

man?' On Mr. Bedford's side (the affirmative) the debate, if properly reported, was slipshod alike in conception and execution. As for the strolling 'orator,' he simply did not face the issue. His part in the proceedings was apparently limited to a few hollow-sounding Ingersollian misstatements, some of the customary cant of atheistic 'humanitarianism' (so-called)—and the fobbing of what was probably the biggest collection that he handled since he touched the shores of New Zealand.

'Noise proves nothing,' says Mark Twain; 'often a hen which has merely laid an egg cackles as if she had laid an asteroid.' Our foreign visitor has, to use Carlyle's phrase, 'swallowed formulas.' But he has not digested them. Neither has he learned that loud and vehement assertion does not transmute shallow sophism into sound reasoning nor misstatement into sober fact. Nowadays scientific men do not cackle over the fallacies of Tom Paine nor the sneers of Voltaire nor the crude and barbarous illogicalities and controversial dishonesties of Robert Ingersoll. They know too much for that. Once upon a time a conceited and blustering French general declared, in the presence of the elder Alexander Dumas: 'I cannot form the slightest conception of the mysterious Being known as the good God.' The eccentric author of 'Monte Cristo' knocked the sneerer inside out with the following unexpected answer: 'General, I have in my house four dogs, two apes, and a parrot, and I assure you that their opinions are absolutely and entirely identical with yours.' Dumas' remark was by no means so trivial either then or now as, at first blush, it may seem. To-day, as in this time, there is probably much so-called atheism and sneering at religion that are merely skin-deep and not grounded upon serious study or investigation of the subject. 'All roads lead to Rome.' So the saying runneth. And its counterpart is this: 'All the great highways of knowledge lead to God.' With unerring certainty the study of all matter, the whole realm of physical science, so long as it stands on the firm and sure ground of fact, lead back to the One First Cause, which is God. 'No system of the universe,' says Sir Joseph Dawson, in his 'Modern Ideas of Evolution,' 'can dispense with a First Cause, eternal and self-existent; and this First Cause must necessarily be the living God, whose will is the ultimate force and the origin of natural law.' Faraday was the wizard of modern science. In his 'Experimental Researches' (p. 465) he sums up, in the words of a higher revelation, the revelation which his life-long study of nature made to him. 'I believe,' said he, 'that the invisible things of Him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and Godhead.'

These are but samples of testimony taken at random from among the foremost of the world's scientific men. There is no atheism about true science. But, of course, there are many who will not see. Nelson, for instance, on a historic occasion clapped his blind eye to the telescope, and 'did not see' the signal which he preferred to disregard. And, in the comedy trial in 'Pickwick,' did not Sam Weller look straight up into the roof of the court and, therefore, 'didn't see' his portly father sitting conspicuously in the gallery? There are those who 'do not see' God in His universe because He is a Personage whom they would willingly ignore. The shallow thinkers and the vociferous half-educated fancy, too, that we are in another 'twilight of the gods.' But three hundred years ago Sir Francis Bacon clapped the cap upon their form of the atheistic fad. A little learning, said he, leads to atheism; deep study leads back to faith.

Mr. Bedford, M.H.R., and the 'Romish' Church.

Mr. Bedford, M.H.R., is probably a well-meaning if somewhat inexperienced young man. He may feel the

need of airing his traditions from time to time to keep the blue mould off them, but he would do well to reserve that function for the pulpit, and to pitch in a somewhat lower key some of the utterances which he makes from the public platform to general audiences of his fellow-citizens. It was, for instance, a needless offence to many of his hearers in a public debate on last Friday in Dunedin to speak of the 'Romish' Church as having 'fought against Christ' when it opposed Luther. Macaulay, referring to some of the envenomed partisan myths set afloat against English Catholics in the seventeenth century, said: 'They have been abandoned by statesmen to aldermen, by aldermen to clergymen, by clergymen to old women, and by old women to Sir Harcourt Lees.' Mr. Bedford should abandon such offensive theological slang as 'Romish' to fanatics of the deep yellow stripe of Sir Harcourt Lees. The word has long ago passed out of respectable society. Its place today is practically limited to the gutter controversy of the Order of the Saffron Sash, and in using it Mr. Bedford claps upon himself a stigma of ill-manners which no cultivated man should care to bear.

In the course of the debate Mr. Bedford was singularly unhappy in his references to Luther and the 'Romish' Church. Take, for instance, his statement that Christianity overthrew slavery. Quite true. But it was not an abstract Christianity that burst the shackles of the slave. It was applied Christianity—Christianity at work in the daily lives of men and women. And it so happens that the men and women who achieved this were those of the 'Romish' Church. They, and they alone, broke down the slavery of the old pagan days. The Church's course of action was, says Baluffi, 'measured, not sudden or revolutionary.' So deep and old-standing a social sore naturally took a long time to heal. The Church's work on behalf of the slave resolved itself into three kinds: (1) She proclaimed the equality and fraternity of all men in the sight of God; (2) she raised the moral dignity of labor; (3) she gave an unexampled impetus to the movement for enfranchising slaves. Not alone the priesthood, but the episcopate, was open to manumitted slaves in the early Church. The noble church of St. Vitalis at Ravenna (Italy) was dedicated to the memory of a martyred slave. The Catholic monks were the pioneers of modern free industrial life. They removed the stigma of contempt that attached to labor; they worked for work's sake and God's sake and their neighbor's sake; they softened and sweetened everywhere the life of the tiller of the soil. At least ten Popes issued fulminations against the enslavement of their fellow-men. In over forty Councils the Catholic bishops enacted laws for the protection of slaves, for their gradual emancipation, erected schools and asylums for them, sanctified their manumission by solemn religious services, and excommunicated all who attempted to deprive them of their freedom. Both in East and West the Catholic monks emancipated the slaves on land given to them. Alms were collected for their enfranchisement; two great religious Orders—that of the Trinitarians and of Our Lady of Mercy—were founded for the redemption of Christians who had been enslaved by the Mahomedans; manumitting as an act of devotion and leaving slaves their liberty by will were encouraged by the Church everywhere. The result is stated by the rationalist historian, Lecky: In the twelfth century 'slaves in Europe were very rare. In the fourteenth century slavery was almost unknown.' It had, at worst, been mitigated into serfdom and villeinage. And these, in turn, gave way to the absolute liberty of the free and untied worker.

When Luther began his revolt he found slavery non-existent in Europe and its very memory dim and blurred. He hastened to advocate its re-infliction on his kind. He advocated the mowing down of the revolted peasants as if they were 'mad dogs.' In one of his