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STORY OF AN OLD LONDON SOCIETY.

BY MONCURE D. CONWAY.

1.

ONE hundred years ago was organised the religious society which seventy years ago founded South Place Chapel. Its history represents every phase of religious progress in that time. It was organised by an American now little thought of, but who in that dread year, 1793, was looked upon by the orthodox as a sort of theological Robespierre, assailing the King of Heaven, though really he was only guillotining Satan. This American was Elhanan Winchester. Born near Boston (1751), eldest son of a mechanic who named his fifteen children out of the Bible (boys out of the Old, girls out of the New, Testament), and brought them up as solemn citizens of ancient Judea, Elhanan was given only a fair common-school education, and taught himself Hebrew, Greek, Latin, and French. He became a rigid Calvinist preacher, but while preaching about New England met on his way, casually, a young lady who shook her head at his doctrine and said all must be saved, for she "beheld an infinite fulness in Christ for all mankind." He interrupted her with denials and texts, silenced her, passed on his way; but her one sentence carried his destiny with it. He never saw her again; he never knew her name or abode; he carried to the end of life a hurt that he could not tell her that he had found out his error and her Truth. Her soft word, a little seed cast on Puritan rock, took root, crumbled the rock into a robust tree of faith (of course, called heresy), whose fruitful slips were planted in various parts of America and England. One of those slips is represented in the hundred years of South Place Society: the seed of it was planted by a Yankee girl four generations ago. She lived and died in her little sphere, dreaming not that the still, small voice of her spirit would be heard in distant lands, would animate leaders of men, and that her heart, a century after it ceased to beat, would be reminding other lonely hearts of the immeasurable influence of the true word spoken in fit season, amid whatever weakness and obscurity.

Elhanan (signifying "God-given") made good his name. It is said (II Samuel, 19) Elhanan slew Go-

liah; elsewhere the feat is ascribed to David, but we will assume it to be a forecast of the Bostonian who saw Washington besieging the British and went forth to besiege Hell. He carried to the combat one brief text,—“God is Love.” With this he began his Universalist revolution in England (1787) when even Unitarians feared a doctrine that might mitigate the fears of mankind. He was, however, kindly received by Priestley and Price, in private, though no Unitarian assembly heard his voice. He was also received in a friendly way by the aged John Wesley, who at times inclined to Universalism. He was a grand kind of man (his portrait is before me), and wonderfully eloquent. He preached about London in small Baptist chapels, and in a schoolroom, until finally a number of admirers from various denominations procured a chapel in Parliament Court; and there, on February 14th, 1793, was organised the society which has now reached its centenary.

Parliament Court has a grand sound; so grand that the American Universalist who wrote some account of Winchester, a sort of tract, says that he (Elhanan) preached before the Houses of Parliament! But really Parliament Court is a squalid alley, and the chapel (now a Jewish synagogue) was small and dismal. Yet it is probable that the London fog was never illumined by more glorious visions than those that shone on the worshippers of Divine Love in dingy Parliament Court. Elhanan was a rhapsodist; he versified the hundred and fifty psalms, composed two hundred and thirty-seven hymns, and wrote a poem in twelve books on “The Process and Empire of Christ.” He was also a millennial enthusiast and preached two famous sermons on “The Three Woe-Trumpets of Revelations,” in which he identified the opening French Revolution with the second “woe-trumpet.” He had an enormous capacity for belief. His first publication in London was the Visions of an old Frenchman whom he had found in Pennsylvania, who, in a forty-one hours’ trance had visited the other world and conversed with Adam himself, from whom he received the assurance that all of his (Adam’s) posterity would be saved. The pamphlet was sold for the benefit of a widow.

The death of John Wesley (March 2d, 1791) was

the occasion of a strange outburst of hatred against him, and Elhanan Winchester, who had announced a funeral service for him, was even threatened for it. So far as I can discover, the only memorial for the dead Wesley, outside of Wesleyan chapels, was that of Winchester,—who did not care much for Wesley's preaching, but admired him personally.

On October 12th, 1792, Elhanan gave a glowing oration in honor of the tricentenary of Columbus's landing in the New World. The conclusion was prophetic :

"I look through and beyond every yet peopled region of the New World, and behold period still brightening upon period. Where one contiguous depth of gloomy wilderness now shuts out even the beams of day, I see new states and empires, new seats of wisdom and knowledge, new religious domes, spreading around. In places now untrod by any but savage beasts, or men as savage as they, I hear the voice of happy labor and behold beautiful cities rising to view. Lo, in this happy picture, I behold the native Indian exulting in the works of peace and civilisation. I hear the praises of my Creator sung upon the banks of those rivers unknown so long. Behold the delightful prospect ! See the silver and gold of America employed in the service of the Lord of the whole earth ! See Slavery, with all its train of attendant evils, abolished ! See a communication opened through the whole continent, from North to South, and from East to West, through a most fruitful country ! O America, land of liberty, peace, and plenty, in thee I drew my first breath ; in thee all my kindred dwell. I beheld thee in thy lowest state, crushed down under misfortunes, struggling with poverty, war, and disgrace ; I have lived to behold thee free and independent, rising to glory and extensive empire, blessed with all the good things of this life and a happy prospect of things to come. I can say, Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, for mine eyes have seen thy salvation, which thou hast made known to my native land, in the sight and to the astonishment of all the nations of the earth !"

Parliament Court Chapel, small as it was, implied a grand step ; for it was the day of small things for even orthodox dissent, of much smaller things for heresy. Elhanan does not appear to have maintained Trinitarianism, but he did not assail it. He adhered to his gospel of universal restoration. He wrote a reply to Paine, but it was gentlemanly,—a rare thing ! Yet his movement was a spark kindled from the burning enthusiasm of humanity which Paine had kindled. The society in Parliament Court called themselves "Philadelphians,"—loving brothers,—no doubt remembering what the Spirit, in the Book of Revelation, said to the church at Philadelphia : "I have set before thee an open door which none can shut." And shut it never has been. Winchester wrote to his friend Dr. Benjamin Rush, of Philadelphia, one of his converts, that he had found "many doors opened in England, especially among the Baptists and Presbyterians." He preached in many English towns ; he arraigned the slave-trade, denounced capital punishment, instituted a true ethical society. After nearly seven years' work here he was compelled by domestic troubles to return

to America (May, 1794). It was his religious belief that a preacher, "to be above reproach," must never be without a wife ; but the fifth Mrs. Winchester uttered so many reproaches that the poor man resolved to put an ocean between himself and her. Though a Philadelphian geographically, she was spiritually the reverse. However, she became penitent, was forgiven, and joined him in America. The Society entreated his return ; but, while they awaited his presence, his death was announced. He died at Hartford, April 18th, 1799.

The memorial service for Elhanan Winchester in Parliament Court was long remembered. Amid draped walls the Rev. William Vidler, his first ministerial convert, preached from the text : "He being dead, yet speaketh." Four hymns were written for the occasion, all containing verses of exaltation,—such as this :

"Oft whilst he spake our souls would rise,
And open spread Faith's widest wings,
And mount and soar above the skies,
And realise eternal things."

For a good many years Winchester's "Dialogues" represented the main strength of the Universalist propaganda in England. Many congregations were formed, which used to meet in private houses. The basis of their belief was that the sacrifice of Christ must be unlimited in effect. They were very puritanical. The late Lord Houghton told me that Universalist meetings used to be held in the home of his boyhood, Freystone Hall, and that they were strict Sabbatarians. This was perhaps why they could not at once unite with the Unitarians. But they are now, I believe, completely absorbed.

AXIOMS.

SUPERSTITIONS are much more common than is generally assumed, for they not only haunt the minds of the uneducated and uncivilised, but also those of the learned. Science is full of superstitions, and one of the most wide-spread of its superstitions is the belief in axioms.

"Axiom" is defined as "a self-evident truth."

It is not the peasantry who believe in axioms, but some of the most learned of the learned, the mathematicians ; and since mathematics, with all its branches, is a model science, the solid structure of which has always been admired and envied by the representatives of other sciences, so that they regarded it as their highest ambition to obtain for the results of their own investigations a certainty equal to the certainty of mathematical arguments ; not much offense was taken by any one at the notion that all the sciences might start with axioms, and that there are some simple and self-evident truths, which need not and cannot be proved.

Euclid does not use the term "axiom." Euclid begins his geometry with "definitions" (*ὁροί*), "pos-

tulates" (*ἀιτήματα*), and "common notions" (*κοιναί ἐννοαί*). Aristotle, however, repeatedly uses the term and defines it in his *Analytics* once as "the common principles from which all demonstration takes place" (I, 10, 4), and in another passage as "that immediate principle of syllogistic reasoning, which a learner must bring with him" (I, 2, 6).

Euclid's postulates and common notions were both called axioms by his followers; the former are counted 1-9, the latter 10-12. The first and most important one of the postulates is, "Things which are equal to the same thing are equal to one another." Of the common notions, the first and most important one is axiom 10: "Two straight lines cannot enclose a space."

That Newton called the laws of motion "axioms," need not be mentioned here. His usage of the word is simply a misnomer.

* * *

It is a strange idea that there can be truths which need no proof, but millenniums have passed without its being scarcely doubted. If the fundamental truths of mathematics, with the assistance of which all the theorems are to be proved, must be taken for granted, does not the whole of mathematics remain unproved? And if mathematics be permitted to start with axioms which must be taken for granted, why should not philosophy and religion have their confessions of faith, too?

Schopenhauer, one of the most radical philosophers, does indeed take the view that the whole of mathematics remains unproved. He says:

"That that which Euclid demonstrates is correct, we must concede according to the principle of contradiction; but why it is so, we are not informed. Accordingly, we almost have that uncomfortable sensation which we experience after a trick of legerdemain, and, indeed, Euclidean proofs are remarkably similar to it. Almost always truth comes in through the back door. It is found *per accidens* from some incidental circumstance. Sometimes apagogic argument closes the doors, one after the other, and leaves open only one into which we enter for no other reason. Often, as in the Pythagorean theorem, lines are drawn, and we know not why. Afterwards we notice that they were snares, which unexpectedly close, and thus compel the assent of the student, who now has to accept what remains to him in its interconnection perfectly incomprehensible. Thus we can go over the whole Euclid without really acquiring a true insight into the laws of spatial relations, or, instead of them, learn by heart only some of their results. This kind of cognition, which is rather empirical and unscientific, is comparable to the knowledge of a physician, who is acquainted with diseases and cures without knowing their connection.

"Euclid's logical method of treating mathematics is unnecessary trouble and crutches for healthy legs. . . . The proof of the Pythagorean theorem is stilted and insidious." (Schopenhauer, "Welt als Wille und Vorstellung," Vol. I, p. 83.)

Schopenhauer's view is not without foundation. Grassmann, one of our greatest mathematicians and the pathfinder of new roads in his science, says, concerning mathematical arguments:

"Demonstrations are frequently met with, where, unless the theorems were stated above them, one could never originally know what they were going to lead to; here, after one has followed every step, blindly and at haphazard, and ere one is aware of it, he at last suddenly arrives at the truth to be proved. A demonstration of this sort, leaves, perhaps, nothing more to be desired in point of rigidity. But scientific it certainly is not. *Uebersichtlichkeit*, the power of survey, is lacking. A person, therefore, that goes through such a demonstration, does not attain to an untrammelled cognisance of the truth, but he remains—unless he afterwards, himself, acquires that survey—in entire dependence upon the particular method by which the truth was reached. And this feeling of constraint, which is at any rate present during the act of reception, is very oppressive for him who is wont to think independently and unimpededly, and who is accustomed to make his own by active self-effort all that he receives." (Grassmann, "Die lineale Ausdehnungslehre, ein neuer Zweig der Mathematik," Introduction, page xxxi.)

Schopenhauer's criticism is good, but his method of mending the fault is not satisfactory. He makes of the whole structure of mathematics one great axiom and proposes to treat all mathematical truths in the same way as axioms. He proposes to prove them directly by intuition, to let them appear as self-evident, and imagines that no further argument is needed.

Says Schopenhauer:

"In order to improve the methods of mathematics, it is above all necessary to give up the prejudice that proved truths have any superiority over those which are intuitively known, or the logical argument, resting upon the principle of contradiction, over the metaphysical, which is immediately evident; and the pure intuition of space belongs to the latter class.

"That which is most certain and always incomprehensible is the contents of the principle of sufficient reason." (l. c., Vol. I, pp. 87-88.)

Grassmann pursues the opposite method. While Schopenhauer makes all mathematical theorems axiomatic, thus introducing into it a peculiar mysticism; Grassmann proposes to discard axioms altogether. He says:

"Geometry at the present day, still lacks a scientific beginning. The foundation on which the entire structure rests, suffers from a flaw that necessitates a complete reconstruction of the system. . . .

"The flaw, the presence of which I propose to show, is most easily recognisable in the concept of the plane. Taking the definition given in the systems of geometry, with which I am acquainted, I find it to be assumed fundamentally therein, that a straight line which has two points in common with a plane falls wholly within the plane;—be it that this is tacitly accepted (as Euclid has done), or embraced in the definition of a plane, or propounded, finally, as a distinct axiom. The first case,—where the assumption is tacitly made,—is on its face unscientific; while the second, as I shall presently show, can with no more reason pretend to the requisites of scientific character. . . .

"The only remaining course, therefore, in case we wished to hold to the method of geometry hitherto pursued, would be to convert that proposition into an axiom. But, if an axiom can be avoided, without having to introduce a new one in its stead, it must be done; even though it should bring about a complete reconstruction of the whole science. For, in this way, the science must gain substantially in simplicity. . . .

"The abstract methods of mathematical science know no axioms at all; the initial proof, in these methods, is brought about by the combination of predications; use being made of no other law of progression* than the universal one of logic that which is predicated of a series of objects so as to apply to each separately, can be predicated in fact of each separate object belonging to that series. To set up as an axiom this law of progression, which, as we find, embraces merely an act of reflection upon what was intended to be said by the general proposition, can occur to no mathematician; this is done, improperly, in logic; and sometimes even it is attempted to be proved in that science."

Grassmann finds that "in geometry only those truths are left as axioms which are derived from the conception of space." Such truths, however, are not axioms in the proper sense of the term, but statements of fact which are true if verified by experience.

The methods of mathematical reasoning are rigidly formal thought-operations; they are, to use Kant's terminology, "absolutely *a priori*"; but the material which forms the substratum of mathematics consists only in part of products of rigidly formal thought-operations. Some notions concerning space which have been derived by experience slip in unawares, which, according to Grassmann's method, had better have been systematically formulated and propounded at the very beginning.

The notion of space upon which mathematics is based may briefly be formulated thus:

The constitution of space is throughout the same, being in all its places and directions three-dimensional, which means that three coördinates are needed to determine from any given point any other point.

This implies that equality is conceivable with difference of place and direction; so that the products of the same constructions in different places will be the same—a maxim formulated in Euclid's eighth axiom.

Geometry, now generally called Euclidean geometry, presupposes the existence of a plane. The nature of a plane is described in Euclid's eleventh and twelfth axioms as follows: "Two straight lines cannot enclose a [finite] space."

All the proofs by which it is attempted to demonstrate these axioms either presuppose what they are meant to prove or fail to prove it.

How can we escape the difficulty?

Suppose we construct with a pair of compasses a circle by keeping one point steady and allowing the other to describe a line which will return into itself. We might rack our brains in vain to find a logical proof for the statement that all the circle's radii will be equal, without assuming that all the points of the circumference remain at an equal distance from the centre. This

* What Grassmann calls the law of progression, is, as we should say, the consistency of mental operations, the nature of which may be formulated as a sameness of operation producing a sameness of result. See the articles "The Formal" and "Reason" in *The Open Court* Nos. 301 and 302.

latter, however, is the same as the former; and both are such as they are by construction.

The so-called Euclidean plane must be made such as it is by construction, and the possibility of constructing other planes is by no means excluded. How this construction is to be accomplished it is not for us to say. Euclid's eleventh and twelfth axioms simply serve to characterise the nature of the plane in which we proceed to construct our geometrical figures.

It is a matter of course that axioms, being out of place in mathematics, are out of place in any of the sciences and also in philosophy.

The bottom rock to which we have to dig down in all our investigations are not principles, or maxims, or axioms, but facts. Such things as principles and maxims have to be derived from facts, and axioms must be dispensed with altogether.

Obviously, Euclid's "common notions" are not axioms; but must we not regard his postulates as such?

Euclid's postulates are rules of reasoning specially adapted to mathematics, which, however, in a general form, are universally applicable in all logical reasoning.

Are not these rules of reasoning self-evident? Are they not principles which must be granted before we begin to agree, and must they not therefore be accepted as axioms?

The rules of reasoning have often received the name of axioms, but we cannot allow that their authority can be regarded as above investigation and proof.

The philosophical world has always vaguely felt that axioms are inadmissible in philosophy. The various philosophers have tried either to prove them or to do without them, to evade them.

At present it is generally supposed that we have to accept either the one or the other horn of this dilemma: either axioms are the result of an elaboration of particular experiences, i. e., are, like all other knowledge concerning the nature of things, *a posteriori*, or they are conditioned by the nature of human reason, they are *a priori*. The most prominent representative of the former view is John Stuart Mill; of the latter, Kant.

Kant replaces the name axioms in mathematics by the word "principles" of mathematics, but the fact remains the same; he regards the mathematical principles as self-evident and directly apprehended by way of intuition. Being necessary and universally valid they are *a priori*. Indeed, to Kant, the whole field of the *a priori* is an empire of axiomatic truths, and Schopenhauer, his disciple, was more consistent than the master, as he accepted this consequence.

Mill discards not only axioms, but also the necessity and universal validity which should be the distinctive feature of axioms. To him axioms are generalisations of single experiences, but, being exceptionally

simple and frequent, they possess, though not necessarily, yet after all a quite exceptionally strong certainty.

Kant's weakness lies in the fact that he still accepts, if not in name yet in fact, principles or axioms, as truths that are immediately certain, while it is urged against Mill, that our certainty of axioms, so called, does not rest upon experience. No amount of past or additional experience makes them more certain, and in case experiences arise contradictory to them, we do not doubt our axioms, but distrust our observation.

The author of the article "Axiom" in the "Encyclopædia Britannica" (Prof. G. C. Robertson) still regards the question as unsettled. He says of the claims of these rival schools :

"The question being so perplexed no other course seems open than to try to determine the nature of axioms mainly upon such instances as are, at least practically, admitted by all, and these are mathematical principles."

Our solution of this perplexing problem is to regard the rules of reasoning, such as Euclid has formulated under the name of postulates, as products of rigidly formal reasoning.

Man's reasoning consists of his mental operations, and man's mental operations are acts.

The mere forms of mental acts are such as advancing step by step from a fixed starting-point. We thus create purely formal magnitudes. We can name every step and can combine two and more steps. This is not all. We can also revert step by step; we can disassociate our combinations and again separate our magnitudes partly or entirely into their elements. Purely mental acts are, as acts, not different from any other happenings in the world. The sole difference consists in their being conscious, and that for convenience sake a starting-point is fixed as an indispensable point of reference. The starting-point may be any point; the names of the products of our mental operations may be any names; yet it is requisite that, once taken, the point of reference shall remain the same, and also the names of the same magnitudes must remain the same.

Our mental operations, by which the rigidly formal products, commonly called *a priori*, are produced, being the given data out of which mind grows, and as regards their formal nature being the same as any other operations in the world, we say that the products of these operations are ultimately based upon experience. However, they are not experience in the usual (i. e. Kant's) sense of the word; they are not information received through the senses. They are due to the self-observation of the subject that experiences, and this self-observation is something different from the mysterious intuition in which the intuitionists believe. The

subject that experiences does not take note of external facts, but of its own acts, constructing general schedules of operations which hold good wherever the same operations are performed.

Thus on the one hand we deny that the rigidly formal truths are generalisations abstracted from innumerable observations; and on the other hand that they are axioms or self-evident truths, or principles acquired by some kind of immediate intuition. We recognise their universality and necessity for all kinds of operations that take place, and yet escape the mysticism that our surest and most reliable knowledge must be taken for granted, that it is unproved, unprovable and without any scientific warrant.

SPIRITUALISM.

A REPLY.

BY J. C. F. GRUMBINE.

[Lack of space prevents us from publishing Mr. Grumbine's rejoinder to Dr. Dessoir in full. Accordingly, we had to take the liberty of abbreviating it, but trust that this extract contains Mr. Grumbine's most vigorous arguments, which, to those who take the same standpoint will appear overwhelming and unanswerable. We, however, must confess that we are not convinced, not because we take another view of the nature of spirit, the spirituality of man and of the world, but because there obtains an irreconcilable divergency of opinion between Mr. Grumbine's and our own view concerning the criterion of truth and the reliability of evidence. In this respect, indeed, Mr. Grumbine's article deserves special attention. It will appear as a psychological problem to many, to be classed together with the cases of Wallace and Crookes.

We do not believe that Dr. Dessoir will have anything to reply, and unless unforeseen circumstances arise, we consider, with the following remarks of Mr. Grumbine, the present discussion as closed.—ED.]

DR. MAX DESOIR did not accept my challenge to afford a single argument to destroy the testimony of D. D. Home and the witnesses of his marvellous powers of mediumship, and, therefore, in reply to his rather interesting article, which is more of the nature of a *narrative* than a *proof* of the incidents of his experiences with the phenomena of spiritualism and the tricks of legerdemain, the latter by his certain and acknowledged confession forming practically nine-tenths of what he witnessed; leaving but one-tenth of what he really saw of the phenomena, that challenged doubt and could not be explained by the alleged *formal* of philosophy and the canons or formulæ of material science, unexplained.

If the learned Doctor made his experiments and got no results with Mr. Slade, or made investigations with alleged but seemingly fraudulent mediums and saw no manifestations which were not the tricks of legerdemain, for he does not say that *he thinks* these manifestations were not genuine but says undeniably

that they were spurious, what right, we ask in all justice to *facts*, has he to *condemn all facts as legerdemain*, and where does he get his knowledge to affirm that the actual phenomena are not of spirit and from excarnate spirit?

Dr. Max Dessoir implies that all mediums are frauds. He says that it is unreasonable to expect the sleight-of-hand performer to imitate the phenomena of spiritualism or the tricks of the medium at once, the medium having trained himself or herself by a "specialised education" for such legerdemain, and yet in his previous articles he admits and the editor of *The Open Court* took the pains to point out that Dr. Max Dessoir is one who is inclined to believe in the existence of spiritualistic phenomena not yet explained by science. *Such* is the inconsistency of his position that it seems necessary first to remove the antecedent contradictory statements and set the readers of *The Open Court* on the watch, lest by anxiety to be truthful we might commit ourselves to the folly of admitting Dr. Max Dessoir to be an enemy in his own household. He is not a spiritualist. With all of his séances which he attended, and they gave him but an *education in frauds*, and yet for all that as a scientist he would in the genuine unscientific spirit cry out against what he knows actually nothing about. We know nothing of the scope of Mr. Slade's mediumship, whether it was or is in his power to really do as he tried to do under test or free conditions with the apparatus which Dr. Max Dessoir supplied. That he failed to do as he had hoped he could do, is by no means an argument against the impossibility of the phenomena. D. D. Home made and gave tests of a similar nature and in other respects far more audacious, inexplicable, and wonderful with Professor Crookes under conditions prescribed by him and rigidly maintained by the medium, which left no grounds for doubt nor denial, tests, however, which were natural, and yet Dr. Max Dessoir, in the face of one failure with Slade, who perhaps *merely consented*, as a personal favor, *to try to do* as Dr. Max Dessoir wished, or at least who may have overestimated his ability to afford such manifestations, or at best who, in his eagerness to catch the ear of the German Professor and his followers, overstepped the region of his psychic power, (an error which is sometimes done, for mediums are not able to do everything,) defiantly says with our irate Brewster "he was right—*spirits would* be the last thing that he would give in to."

This one single exhibition I shall cite of what we shall call merely "*phenomena*," for then Dr. Max Dessoir cannot say that we were *partial* to *spiritualism* as *against materialism* and *agnosticism*. A young man visited my home one Sunday, June 18th, 1893, and I received for him through automatic writing an analysis

of his spiritual gifts, also the name of an angel or spirit-intelligence who was then about him, her description being given and the astonishing news that she is the inhabitant of another planet, which is located beyond Neptune, in remotest space, and which is larger than Jupiter. For the time, so agnostic was I of the verity of the message and of its excarnate spirit-origin, that I doubted my own senses. Yet the young man believed me against my doubts, inferring that I would not lie or seek to deceive him, he being a dear friend and a young man of fine attainments; yet my doubts were irresistible and not to be idly set at naught. The young man put me to the test. He went to Chicago, visited a prominent medium, an independent slate-writer, whose name I can now give if desired, and received on separate slates, which he washed, examined, and kept his eyes on throughout the séance, eight communications from this spirit-intelligence. On the Monday evening following this revelation in his presence through automatic writing the name of the angel, which is "Faith," was given me. Now, every one of the messages which he received in Chicago from the medium was signed by this excarnate intelligence, "*Faith*." This spirit gave also the name of the planet where she resides. The medium knew nothing of this private conference between this young man and myself, is not a mindreader, and never saw the young man before. There is but one explanation; perhaps Dr. Max Dessoir may have that one, and if so, let him make legerdemain explain this phenomenon if he can.

CURRENT TOPICS.

IN Mr. Herbert Spencer's latest work, "Negative Beneficence and Positive Beneficence," he pours high spirited contempt upon the "tipping" system, so prevalent in England, and he says: "That social life may be carried on well without gratuities we have clear proof. A generation ago while there still continued much of the purity that characterised American institutions, employés, and among others the servants in hotels, looked for nothing beyond the wages they had contracted to have for services rendered. In England, too, at the present time, there are to be found even among the more necessitous, those who will not accept more than they have bargained to receive. I can myself recall the case of a poor workwoman who, seeming to be underpaid by the sum she asked, declined to receive the extra sum I offered her." The custom of tipping, remarks Mr. Spencer, "while seeming to be beneficent is essentially unbeneficent," and yet he himself practices that "unbeneficent" system. He offered that poor workwoman a "tip" and she rebuked him by declining it. The poor workwoman had strength of character enough to practice the philosophy of Herbert Spencer, but the great philosopher himself had not. Does he never "tip" the servants at the Athenæum club? And, if not, what sort of a mutton chop do they give him when he goes there for his dinner?

* * *

The *Detroit Free Press* reviewing Mr. Spencer's book, appears to doubt that anybody ever did refuse a "tip" in England; and it says: "Mr. Spencer's 'workwoman' we are bound to accept on his assurance; but she could make quite a handsome income as a

'freak' in an American museum." Further, that paper says: "There is a prevailing impression among travelled Americans that the Lord Chief Justice and the Premier are the only persons outside the royal family to whom one could offer a 'tip' without the certainty of having it accepted." The *Free Press* is loyal and respectful to the royal family as a genuine Briton, dutifully pretending not to know that their Royal Highnesses are the most incorrigible tip takers in all England, although they "graciously please to accept" their tips in a patronising, condescending, and magnificent way. Sometimes, however, they accept them in the plebeian spirit of James Yellowplush himself. When I was a boy, they used to sing a song in England about a rustic who was visiting Windsor, where he had the good luck to meet a man who showed him a great many places of interest in the castle and the town. At parting, the visitor gave the man a shilling, which was thankfully received. Immediately afterwards he learned from a bystander that his "guide, philosopher, and friend" was the king himself; whereupon he followed him up and said, "If I'd a knowed that you was the king, I wouldn't ha' gin you the shilling"; and, here, as I remember it, the chorus came in. But this was in a song, and the story may not be historically true.

* * *

As an Englishman I am proud to learn from the *Free Press* that there are two personages in England, the Lord Chief Justice and the Premier, who are above the temptation of tips; and as an American I would be equally proud if the *Free Press* could give the same praise to the Lord Chief Justice of the United States, and to Mr. Cleveland's "Premier." Perhaps it can; but I have my doubts, because judging by the customs of this country it may fairly be assumed that those dignitaries get plenty of tips in the shape of passes on railroads, free tickets to everything, and favors of that character. If there is within the United States any president, vice-president, cabinet minister, senator, judge, congressman, governor, mayor, alderman, or any other officer, who is above tip-taking, he can, like Mr. Spencer's workwoman, "make a handsome income as a 'freak' in an American museum." There may be nothing corrupt in tip taking, but the effect of it is that the receiver puts himself under obligations to the giver, and the value of those obligations, except when strictly personal, must be abstracted or at least withheld, from the whole commonwealth, where all the proceeds of official duties rightfully belong. The taint of tip taking is rapidly spreading over the social system of the United States, as I personally know. I, myself, have been so pampered in America with railroad passes, free tickets to the circus, and similar gratuities, that when I have to pay my fare, I complain of it as a personal injury, and I protest against it as a tyrannical imposition.

* * *

The first money that I ever earned in America, I earned as a "roustabout," some forty-six years ago. I was at the time an "undesirable immigrant" in quarantine at Grosse Isle in the St. Lawrence river, a few miles below Quebec. I know I was "undesirable," because although I had paid my fare to Quebec the authorities there would not permit me to land, and they ordered the captain of the boat to take me "to — out o' this," whereupon he carried me up to Montreal, and dumped me on the levee like freight. While at Grosse Isle, a sloop came along laden with pine boards for sheds to shelter the fevered immigrants in quarantine, and the mate hired a small squad of us to unload the sloop, promising to pay us one pound as wages for the entire job. We unloaded the sloop, whereupon he paid us a gold sovereign, English money, and here I got my first lesson in monetary science, which the way of it was this: We went into a little store to buy some trifles, and the storekeeper worked a financial miracle right there. He gave us not only the articles we bought, but also more money in change than we had paid in. Thinking he had made a mistake

we called his attention to the number of shillings given us, but he said there was no mistake, and that he had given us the proper change. The explanation was that silver being at the time "cheap money" in Canada, a gold sovereign was worth more than twenty silver shillings. The lesson I committed to memory then was this, that the dearest money is the best for wages to the workingman. The mate of that sloop could have paid us twenty silver shillings and pocketed the discount, but he paid us a gold sovereign, and we pocketed the premium. If any workingman, or any other man, can show me that there is a fallacy in this example and that the quotient is wrong, I will cheerfully reverse my opinion that the dearest money is the best for wages, although I have cherished that opinion for forty-six years.

* * *

Can a man be guilty of a crime which he did not intend to commit? This is not so easy a conundrum as it seems to be. It has bewildered and entangled some judges of high degree; the courts of Illinois answering in the affirmative, and the English courts deciding the other way. Here is the way they solved the puzzle in a remarkable case recently tried in England. Ben Tillett, a labor agitator, was charged on various indictments with having, on December the 18th, at the Horse Fair, Bristol, incited persons then and there present to unlawfully assemble and commit a riot. The riot grew out of a strike and was no doubt excited by the seditious and inflammatory speeches made by Ben Tillett to the strikers and other workingmen. The judge, in summing up, declared that the speech was "reprehensible and extravagant," and he said that the resulting tumult was undoubtedly "a riot." The verdict was: "Guilty of uttering words calculated to lead to riotous conduct, but that he spoke in the heat of passion and without any intention to provoke a breach of the peace." Then the judge, turning to the prosecuting attorney, said: "It seems to me, Mr. Matthews, that is a verdict of not guilty. The prisoner must be discharged." So it seems that in England a man cannot be guilty of a crime which he had no intention to commit.

* * *

Last week the subject of "Education" was discussed at the Auxiliary Congress. Every day the rooms of the great Art Palace were crowded by enthusiastic people, and they listened eagerly to the variety of papers read. This week the subject is continued, and the interest, instead of diminishing, is increasing every day. It is fortunate that this town was appointed as the place for holding these educational congresses, because, perhaps, a little of their influence may reach that poorly enlightened legislature called the City Council of Chicago. Probably there is not another legislative body in the world so innocent of education; and yet, by a solecism so comical as to be grotesque, this aggregate of undeveloped intellects has just passed upon the qualifications of the School Board. Six men and one woman were appointed by the Mayor, as members of the Board of Education, but before they could be confirmed, they were compelled to satisfy the Board of Non-Education that they would expel "fads" from the schools. "Fads" is the contemptuous nickname by which they describe those more practical and intelligent methods of instruction, which in all sensible communities have supplanted the stupid old humdrums as effectually and beneficently as the railroads have abolished the stage-coaches of the olden time. The sinister purpose of the Board of Non-Education is to deprive the common schools, as far as possible, of their educational power.

* * *

Last Monday at the Education Congress a laboring-man had something to say, and a startling something, too. He shook his leather apron over the whole assembly and gave a smoky color to the atmosphere. He said that 60,000 children in the city of Chicago, entitled under the laws of Illinois to an education, were deprived of it because there was not room for them in the schools.

It gave pungency to the proceedings, but the flavor was too strong; and really the laboring-man ought not to have said it, because there is no use in bringing just nothing but vinegar to a picnic. It was an uncomfortable revelation, and as soon as it was made, the trumpet-vauntings of the great city became weak as the notes of a tin whistle; its tall buildings drooped, and its proud Exposition morally shrivelled up. What availeth it that a city is materially great, if it is at the same time spiritually and intellectually small? The next day a bishop came to repair damages, and he said: "We were told yesterday that there are 60,000 children in Chicago who cannot find seats in our public schools. But why is this? Simply because the people from every part of the globe have been crowding in upon us. But I pledge you, on behalf of this great city of Chicago, that just as soon as possible we will have the amplest provision for every child within our city limits." Right reverend bishop, is that apology sufficient? How comes it that everything in the city, except the schools, grows with its growth? How comes it that in addition to accommodations for business, for pleasure, and for worship, you could build the White City by the lake at a cost of thirty million dollars, while 60,000 children are deprived of that accommodation in the schools that belongs to them by law? Right reverend bishop, do you not think that the city ought to stop growing until the schools catch up?

* * *

Even at the risk of being tiresome, I must add a postscript to that last paragraph. Bishop Fallows is a learned man of good heart and good brain: he is a patriotic man, full of energetic public spirit; and he is a just man. For these reasons I regret that he did not strengthen Mr. Morgan, instead of yielding to civic pride by excusing those men who govern us and who shut our children and our grandchildren out of the public schools on the insufficient plea that there is no room for them there. That the heart of the bishop is with the schoolchildren and the schools is proven by his enthusiastic pledge on behalf of the city "to make the amplest provision for every child." Unfortunately, the bishop's pledge is of no more value than my promise to buy the Palmer House and the Auditorium. I cannot redeem the promise, nor can the bishop redeem his pledge. I have always admired that old sea-captain mentioned in the story, who, out of abundant gratitude, left enormous legacies of money to his friends, besides a great number of gold snuff-boxes and diamond-hilted swords, although the good-natured old imposter did not own a dollar's worth of anything. I sympathise with his motive, for I have a number of good friends to whom I would like to leave about five million dollars, if I had the money; and I believe I'll do it anyhow. The bishop's pledge is good-hearted and void, like the old sea-captain's will.

M. M. TRUMBULL.

CORRESPONDENCE.

"INDIVIDUALISM AND POLITICAL ECONOMY."

To the Editor of The Open Court:

Permit me to comment briefly on the more or less indirect criticisms passed upon my essay under the above title by Mme. Clémence Royer, in her interesting letter published in your issue of June 29th.

It is strange that Mme. Royer should have read a negative where an affirmative was elaborately argued. Surely the essential principles of political economy, and the philosophy of freedom which constitutes their real basis, needed no defense against the reproaches which I plainly laid at the door, not of the consistent individualistic advocates of *laissez faire* in the economic sphere, but of the inconsistent economists, who, in the language of Cairnes, merely sought to offer a handsome apology for the established order of things. Did I not wind up by pointing out the logical implications of *laissez faire*, and by calling upon political econo-

mists to put their advocacy of freedom upon a rational and scientific basis?

Again, Mme. Royer falls into error when she avers that political economy has been unjustly condemned, and that only the ignorance and selfishness of the masses are responsible for the widespread belief that political economy has ignored popular rights and popular interests. It is true that political economy has been regarded with suspicion by the masses, but it is equally true that the present demoralised condition of that science is the result, not of the suspicions and accusations of the masses, but of the fatal blows of profound thinkers and critics, many of them prominent economists themselves, and of the "spirit of the age." Political economy is weak, because it is a house divided against itself. In my essay I omitted all reference to the distrust of the masses, not because I attach no importance to it, but to guard against the obvious objection that the masses are incompetent to form an opinion on the subject,—an objection which I did not care to discuss at the time. I showed that political economy was discredited in scientific circles, and I gave the names of its chief assailants: Cliffe Leslie, Ingram, Cairnes, Carlyle, Ruskin, Toynbee, Proudhon. I may add Böhm Bawerk.

Doubtless no economist is open to the charge of deliberately sacrificing popular rights and consciously inventing sophistical apologies for inequitable arrangements. But there is such a thing as class *bias*, and a mistaken advocate may be more dangerous than an insincere one. Moreover, the anxiety to resist change and conserve the things that are, often prompts men to shut their eyes to the defects in their own systems. The essential principles of political economy are sound, but few of the economists knew how to defend their position or what a consistent application of the professed doctrine involves.

I believe in *laissez faire*, but it would be difficult for me to point to an economist logical enough to comprehend the difference between the alleged *laissez faire* of to-day and the true *laissez faire*. There is Proudhon, to be sure, but he was more than an economist. There is Spencer, but he does not claim to be an economist. What economists advocate freedom of banking and credit and a system of land tenure compatible with equity and equal liberty? Yet without freedom of credit and a proper system of land tenure there can be no such thing as *free* competition.

VICTOR YARROS.

THE OPEN COURT.

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