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## Current Topics

AT HOME AND ABROAD.

ERASMUS, who had borrowed a horse from a reformed friend, put the belief of this evangelical person to the proof by telling him to believe that his horse had been returned to him, and he would at once find it in his stable. There is now a body of people partly religious and partly scientific in the United States who hold that all which is required to free them from illness of any kind is the belief that it has no existence. Their system is called the mind-cure, and it furnishes us with another and a very curious instance of the advantages of private interpretation, and of being at liberty to form a creed of your own. One prominent minister of Boston describes the religious aspect of the system in question as a mixture of Pantheism and Buddhism, but as those who profess it show an intimate acquaintance with Holy Scripture—which is quoted voluminously by their preachers, it is difficult to see how this minister can account for such an issue. Are Pantheism and Buddhism, indeed, to be found in the Bible, or, if so, how shall private interpreters generally be protected from becoming affected by them? Here is one more difficulty in our way with regard to the "unaided word." If not aided, in fact, it would appear in danger of landing its devotees in some very queer quagmires. But to return to the adherents to the creed of the "mind-cure." The chief apostle of the sect is one Mrs. Eddy, who professes to have received initiation into the mystery by divine revelation. It appears that some years ago she fell on the side-walk, and receiving injuries to her spine that resulted in paralysis, she was declared within a few hours of her end. Under these circumstances the minister of the sect to which she then belonged called to see her, and was requested by her to repeat his visit some little time later in the day, no one believing, however, that she would be then alive. And it was between the two visits of this worthy man that the revelation was made which enabled Mrs. Eddy not only to live until his return but to meet him in sound health and at her hall-door. It was, in fact, revealed to her, meantime, that illness or hurt of any corporal kind was but an error, and that it must immediately disappear from the body of the believer who should realise this truth. There seem to be divisions, nevertheless, among the persons who believe in the mind-cure, some of them professing Christianity and others denying it, and we cannot quite make out whether the fact that illness is an error is based upon the philosophic definition that "matter is nothing," and consequently cannot suffer illness or hurt; or on the statement that as God made only what is good he could not have made illness which is not good, which therefore was never created, and has no existence. The philosophical teaching, however, of Mrs. Eddy is deep and delightful, and were it not for the fact that she calls herself a "Christian scientist," it might even obtain for her a hearing on those exclusively scientific platforms erected among ourselves. The following definition, for example, the outcome of her revelation, would form a gem in any of the discourses we have seen reported, or of the pamphlets published, i.e., "Personality is the embodiment of mind." There, indeed, is profundity itself, and if it be unfathomable, why, that only shows its depth. We defy any of our philosophers to beat it. It is not, however, necessary that to obtain the benefit of the "mind-cure" the sufferer should himself be able to attain to the necessary belief, that he may do vicariously, and in this way several people, in Boston especially where are the head quarters of the sect, are making snug little sums of money. But not only can the mind cure the suffering body of a neighbour; it can also harm it grievously, and this is a very serious consideration. Mrs. Eddy, for example, declares that her late husband met his death some years ago by reason of a mind which "thought arsenic into him."—An enviable mind, indeed, it must have been, and blessed was its possessor and all belonging to him. Or could it have been the mind of a member of the fair sex? But that we leave to the judgment of the sex themselves. Dear Madam, do you know any sister whose mind you consider capable of thinking arsenic—or gall, or wormwood, or even vinegar? Your well-known charity, and sisterly loving-kindness, will not permit of your replying. This idea alone of Mrs. Eddy's is sufficient to prove her genius, particularly if it relate to another

woman. Does not somebody tell us that it is the province of genius to seize upon the idea that, as it were, is in the atmosphere, and to give it a fitting expression? Such a man is the latest movement in the matter of belief of which we have received any report, and that promises to be of any consequence. We are, indeed, likely to witness some development of it among ourselves, for does not all that calls itself scientific find a welcome here. The mind-cure is eminently suitable to the calibre of our philosophers, and we look for its immediate introduction among them.

It has often been said that were it not for St. George's Channel there would never have been any Irish question. Perhaps not.—But, then, had it not been for the grace of God, the Irish question would have been altogether different from what it proved.—There never would have been any resistance of the Irish people to the Protestantism of their invaders, and matters would have been altogether different, although as to whether English merchants and tradesmen would have been one bit better pleased to suffer injurious competition from the trade of a Protestant country than from that of one inhabited by Catholics, may well be doubted. With the aid of God's grace, moreover, even had the Archbishop of Canterbury been able to send the Thirty-nine Articles to Dublin in his carriage, or had the elders of the Kirk carried over their Confession or their Sabbath to the country dry-shod, the Irish people would still have remained Catholic and all the difference would have been in their favour, for they could have made a more powerful resistance. The time, however, is gone by at which any one could think that communication by land with Great Britain would make any difference as to the political or religious condition of Ireland, and the prospect of a possible road to join the two islands has now no such significance.—Indeed if any influence has of late years spread from one country to any of the others, it has proceeded out of Ireland.—The land question in Scotland has been evidently influenced by that in Ireland, and the farmers and crofters have been aroused to action and encouraged to continue in it by the example of Irish agitation. In this respect Ireland has led the people of Great Britain, and marched in the van of what will prove the greatest reform of the century. It is proposed, then, to construct a tunnel under the Channel from Portpatrick to Donaghadee, by which a great saving of time and trouble might be made in the carriage of goods, and passengers even would be spared the passage by sea. There might, nevertheless, be, at least, some nervous people who would prefer the delays and inconveniences of the passage to the journey through a tunnel twenty-one and a half miles in length, and whose roof would, in the deepest parts, be some 930 feet below the surface of the water. The cost of the undertaking is estimated at about six millions, and a company has been formed to promote it. That the work is practicable no-body can doubt. The experiment made with the tunnel under the straits of Dover, and concerning the possibility of whose completion all authorities appeared agreed, would seem to prove so much. That work would almost certainly have been completed had not the alarm of the nation been aroused, very needlessly as we think, concerning the danger of invasion. The Irish tunnel, however, which besides would be much shorter than the French one, would offer no fears of that kind and would greatly shorten the route, but much more as to time than distance, between the Scotch and English towns and some of the principal ports in Ireland. In some respects very important changes would result, and possibly, as is generally the case when any notable alteration is made, certain interests would suffer. The trade, for example, between Liverpool and America must evidently be affected by any arrangement which would permit of goods' being carried with out transshipment and directly by rail from Irish ports to the English cities, and American vessels would also find it to their advantage to exchange Queenstown harbour for Lough Foyle. Resistance, therefore, to the project may be looked for, and will probably succeed in delaying its execution, but the benefits to arise from it are too apparent to allow of its eventual failure.

THE death is announced of a man who has figured prominently in the later and more deplorable history of Ireland. We allude to Mr. John George Adam, known to all the world as the evictor of Glenveigh and concern-