

RELIGIOUS FADS.

Whither is the Intelligence of the Present Age Drifting?

The complete satisfaction of mind and heart, experienced by those who have accepted the doctrines of Holy Mother Church, and model their lives thereon, cannot be understood nor appreciated by our separated brethren.

AND LITTLE IDEAS.

York Herald has fallen a habit of preaching a sermon once a week. If he rightly it was Huxley idea. The writer of the pamphlets is an expert in the vagabond, and his whole to be to see how much he can say, and how little he can say, name time to envelop what philosophical fog so dense the reader under the im-

There is no doubt to understand how this satisfaction cannot be realized elsewhere. The very fact of division, disunion and dissection existing in the separated churches, the individual interpretation and application of doctrine, the absence of unity in any shape or form, necessarily create a wavering in belief and at the same time a longing in the heart for something that will give it more stable happiness.

SOME OF THE FADS.

The word "fad" has been interpreted to signify a hobby. The definition given by one of the best authorities of the day, the Century Dictionary, is: "A trivial fancy adopted and pursued for a time with irrational zeal; a matter of no importance, or an important matter imperfectly understood, taken up and urged with more zeal than sense; a whim; a craze; a temporary hobby."

So much for the definition of the word fad. And, indeed, it seems almost ridiculous to prefix "religious" to any one of these terms. Can it be a matter of no importance, a whim or a craze? Truly the word implying even in its most ancient signification something sacred, seems out of place in the connection.

Once launched upon the current of the movement, they are carried along with a zeal which is so blinding that the most magnificent powers of their souls are darkened, the greatest genius is befogged, and reason is itself for a time dethroned. Hence the extravagant assertions of the devotees, their contradictions and inconsistencies, their pretended attainment of an ideal happiness unsurpassed even in the celestial abodes.

In its turn Spiritism now finds its domain disputed by its offspring, theosophy, while Buddhism claims a number of adherents. The ascent from materialism to spiritism was as great as the coming from the most loathsome darkness into the most dazzling light. Each of its kind is an extreme, and each has been and is carried on with an irrational zeal bordering upon frenzy.

THE FAD OF MATERIALISM.

Prior to the celebrated Belfast address of Prof. Tiddall, about twenty years ago, materialism was the watchword of the so-called advanced minds outside the Church. They abhorred the idea of spirit life, holding that matter was the beginning and end of all things, hence denying the existence of God and the future life of reward and punishment.

Happiness arising from the material pleasures is necessarily transient; for the soul, created to enjoy the everlasting bliss of heaven, soon detests the husks of earth, animal gratification pales upon it, and it seeks to break the fetters which hold it down. Hence, the revolt from materialism, which required only the voice of a leader to suggest. The so-called scientists and the great minds of the day hailed the emancipation; but in their eagerness to escape they fell into as grievous an error by advancing to the extreme which denied the existence of matter and soared with lightest pinions to the

spirit realm, claiming that spirit is the only reality.

WHAT IS SPIRITISM?

Spiritism affirms as the basis of their belief that disembodied spirits can and do communicate with the living, especially through the agency of a person particularly susceptible to spiritistic influence. And their doctrines and theories are founded on this belief.

Although in one form or another this peculiar creed has existed for many years in different parts of the world in its modern form it originated in the State of New York in 1848, and since that time has extended over the United States and Europe. The mediums, or persons susceptible to spiritistic influence are of various kinds, no fewer than twenty-four classes being mentioned. The chief methods of communication are rappings, table-tappings, writing and speaking. In the latter forms the medium is supposed to be fully possessed by the spirit for the time being. The movers of this belief contend that these spirit communications are providential for the purpose of inculcating the doctrine of immortality and counteracting materialistic tendencies.

A glance at a brief exposition of the above theories satisfies the mind that spiritism deserves to be classed under the head of fads, in that it is calculated to carry the unwary enthusiast to most irrational conclusions, to awaken a zeal, real or supposed, which will be almost limitless in its results. Playing largely upon the imaginative part of the intellect, its fascinations enthrall the most sound minds and the greatest geniuses. But, unlike its opposite, materialism, its effects are the more disastrous, as it appeals entirely to the better part of man, claiming to elevate him from earth to live wholly and entirely in an atmosphere peopled with pure disembodied spirits.

As a religious fad, while it has no formal system of theology, it contends to be not of necessity inconsistent with Christian faith. Therefore, many outside the Church are drawn into its nets, believing that their highest happiness will be attained by the communion with the spirit world. And while as Protestants they reject the doctrine of the Communion of Saints, they do not hesitate to attend the seance, accepting without a shadow of doubt the communication delivered by the medium from a dear one who has long since passed beyond the bourne.

One of the greatest lights of spiritism in the age was Dr. Orestes Brownson, a man possessed of the most brilliant intellect of his time. Drifting from one form of belief to another without finding the contentment for which his soul was craving, he was led to join the movement of Spiritism at the time when it was producing the most lively impression upon the intelligence of this country.

In his celebrated work, "The Spirit-trapper," he details the wonders of the belief and portrays in realistic colors the possible heights to which the spiritists may ascend in his communication with the unknown. But his large mind was not long satisfied with the results of the movement. Dr. Brownson carried his search further and found rest and perfect happiness in the bosom of the Catholic Church.

Perhaps one of the most ludicrous, and at the same time pitiable, examples of the results of this fad was Lawyer Moss, a gentleman of culture, intelligence and refinement, residing in New York City. So completely deluded was he by the supposed medium, Dis Debar, that he expended a fortune, gave up a flourishing business and became almost demented on the subject of the "Spoon Pictures," which she claimed to produce. Everyone is familiar with the newspaper accounts of the celebrated trial of this famous impostor, the pathetic scenes in the courtroom when the pictures were produced, and the feeble old man, a wreck of his former self, weeping like a child.

So are the dupes of the fad deluded, and so are they swayed by the so-called mediums, until not only their minds but their bodies succumb to the unwholesome influence of a zeal as inconsistent as it is irrational.

THEOSOPHY.

Advancing a step higher than spiritism, theosophy claims a special insight into the divine nature. It differs from most philosophical systems in that they start from phenomena and deduce therefrom certain conclusions, whereas theosophy starts with an assumed knowledge of God, directly obtained through spiritistic intercommunication, and proceeds to a study and explanation of phenomena. It is in this that its likeness to spiritism is apparent, that in both there is the communion with the spirit world.

Middle Ages. As a religious belief it is essentially atheistic inasmuch as it inculcates the doctrine that the divine essence is inseparably connected with the phenomenal universe. As a fad existing in our own enlightened age, theosophy holds within its grasp the minds of many intelligent men who, if asked to accept a form of belief far less extravagant and illusory, would repel the idea as unworthy of their genius.

In proof of this I might cite a circumstance which took place within the past month at Washington, D. C. The learned Prof. Hensoldt, explorer of Tibet and the vale of Cashmere, lectured under the Blavatsky branch of the Society of Theosophists. Prof. Hensoldt is a profound scientist and scoffs at the idea of a miracle or anything which cannot be explained according to the specific laws of science. In the course of his lecture he spoke of Ceylon, the paradise of the Eastern religion. He said that it is claimed that here the Garden of Eden existed and tradition points to the print of a man's foot on two of the mountain tops, asserting that Adam stepped across the valley leaving the impression of his foot in each of the mountains. Now the professor contended that this tradition was absurd, and argued that according to the laws of specific gravity there could not have been a man of such colossal proportions. A little later in the evening, during the same lecture, he asserted that he himself had witnessed a man pass from one mountain to another in mid-air. This occurrence was presumably explained by the laws of theosophy.

The prime mover of this fad was Mme. Blavatsky, who died during the last year. England was for a time the main seat of the belief, and many persons of intelligence and position subscribed to it, notably Mrs. Besant. In this country theosophy has followers among the advanced spiritists, although it is difficult to say who holds the position of Coropheus. Rumor has whispered that it is justified by fact, and that others may be brought to see the gravity of their error, to behold it in the lurking forms of ignorance, superstition and credulity, together with its absurdity and contradiction. The fact that it has been and is practiced by barbarous peoples, that its stronghold has been among the illiterate fakirs of the East, should be a sufficient reason for the detestation of theosophy as a religious fad from the minds and hearts of all intelligent, civilized men.

BUDDHISM AS A FAD.

This form of belief is essentially Indian in origin, having been founded by Buddha in India. Its principles are that man is under the operation of certain inflexible laws from which he can neither escape nor be delivered. Existence under them is an evil, priestly rites and sacrifices are unavailing, death itself offers no escape, but only a transmigration to another form of existence. Obedience to moral laws insures a sojourn in heaven, followed by a higher existence on earth. Disobedience insures a punishment in some of the innumerable hot or cold hells situated in the interior of the earth or its furthest verge followed by a lower state of existence on earth.

The supreme felicity to be obtained by perfect obedience is the suppression of every passion, and eventually the unconscious existence—annihilation. Transmigration of souls, temporary reward or punishment, fatality, annihilation are the ultimate goal constituting the substance of the doctrine of Buddhism. And yet it is today established as a religious fad in some of our leading cities, both of Europe and America. In London, Paris, New York, Boston and other cities, circles of Buddhists are to be found, and the devotees are as firmly convinced of the sacredness of their worship as is the lowest Pariah of India.

Surely there is little in the fad to bring satisfaction to the mind or heart! When I consider myself the victim of an unchanging law from which I can only escape by transmigration into another existence, where is my happiness? Certainly the sword which hung over the head of Damocles, ever threatening his destruction, was not more terrible! Why shall I be honest, charitable, temperate or just if in reward I am only permitted a brief sojourn in heaven, the place of exquisite delights? And why should I refrain from the indulgence of every passion when the punishment is so slight? The end of it all is the same as that of materialistic annihilation.

Assuredly this is not an improvement upon Theosophy or Spiritism; rather a falling off from both, as showing that neither offered the satisfaction ever sought and never destined to be attained.

THE END OF FADS.

And so they will proceed, these restless, unbound minds outside the pale of the true faith. These minds, great and magnificent, framed by the omnipotent Creator for the special object of reflecting His divine image, are drifting hither and thither, as St. Paul says, by every wind of doctrine. Always eager to grasp the latest phase presented in hope that there at last they will find abiding peace. They are enchained by the fancy of the hour; the croquet of some one inferior to themselves, perhaps, intellectually enthralls them, and with more zeal than prudence they allow themselves to be carried away into unknown depths, where, left alone and unaided, they may or may not reach the haven of rest.

Well for them if they behold on the darksome horizon the star of faith glittering in transcendent splendor brightening their cold hearts to cheer. Well

if they desecrate the barque of Peter as she sails majestically on the flood. There, and there alone, will the discontented intellect, the unhappy, cheerless heart find true peace and joy.

And while the subject is under discussion it may not be out of place to venture the prophecy that the next age will witness the abolition of all religious fads and the concurrence of the restless and weary into the Holy Catholic Church, whose doctrines they will accept, not as a fad, but as a heaven-inspired and heaven-taught creed bringing the long desired and long-sought-for happiness.—Edw. C. Kane in Catholic Mirror.

A BISHOP'S PREDICAMENT.

Plus IX., of Blessed Memory, Could not Resist the Rude Assaults of Elements of a Trying Situation.

James R. Randal relates in the Mirror the following narrative of a Protestant friend. I happened to be years ago in the Eternal City, in the time of Plus IX., of blessed memory. On one occasion an Irish Bishop, assigned to a See in our so-called new world, entered the Propaganda when I happened to be there, in utter distress and dejection. He was a wretched spectacle, and when questioned as to his sorry plight, told us a curious story. It seems that he was at Civitavecchia, on the way to Rome, when custom house officials were ransacking the trunks of an English mildred who, with his daughters, was bound in the same direction. The British nobleman, who did not speak or understand a word of Italian, was furiously denouncing this transaction in the language of his country, and threatening to expose it to the Times newspaper and to Her Majesty, the Queen. The Italian officials were retorting, in kind and as neither understood each other, the situation was at once embarrassing and ludicrous. The Bishop, who was a master of both tongues, offered his services, and soon brought order out of chaos. He proposed that the English party should journey in the diligence to Rome under his own train-robbers as banditti, like our own train-robbers were still in vogue. This proposition was accepted and the party, a nocturnal one, went on their way in high spirits and perfect confidence. About daylight, when nearing the city, just as the party had fallen asleep, there was a sudden jolt, a terrifying shout, and a complete halt of the vehicle. The bandits appeared, and in traditional fashion, at the points of their pistols, demanded the money or the lives of the passengers. The Bishop bade his companions compose themselves while he parleyed with the robbers. He assured the leader that he was a high functionary in the Church, and, taking his official ring from his finger showed it to the descendant of Rinaldo Rinaldina. The bandit chief reverently kissed the jewel and put it in his predatory pocket. The Bishop pointed to his petoral cross of gold. The chief displaced it from its abiding place, without more ado, pocketed it. Then, without more ado, the gang literally "went through" the wayfarers' wares, even removing the ladies' stockings, while complimenting their feet in more or less choice Tuscan. After the travelers were stripped of their portable property and their trunks rifled, the bandits vanished, leaving their victims in the cold and mud. The mildred and his daughters were vociferous in their wrath against the Papal system and threatened the vengeance of the British empire. They anathematized Catholicity and even hinted that the poor Bishop, a fellow sufferer and discomfited, had some hand in the misadventure. Arriving at Rome, the travelers separated in different frames of mind. The Englishman, full of wrath and indignation, sought a hotel. The Bishop went sorrowfully and humbly to the Propaganda, where I saw and heard him. Monsignor Barnabo was greatly excited and had armed constabulary scouring the country, but the birds of prey, had flown. An audience was arranged at once for the Bishop with the Pope. He was duly presented and told his story. His Holiness could not conceal a smile when he heard how the bandits had kissed the Bishop's cross and ring before appropriating them. He said: "At least, they showed some latent piety." When the narrative was ended, the Pope laughed heartily and ejaculated: "Tell it again! tell it again!" Resuming a serious mood, the Holy Father gave instant commands that the English party should be sought, placated, given many times the amount of their losses, and afforded a freedom of the city such as only princes can obtain. The mildred and his daughters were charmed. They had nothing but eulogies for the grand Pope, and the Times newspaper and Her gracious Majesty the Queen probably had flattering accounts of the city and the Pontiff. The Bishop, who was so roughly handled and subjected to such unceremonious reproach from John Bull's subjects, had his reward. He was, not long afterwards, promoted, and likely, for many years afterward, told this story as an illustration of how all's well that ends well for men of good will, at the hands of those entirely great.

Well for them if they behold on the darksome horizon the star of faith glittering in transcendent splendor brightening their cold hearts to cheer. Well

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Old Times! Old Times!

BY GERALD GRIFFIN.

Old times! old times! the gay old times! When I was young and free, And heard the merry Easter chimes Under the sally tree.

I've lived to know my share of joy, To feel my share of pain— To learn that friendship's self can cloy, To love, and love in vain— To feel a pang and wear a smile, To like my own unhappy life, And sing the gay old times!

And sure the land is nothing changed, The birds are singing still; The flowers are springing where we ranged, There's sunshine on the hill! The sally, waving o'er my head, Still sweetly shades my frame— But ah, those happy days are dead, And I am not the same!

Oh, come again, ye merry times! Sweet, sunny, fresh, and calm— And let me hear those Easter chimes, And wear my sally palm. If I could cry away mine eyes, My tears would flow in vain— If I could waste my heart in sighs, They'll never come again!

Outside the Church.

In studying the inner life of noble souls outside the Church, it seems passing strange that in so many important matters they are with us heart and mind. Tennyson, Longfellow, Edwin Booth, and many another seemed at times to have been upon the very threshold of the Church. The late John Addington Symonds was another "half Catholic." If the man be reflected in his work, his was a singularly lofty character; and nowhere is it more strikingly revealed than in his admirable "Life of Michael Angelo." Throughout the work, his attitude toward his subject and its environment is essentially Catholic; and, while giving a perfect picture of the great Italian, he has extenuated nothing nor set down aught in malice. That Symonds was a believer in the pivotal doctrine of the Real Presence seems evident from the following passage. Treating of the Sistine frescoes, he had expressed regret that nowhere in the chapel is an adequate representation of Christ the Redeemer. But in the appendix to his monumental work he remarks: "I have alluded in my text to the absence of any representation of the Crucifixion as singular; but I did not think it necessary to publish a suggestion which has often occurred to my own mind—namely, that the crowning act in the drama of man's redemption, the sacrifice of Christ, was continually repeated in the consecration of the Host upon the altar."—Ave Maria.

No "Escapes" Wanted.

How is it we have no "ex-ministers" in the Catholic Church as parallels to the "ex-priests" of the Protestants? Not because there are no ex-ministers, for scarcely a week goes by without a Protestant clergyman joining the Catholic Church. The Boston Pilot gives the reason: "There is not a Catholic society, much less a Catholic church, in all the country, which would give a moment's attention or patronage to any convert from Protestantism who sought to curry favor by insulting the feelings of his former brethren. We have no use for 'escapes' in our fold."

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HOOD'S Sarsaparilla CURES

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