

CORRESPONDENCE.

THE ATHANASIAN CREED.

To the Editor of The Week:

SIR,—Your issue of the 19th March contained an article in which the Athanasian Creed is classed with such forgeries as the Will of Peter the Great, the False Decretals, and the Donation of Constantine. The writer deals with the "Creed of Athanasius" as a "literary forgery," and mentions its "spuriousness" as "conclusively proved." This has had the effect of puzzling me. I was aware, long ago, that portions of this Rule of Faith are too strong meat for some; and the whole thing, to others, one awful crystallized falsity, but then it was at least a genuine falsity. Every Sunday-school tyro knows that its author is unknown; that it is associated with the name of St. Athanasius, not as compiled by him, but as embodying in clear and concise form the great verities of the Faith of which, in his day, he was the most distinguished defender, as Arius was their deadliest impugner. I am not aware that Athanasius ever pretended to be the author or compiler of this creed. I am not aware that any one has ever supposed it to have been in existence, as a form of doctrine, till long after his time. I have never heard that his name was, by its compiler or any one else, fraudulently affixed to the document. I know that, in substance, it contains what Athanasius taught, and what the great Augustine wrote, concerning Life, Death, Resurrection, Judgment, the Trinity, and Retribution. I know that almost every clause of it may be found in Augustine's works; that every statement it contains is founded on and warranted by Scripture, and is therefore true. I know that for a thousand years it has stood out, like a grim fortress, terrible with cannon, every one of them pointed against some deadly heresy. And I know that it is unpalatable to some, because of its inexorable attitude of hostility to your modern religious maudlinisms. In a word, I knew it was under the ban as a "relic of the dark ages," freighted with bigotry and uncharitableness; but it remained for this writer to open my eyes to the fact that it is "spurious"—a "forgery." Putting the matter as he does, the reader is to infer that the Church has in this matter knowingly perpetrated, or at least sanctioned, a wicked fraud. For argument sake let us agree that the creed is not a correct statement of the Truth. Even then there has been no fraud in the case. Indeed, the Church Catholic has never even sanctioned or enjoined its use, in solemn council, as she did with the shorter and less expository symbols. The American Church has inconsiderately expunged it; the Eastern Church never adopted it. Universally, however, in substance, it is held. What, then, does this writer mean when he says: "Nor did the effect in any of the cases cease when the imposture was exposed"? Why, he means, of course, that the Church had imposed a falsehood—and an invented, "forged" falsehood at that—on Christendom; and that, under the blaze of modern light, the "murder" came out. I would ask, is it manly or honourable thus to smuggle in an inference which is groundless? which, if true, would be most discreditable to the Church? and which this writer intends that his unwary readers shall accept as truth? I ask, is it just to place the history of the Athanasian Creed *en sandwich* with an instrument fabricated to promote the damnable schemes of a Bonaparte, and another invented for purposes hardly less disreputable?—a creed evidently intended at any rate for the highest good of mankind and the glory of God. It has no sort of kindred or fellowship whatever with these cunning concoctions either in its authorship, its nature or its purpose; and this our author is too well-read and too clever not to see. Could Peter the Great "revisit these glimpses of the moon," what, think you, would he say to his too famous "last will and testament"? We know he would repudiate the document, but we do not know whether or not he would now repudiate its sentiments. It is very probable that Isidore of Seville, as one of the *pares* among whom the Bishop of Rome was simply *primus*, would reject with indignation the "Decretals" which bear his name, as false in substance as well as form. Can the same be affirmed of Athanasius? Would he not say: "It is true this document is not my work—it was not constructed by me; but I endorse every word of it, and I bless God's providence for so magnificent a bulwark of the Faith"? All this we absolutely know. Where, then, is the "forgery"? Where the "imposture" which, even after its "exposure," has perpetuated its terrible "effects"?

The fact is, it is most likely this invaluable composition is not, even in form, the product of any one hand or one age. True or false, its dogma interpenetrates the very life of Christendom. Its enemies can hope for little from flank assaults or sandwich enterprises—that old but futile device of the crucifixion of the Truth between two thieves.

Yours truly,

J. MAY.

Winnipeg, April 22, 1885.

INSOLVENCY LEGISLATION.

To the Editor of The Week:

DEAR SIR,—In your last issue of THE WEEK, in treating of the Bankruptcy Bill, you refer to the position which I have felt it to be my duty to take in the matter of legislation relating to insolvency. You apparently misapprehend my argument, doubtless through not being furnished with what I have so far advanced; I therefore take the liberty to enclose to you three hurriedly-written letters on the subject.

It is to be regretted that the public press is so short-sighted as to close its columns to discussion when this bears against insolvency legislation. All the papers I have asked to insert letters have refused, though I offered to pay for their insertion at advertising rates. Could discussion be had, so that the promoters and advocates of the Bill would have to stand on their defence, the grossest oppression and wrong, not yet even hinted at, done under and through the opportunity furnished by a law providing for distribution *pro rata* of assets of insolvent debtors, would be exposed to the light of day.

I may not have made my argument very clear in the last letter enclosed to you, though you will no doubt understand what I mean, namely, that all statutory law should be so framed as to constrain men to observe the laws of nature, and conversely, that no law should be enacted by the State which will tend to lead men to neglect these laws, or relieve them in any way of their responsibilities to God and to their fellowmen of informing themselves as to the operations of these laws; but this very thing all special laws relating to insolvency necessarily do, and therefore it would really be more consistent to enact a law to punish men for disregarding the laws of supply and demand than to enact laws with a view of relieving them of the consequences of breaking them. But of course this is not necessary, for nature will always assert her own prerogatives, and either bring back the erring one to the right way or else destroy him.

You will observe that throughout I oppose special insolvency legislation, not on the basis of expediency, but on principles of justice and righteousness.

Yours very truly, THOS. RITCHIE,
President Belleville Board of Trade.

MAY TIME.

With throb of throistle and with throat of wren,
Full of soft cheepings comes the longed-for May;
With myriad murmuring life throughout each day,
It grows and greens in grove and field and glen.
Gleam marigolds across each fragrant fen;
The fields grow bright with dandelion gold;
The buttercups are yellow on the wold,
Till all the earth is made glad unto men.

And thus May comes most like some sylvan queen,
Her trailing garments fringed with green and gold;
And passes by with shimmer and with sheen
Of all her verdure, till she reach the fold
That rose-crowned June will offer her between
His flower-wreathed arms in fragrances untold.

J. ALMOND RITCHIE.

ON THE ICE BREAKING UP AT BELLEVILLE,

Thursday, 16th April, 1885.

THE morning sun shines brightly o'er the town
On this, the loveliest day of early spring;
I watch the busy streets both up and down,
And think that winter now has taken wing.
But lo! the thought has scarcely taken shape
When through the streets one cry is heard—"The ice!"
The eager crowd now for the river make,
And fill the city bridges in a trice.

Huge blocks of ice come floating down the stream,
Smashing the houses built on either side;
No human building can resist, 'twould seem,
Yet the last bridge hath stayed the powerful tide.
The water thus pent up must find a vent,
So with a backward rush it finds its way,
And down a street in volumes it is sent—
The dwellers gaze upon it with dismay.

Within yon house an anxious mother stands,
With pale, set face, and anguish in her heart;
She hears the rush—its import understands—
Her babe pressed to her breast—naught shall them part.
'Tis scarce a moment since she heard that sound,
When the fierce flood bursts in the bolted door;
She gains the staircase with one frantic bound,
And joins her children on the upper floor.

And through the open window now she looks,
To see ice, house-tops and verandahs pass;
The rapid stream no opposition brooks,
It sweeps away full many a home, alas!
But tears of joy come to her weary eyes,
For coming towards her window is a boat,
And in it her dear husband she descrys;
Soon husband, wife and children are afloat.

That tiny craft makes for the nearest land;
And though their home has been completely wrecked,
This humble pair thank God, and pray the hand
That bruised them on their helplessness reflect.

DAVID McCLEW.

LORD BRAMWELL ON DRINK.

In a pamphlet written by Lord Bramwell for the English Liberty and Property Defence League, which will shortly be published, he says: "There are some opinions entertained as honestly, as strongly, and after as much thought as the opinions to the contrary, but which nevertheless are put forth in an apologetic way, as though those who hold them were doing wrong and knew it, or at least doing something they were not sure about. This apologetic style exists in some when the opinion entertained is righteous, just, moral, and in conformity with the practice of all mankind. It exists where those who hold the contrary say, and are permitted by their opponents to say: 'We are the righteous, the good, the virtuous, and you are the wicked, bad, and vicious.' This is what the total abstainers and the like say of themselves and those who do not agree with them. I am one who does not, and I am going to say why; and, as I think my opinion as good and virtuous as theirs, with the additional merit of being right, I am going to state it without asking pardon for it or myself. Drink—yes, drink! I mean by that drink which cheers and if you take too much, inebriates. Drink! Yes, alcohol, of which if you take too much 'you put an enemy in your mouth to steal away your brains.' Drink, which makes a man contemptible and ridiculous if under the influence of too much of it. Drink, which ruins the health and kills the unhappy wretch who persistently takes it to excess. Drink! Yes, I say it is a good thing, and I think the world would act very foolishly if it give it up. Why, if