dietetic abominations of South European taverns and English railway-restaurants.

Lung microbes could not always be parried, but Tyndall had an instinctive dread of strong stimulants, and contrived to utilise even the leisure of the sick-room in a way that enabled him to turn his head into a cyclopædia of secular science. He was an accomplished naturalist, next to Davy perhaps the foremost chemist of his native land, an acknowledged authority in astronomy, biology, physiology, and general physics, and in addition to his technical and geographical studies found time to master a number of foreign languages. His family traced its origin to the Saxon immigrants of Ireland, and there was an English free-

thinker Tyndall (or Tindall) in the seventeenth century, still the versatile philosopher's temper now and then seemed to indicate an admixture of Celtic blood, and it is perhaps a suggestive fact that he spoke French with a much more facile accent than German, though he passed several years in Marburg and Berlin, and made the German-Swiss cantons his favorite summer head-quarters. When I first met him in Hermance near Geneva in the winter of 1869, he pronounced the word *gütig* alternately like *geetik* and *gootik*, and seemed to labor under the delusion that *all* foreign words of the German language have to be accentuated on the last syllable, while he betrayed a curious, natural talent for imitating the patois of the French-Swiss peasant children. But his lexicographical mastery of that mispronounced *Hochdeutsch* was almost incredible, even in consideration of his sojourn at the intellectual metropolis of Germany. He used synonyms with a subtle appreciation of their etymology, and had collected data on the propriety of new-coined words and such rare archaisms as *Recke*, a heavy-weight athlete, and *ungeheuer*, in the sense of uncanny. "*Alle Eulen des Gedankens* are roosting in his head," I heard him once say in one of his bilingual *bon-mots* for the benefit of a limited number of bystanders; and on a garden-bench of Hermance (where he was nursing his sprained foot) he once handed me a newspaper with a red query-mark opposite a quotation from another German poet:

"Nun eilet aus des Lebens wildem Lauf
Mein grosser Schatten zu des Grabes Frieden."

—"Schatten? what does that spitlicker mean?—*grosse Schattenseiten*, I suppose,"—the passage having been intended as an apotheosis of an individual whose crown had been his chief claim to distinction. The *Unterthänigkeit*—constitutional servility of a certain class of German contemporaries was a subject of his constant banter, and he could chuckle for minutes together at the mere mention of a passage from a biography of Frederick the Great, where the author describes an official chronicler recording certain court-ceremonies with "trembling exactness." The democratic irreverence of Yankee travellers amused him all the more since he had reasons to predict the decadence of that spirit of sturdy independence. "North America," he said, "is drifting into a sort of cosmopolitanism that endeavors to efface the most distinctive characteristics of the freedom-loving old pioneers, and I am afraid you will soon have to go pretty far West to find such champions of self-help as Jackson and Boone."

Withal, he often quizzed the unscrupulous land-greed of those primitive patriots. "What's the matter with your Spanish Americans," he once asked me in discussing the chronic revolutions of the Mexican Republic, "are they really unable to hit a medium between anarchy and despotism, or are they trying to

turn their country into a desert to lessen the temptation of their enterprising neighbors to cross the border again?"

Aside from that penchant for banter, the practical sagacity of his remarks was often striking, and, I cannot help thinking, had something to do with the fact that, like Thomas Carlyle, he was a poor man's son and was schooled in the stern realism of life before he applied his mind to speculative problems. "Can the effect of prejudice be illustrated by a more glaring instance," he said, "than the fact that Heinrich Heine's works are not by this time found in every library of the civilised universe! What an incomparable series of intellectual pyrotechnics—rocket after rocket blending its sparks with the very stars and paling the brightest sparkle of De Staël and Voltaire! Leland's translation is almost an equal marvel, and they can soar into sublime pathos, too, but, as Byron says, they are guilty of the never-pardoned offence of opposing tithes. As an orthodox court-poet of . . . he would have achieved fortune and statues, but the trouble is that the Muses decline to answer an invocation on such topics."

"A locomotive," said he in a conversation with Mons. Boissonnet, "is really a highly complex piece of mechanism, so much so, as to account for the late date of its invention, but how is it that the simple idea of a horse-car railway did not occur to the practical Romans? And why did the shrewd First Consul not offer a premium that could hardly have failed to lead to the construction of iron-clads, a couple of years before Trafalgar? Any floating tin wash-basin ought to have suggested the possibility of an armor-frigate, and the necessity of anti-commercial measures might have been obviated."

"That Rhadamanthus of atheism, the editor of the * * has impeached Napoleon for his death-bed recantations, but he should not be so hard on a man in such circumstances," said he on another occasion. "His grenadiers were gone, and he probably saw no other way to spite the British heretics."

In proposing his famous prayer-test, Tyndall himself possibly intended only a demonstration of that sort and greatly regretted the consequent controversies, partly from an aversion to that sort of notoriety, partly from a constitutional preference for the practical polemics of science. He was an agnostic, absolutely free from the dread of the unknown beyond, and with only a faint, though long lingering, faith in the possibility of a *post mortem* existence. When his friend Bennen perished on the Haut de Cry in the winter of 1864, Tyndall, Sir John Lubbock, Prof. Vaughan Hawkins, and a few others, contributed to the monument-fund of the famous guide, and delegated the supervision of the work to a Vallais curate, who,

as the chief promoter of the project informs us, made but a poor use of his trust. Still, a sort of memorial column was at last procured, and the supervisor forwarded his plan for a lengthy epitaph (in French, I think), concluding some biographical data with the information that the champion of so many mountain expeditions had departed to explore still grander heights. Tyndall rather liked the conceit, though not the manner of its expression, and contented himself with adding one touching line in the brave guide's own German: "Ich komme nicht wieder, Ihr Lieben." In the "interest of public morals" that supplement of the epitaph was, of course, suppressed, but Tyndall held with Arthur Schopenhauer, that philosophy should not be fettered down to an alliance with gnosticism, deism, nor even with the established system of ethics, but only with truth, and that if rightly understood, the uncompromising cultus of that truth, can never be unmoral. Though liberal to a fault, he was not fond of parading his philanthropy, and refuted the charge "agnostic egotism" in his own way, by donating the entire proceeds of his American lecturing tour—some thirteen thousand dollars, I think—to the promotion of scientific studies in the United States.

Tyndall's temperance and methods of outdoor exercise had endowed him with a reserve-fund of health that sustained him in the severe scientific labors of the last fifteen years, and there is no doubt that the fatal issue of his last illness was a direct result of his nurse's blunder in administering an enormous dose of chloral, instead of magnesia, and dismissing his medical friends upon the first symptom of improvement.

It is, indeed, probable enough that those mistakes robbed him and the world of twenty years of his life, but according to Tyndall's own principle, a teacher may depart contented, if he has lived long enough to see the seed of his doctrine bear fruit.

MENE TEKEL.

WINTER is always hard on the poor, but this year it seems to be severer than usual. Thousands of penniless tramps are overcrowding our great cities, and there are also many diligent laborers out of work, while charity institutions have been created to bring wholesale relief to the most needy. Yet it will be observed that those who deserve our sympathy in the highest degree receive but a small benefit of all this, and for the most part are left to rely upon their own reduced resources. The improvident vagabond is fed while the fate of the thrifty father of a family, who has mortgaged his home dearly bought with the savings of his wages, is scarcely considered in the general commiseration of wretched existences.

The reasons of our present calamity need not con-

cern us now; to a great extent they are obvious enough. Fear of the depreciation of our money by substituting silver for gold caused a withdrawal of credit from banks and commercial enterprises and produced a sudden contraction in the business-world which almost amounted to a panic. Many factories have been shut down and almost all the others reduced their product. Although less has been produced during the last months than at other times, the market is overstocked so that our protective tariff has ceased to benefit even the few and our want of export opportunities is more felt than ever.

We have learned, or at least have had occasion to learn, a lesson; we ought to know now that the laws of economics cannot be transgressed with impunity. We Americans have been spoiled by Mother Nature and are under the impression that we are her favorites, that we can do many things which other nations cannot, and that famines or other calamities will never befall us. Thus we have adopted the habits of prodigals, which are often shocking to the frugal and economic European, and it is rarely that we are prepared for hard times.

The hard times prevailing now are not as yet so disastrous as the visitation under equal conditions in other countries might have proved; yet they are severe enough to be a *mene tekel* to us. Hard times may come again, and they will come again; some will come because we ourselves conjure them up through our national follies and political sins, others through complications in the natural forces of the world, be it by droughts, cyclones, or epidemics, and in the face of such possibilities it is our duty to be prepared for them.

We must first become aware of the fact that the typical American is extremely careless as to the possible rise of future emergencies, and frivolously wasteful of food, money, and all the other little items that go to make up the conditions of human life. And this is, upon the whole, as true of the employer as of the laborer, of the master as of the servant, of the rich as of the poor.

This is no secret to those who know the habits of European countries, especially of Germany; but very few of us think that we are wrong; on the contrary, there are many scoffers among us who ridicule foreigners on account of their stinginess and miserly habits; there are many who look with contempt upon the man who cuts down his expenses or denies himself luxuries in order to save a part of his wages for emergencies or times of need. We are a nation of spendthrifts and take pride in throwing away our money freely and indiscriminately. Such being the ambition of the great majority, many families live pretentiously who cannot afford it, and would rather dispense with wholesome food

than with jewelry and costly clothing or an expensive residence in the most fashionable part of the city. Forced to economise somewhere, they cut down their expenses in the wrong place.

Now it is true that America has been blessed with extraordinary prosperity, a prosperity which greatly exceeds that of most European countries, but it is also true that, sooner or later, hard times will come to us also. Anxious to preserve our natural advantages, we have erected a Chinese wall of protective duties about our frontier which so far has tended to make bread dear and money cheap. Like the stag in the fable who praises his horns, we are very proud that American money so valuable abroad has but little purchasing-power at home. How often do our smart innocents abroad boast that a dollar has no more value in the United States than a shilling in England.

We have artificially produced these conditions by fencing in a part of the world-market, and we imagine that our prosperity has been due to a sharp little trick of ours, while in fact it is due to the great resources of the country, which yield us their wealth in spite of these self-imposed fetters and burdens.

So long as we are prosperous we shall be able to stand the pressure of our heavy import duties, but in times of great emergencies they will make themselves felt. Nothing short of a famine in England opened the eyes of the people to the errors of a protective policy, and, considering the impervious tenacity of our protectionists, it is possible that we shall have to pass through the same ordeal, for our people refuse to learn from history and prefer the more impressive and more expensive way of learning by direct experience.

Being prosperous, we can sin against the natural laws that regulate economics and society for a long time, but it is certain that we cannot do so forever. We now exclude, as much as possible, foreign competition, and thus weaken our ability to compete with other countries. What shall we do when the time arrives in which competition becomes inevitable? Even now we see the symptoms of it. There are toys made in Germany and France, ingeniously contrived and economically made, which sell here for exactly double their value, and when we see them we exclaim, "Oh, how cheap!" With our conditions, and with cheap money our manufacturers cannot compete with Europeans. The benefit of protection is a two-edged sword. Its advantages turn out to be very disastrous. Our laborers are better paid, but the higher figures of money-values are very misleading. They would be better situated with less money of a greater purchasing power. We might better expect to fence in a part of the ocean, artificially to raise or lower in that part its level than to create forever exceptional conditions in one part of

the mercantile world. The value of goods will after all seek its natural level and will thus produce a disturbance, which may prove dangerous to the welfare of the community. The fear of a cataclysm actually and naturally keeps many free-traders within the camp of protectionists. That is the curse of all errors, wrongdoings, and sins—their chains are lingering.

* * *

Whatever the future may have in store for us, one thing is certain, that our wastefulness will some day come into conflict with European economy. We enjoy great advantages, such as inventiveness and boldness of enterprise, but those Europeans who are well acquainted with our conditions imitate us and adopt our machinery. In the same way our industries must acquire the virtues of their competitors or succumb to their greater fitness in the struggle for existence. Uneconomical employés will have to be discharged or the whole plants will by and by pass into other hands. There is no hope for those who are unable to adapt themselves to the conditions of life; they must make way for others who can.

If Jeremiah were to appear among us, he would raise again his voice of warning. Hard times will come and how many among us have in their short-sighted vanity made themselves unable to face them. It is not possible to establish economic habits among large classes of the people as quickly as the tide of destruction may rush upon us; for visitations come sometimes like a whirlwind, and smite the proud more severely than the humble.

A passage in Prof. Lloyd Morgan's book, "Animal Life and Intelligence," in which he discusses the influence of good and hard and intermediate times on the production of varied forms of life, seems to me instructive. He shows that good times, in which by some favorable circumstance the area of life increases, will produce innumerable varieties; they create many new species, giving them a chance to prove their fitness for life, while hard times, in which a contraction of life-sustaining forces takes place, do the pruning; they cut down with ruthless cruelty those kinds which have not used their opportunities to their advantage. He says:

"During the exhibitions at South Kensington there were good times for rats. But when the show was over, there followed times that were cruelly hard. The keenest competition for the scanty food arose, and the poor animals were forced to prey upon each other. 'Their cravings for food,' we read in *Nature*, 'culminated in a fierce onslaught on one another, which was evidenced by the piteous cries of those being devoured. The method of seizing their victims was to suddenly make a raid upon one weaker or smaller than themselves, and, after overpowering it by numbers, to tear it in pieces.' Elimination by competition, passing in this way into elimination by battle, would, during hard times, be increased. None but the best organised and best adapted could hope to escape."

In order to illustrate his law in the animal world, Prof. Lloyd Morgan calls the attention of his readers to the correspondent events in the history of man. He says :

"The alternation of good times and hard times may be illustrated by an example taken from human life. The introduction of ostrich-farming in South Africa brought good times to farmers. Whereupon there followed divergence in two directions. Some devoted increased profits to improvements upon their farms, to irrigation works which could not before be afforded, and so forth. For others increased income meant increased expenditure and an easier, if not more luxurious, mode of life. Then came hard times. Others, in Africa and elsewhere, learnt the secret of ostrich-farming. Competition brought down profits, and elimination set in—of which variety need hardly be stated."

Prof. Lloyd Morgan continues :

"I believe that the alternation of good times and hard times, during secular changes of climate and alternate expansions and contractions of life-areas through geological upheavals and depression of the land, has been a factor of the very greatest importance in the evolution of varied and divergent forms of life, and in the elimination of intermediate forms between adaptive variations."

Speaking of the present era he says :

"These are the good old-fashioned times of slow and steady conservative progress. They are, perhaps, well exemplified by the fauna of the Carboniferous period, and it is not at all improbable that we are ourselves living in such a quiet, conservative period."

Let us mind the lesson ere it be too late. The hard time of this winter is only a moderate admonition of worse possibilities. Bad laws made by demagogues, fools, or impostors, will bring misfortunes upon the people, and if the people do not learn to watch our legislators we shall have to pay dearly for it. But even if we cease to make blunders ourselves, the time of trials will come, for the balance of life is very unstable and often hinges upon trifles. We cannot continue for good in our wonted wastefulness, and it is unavoidable that those who refuse to learn the lesson shall be doomed in their future generations to hopeless perdition. How many, incredibly many, of our people are unable to live through periods of hardships, and we must shudder to think how terrible the pruning will be, should the metal of our nation be assayed in the crucible of some great visitation.

Those who have ears to hear, let them hear ; those who have eyes to see, let them see ; and those who have voices to speak and sufficient understanding to see that there is danger ahead, let them raise the cry of alarm, so that the day of judgment may not be too severe on us.

We proclaim no pessimism, for after all we are confident that this is the country in which a higher species of man is to be developed. Even the visitations, which, as we fear, will not be spared us, must contribute to mature the fruit of a nobler humanity.

So must it be, and may we all be found worthy to contribute our mite to the realisation of the noble destiny of our nation.

P. C.

A HYMN OF HOPE.

BY J. S. CLARKE.

Spirit of life and love,
Music and flowers !
Ruling the seas and streams,
Filling the night with dreams,
Smiling with sunny beams,
Weeping soft showers !

Sweet is thy sovereign grace,
Mighty thine art !
The soul-storm thou dost calm
With a celestial psalm,
And pour thy healing balm
On the torn heart !

What though pain's arrows pierce,
And health be slain ?
Like the sunlight in the west
We shall gently sink to rest
On thy eternal breast
And conquer pain !

It is not life, but death,
When hope is gone ;
Thou wilt mend all that mars
Our joy ; for the bright stars
That shine through prison bars
Bid us hope on.

Sweet joys must burn and die,
Though the heart clings
To its fond heart's desire.
They shall rise from their dead fire,
Like the phoenix from its pyre,
With beating wings !

Spirit of boundless space
And endless time !
Thy works thou dost unroll
As from a magic scroll ;
Like music to the soul
Is their sweet chime !

Mid the whirl of myriad wheels
Thy footsteps fall ;
Treading the mystic loom
That weaves the web of doom,
And the flowers that bud and bloom
With hope for all !

Onward the soul-stream glides,
Sparkling with glee ;
Foaming in many a lin
Of pain and sorrow and sin,
Until it flows within
The sunlit sea.

Spirit of raging wrath,
And flashing fire !
It is thine eye that reads
All our unholy deeds ;
Whether it lags or speeds,
Sure is thine ire !

Dark is the shadow of sin
 Over the soul ;
 Darkly it flits and flees
 Like the pirate o'er the seas ;
 Thou wilt heal the soul's disease,
 And make us whole !

Spirit of light and truth,
 Guide thou the way !
 Fiercely the tempests blow ;
 Yet we must onward go,
 Onward through weal and woe,
 Onward for aye !

CURRENT TOPICS.

THE echoes of the Parliament of All Religions are just returning to us from the lands across the sea, and they are not so flattering to our own theologies as many zealous persons expected them to be. The echo from Japan comes in the shape of a report made at Yokohama by the Buddhist Bishops Bourin Yatsubuchi and Shaku Soyen, conspicuous delegates in the Parliament and eminent scholars in their own country. They are absolutely innocent of any intentional sarcasm ; they were serious, and even solemn, so that the humor of the report is all the more delightful, because entirely unpremeditated and spontaneous. Dr. Barrows and the other Christian clergymen who convoked the Council of Chicago will be surprised to hear from the Right Rev. Shaku Soyen that "the Parliament was called because the Western nations have come to realise the weakness and the folly of Christianity." This is not encouraging, for the object of the Parliament was to exhibit Christianity in its own dominions, and to show for the conversion of the heathens, its wisdom, its justice, and its divine character. This, by object lessons and visible examples of social and political justice, of moral and spiritual excellence, and of material greatness too colossal for the missionaries to carry over in their ships. The purpose was defeated by the Parliament itself, when Christian bishops, presbyters, and priests confessed the failures of Christianity and justified the Japanese opinion that the Western nations had outgrown the Christian system, and were seeking for another, and a more beneficent, religion.

From personal observation the Buddhist bishops came to the opinion that Christianity in America is more a fashion than a faith, a formalism destitute of soul. Not only did they suppose they saw that for themselves, but they heard it over and over again from Christian preachers on the platform at Columbus Hall. The Japanese critics proclaimed nothing at Yokohama that they had not heard at Chicago ; and they had good Christian warrant for it when they said, "Christianity is merely an adornment of society in America. It is deeply believed in by very few." The Christian speeches in the Parliament bore energetic testimony to that, but picturesque and ceremonial Christianity gets a nominal recognition and acceptance because it is really "in society," and valuable as religious embroidery for what the Buddhist bishops call "the adornment of society." Like incense from a golden censer it gives an odor of sanctity to pleasure, and after we have indulged in self-worship for a life-time, it blesses us with absolution for our sins. Because in matters of religion we profess what we do not believe, we have grown false in other things, and we do business with one another, each without any belief in his neighbor's faith or honesty. Happily, there are inside and outside the churches many exceptions to this rule of business ; enough of them to break in some degree the force of heathen censure and strengthen that social confidence that gives character and dignity to life. I offer these mitigating circumstances for what they are worth, confess-

ing at the same time that they are not a full defence to the heathen accusation.

Because the Christian religion hangs loosely upon the Americans, many Buddhists and Mohammedans erroneously think that America is good missionary ground for them. With a religious enthusiasm like that of Loyola, or Wesley, Bishop Shaku Soyen points to the Western nations eager for the light of Asia as it is in Buddha, and, referring to the Parliament, he said : "The meetings showed the great superiority of Buddhism over Christianity, and the mere fact of calling the meetings showed that the Americans and other Western peoples had lost their faith in Christianity and were ready to accept the teachings of our superior religion." So, likewise, the Mohammedans think that the decay of Christian faith makes an opportunity for them to propagate their "superior religion" among the Western peoples, and Mohammedan missionaries are now at work in England and America. They make a mistake in supposing that the Western peoples who have lost their faith in Christianity are anxious to believe in Buddha, Brahma, Mohammed, Baal, or some other deity or prophet, when the truth is they have lost faith in all religions that express themselves in forms of worship or claim supernatural inspiration. For centuries men have accepted sacred stories as a substitute for truth, and worship has usurped the place of duty. The rattle and the rumble of the printing-press are shaking the foundations of every superstition, of every error, and of every wrong. Men who have thought themselves out of the Christian faith will rarely think themselves into the faith of Buddha or Mohammed. There is no reason why a man who has been released from one prison should strive to enter another.

The Central Relief Association held a meeting last night and adopted plans by which to raise a million dollars for charitable purposes in Chicago ; and we are informed that "A million dollars for charity, but not a penny for tramps, bummers, and impostors was the watchword of the Association." I fear this "watchword" will be a heavy handicap on the society, for it will require the critical ingenuity of expert metaphysical detectives to determine which of their hungry brothers is a "bummer" or a "tramp." According to the papers, Mr. Sterling, a very active member of the Association, a kindly man, of good intentions, but rather severe and rigid in his benevolence, said, "The class of loafers that had been sleeping in the City Hall had attracted entirely too much attention. What we need to do is to weed out the impostors, starve them out, and give assistance to those who deserve it." The language is rough, like the lot of the men described, and I do not believe that Mr. Sterling used the word "loafers" at all, but it expresses a prevalent estimate of the idle men, and about ninety per cent. of it is unjust. I inspected that shivering surplus in the corridors of the City Hall, perhaps not with strict impartiality, because of ancient fellowship, but as fairly as I could, and by the faces and the hands, and by the clothes, I knew that a large majority of it was made of men who are in the habit of earning their own living, but were just now out of work ; and "out of luck" besides.

In the days of old, some years before the war, when a man's "nigger" was a bit of sacred property, it was my fortune to live in Virginia. I had drifted on a vagabond wave to the shores of that province, and as soon as I was cast upon the dry land, I found the white opinion to be unanimous that the "nigger," as they called him down there, was lazy and ungrateful. I searched with a mental telescope that multiplied by ten million diameters, to discover something that he ought to be grateful for, but I never found it ; and when my telescope showed me that the "nigger" did all the work in Virginia that *was* done, and that he got nothing

for doing it, I wondered why he did not rest oftener, and—longer. Like the old Virginia planters, the Central Relief Association is very nearly unanimous in believing that the homeless wanderers who seek shelter on the stairs and in the passages of the City Hall, the gaunt effigies that besiege the soup-kitchens, are lazy and ungrateful. They had been tried by the street-cleaning test and found wanting.

* * *

In spite of all my efforts to resist the magnetic fascination, I am driven by an uncontrollable spirit to bring Oliver Twist into this discussion. The pathetic soup-story told by Mr. Sterling to the Central Relief Association made me dream all night about that historic meeting of the "Board" of charities, or whatever it was, and the gentleman in the white waistcoat who prophesied that Oliver would certainly be hung because he had shown inborn depravity enough to ask for more soup. "When our free soup-kitchens were opened," said Mr. Sterling, "we offered two good meals a day and free lodging to all who would work three hours a day on the streets." In my boyhood I knew a church, where the rear pews were ostentatiously placarded as "Free Seats," to which the poor could get admission by the payment of a penny. So, Mr. Sterling gives "free" soup to the poor who pay for it with work, at the rate of an hour's work for a meal. He is astonished that the terms are not gratefully accepted by the "unemployed," but are looked upon by them as a hard bargain, in which there is neither charity nor justice. They say that the two meals and the lodging do not cost the Association more than fifteen cents, while the work demanded for the charity is worth at least thirty cents if it is worth anything.

* * *

For several months the country has been in a state of panic, and industry has been depressed. Business is dull, money scarce, and many mechanics, clerks and laborers out of work are dependent upon charity. We have been told that this unhappy condition was due to a paralysis of enterprise resulting from a fear that the duties on imports would be lowered, and that uncertainty as to the fate of the tariff was the cause of the distress. The excuse is gone, for the uncertainty is now at an end. Even if the Wilson bill should pass, the "tariff reform" contained in it is so conservative and mild that the protected interests themselves must laugh at their own affectation of alarm. To be sure, the explosions of oratory directed against the "robber tariff" in the campaign of 1892 were very loud, but much of the cannonading was merely "sound and fury signifying nothing." Some of the cannoners themselves were careful to assure the listening crowds that they were firing blank cartridges. They resembled the soda-water merchant at the Fair one thirsty day when the demand for his liquor was so great that the noise made by the liberated corks was like the firing of guns. "Don't be a frightened, ladies and gentlemen," said he, "its only effervescence."

M. M. TRUMBULL.

CORRESPONDENCE.

GENERAL TRUMBULL'S REPLY TO PROFESSOR VON HOLST.

To the Editor of The Open Court:

I am glad to learn that Professor von Holst is not the author of the article in the *Forum* for November, entitled "The Senate in the Light of History"; and I think that he is under some obligations to me for giving him an opportunity to deny the paternity of the nameless contribution. The magazine did not positively "assert" that Professor von Holst was the author of it, but it led its readers to believe so. Not only does Professor von Holst affirm that he is not the author, but he adds: "Nor does the *Forum* say

that I am." It is true that a very close and microscopic examination of the *Forum* supports that statement, but the Professor must admit that the place of the article in the *Forum* and the position of its title on the outside of the cover, right under the name of Professor von Holst, and without any other name to indicate its authorship, justify the reader in supposing that it was written by Professor von Holst. It follows in orderly sequence the article entitled, "Shall the Senate Rule the Republic," and it seems to be a second chapter of the main article, "The Decline of the Senate." It appears as a continuation of Professor von Holst's contribution, for the personal pronouns are in their proper places, and to the ordinary reader there is no other personality visible.

The mischief was innocently done while the editor and the sub-editor were off duty, but the inevitable consequence of it was that Professor von Holst appeared in a false position. The readers, too, are misled, for I have talked with many persons about the article, and not one of them has had any suspicion that Professor von Holst was not the writer of it.

Professor von Holst says that the title to his article was "manufactured in the *Forum* office," in the absence of the editor and the sub editor; and that the heading he had chosen for his essay was cancelled in that office for reasons unknown to him. I sympathise with him in his misfortune, but it only shows what a supernumerary can do when suddenly made stage-manager and let loose among the properties. Professor von Holst is lucky to escape as well as he did, and he may be thankful that the temporary stage-manager did not "cut the lines" and interpolate a few "gags" of his own.

I cheerfully withdraw the remarks I made about "The Senate in the Light of History" so far as those remarks apply to Professor von Holst, but I must let them stand against the article itself, and its invisible author. It now devolves upon him to reveal himself and the "six men of most excellent judgment," who classified the Senate and ticketed the Senators. M. M. TRUMBULL.

THE OPEN COURT.

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