

Mr. Hancock's reply, however, did something to soothe him. "I'm sure, Bishop," he said, with the confident familiarity of a successful man of the world, "you won't mind my speaking plainly. You're much too wide-minded for that. Well," Mr. Hancock continued, in tones of intellectual briskness, "I confess that, so far as mere evidence goes, I consider Mr. Glanville right. I can't see, as a man of science, or as a strict logician, at what point freedom, responsibility, moral praise or blame, find their way into the mechanism of human life. But they may come in—mind you, I add this—they may come in, in some way of which we know nothing. Scientifically—theoretically—I'm an absolute Agnostic about the matter. That seems to me the only position possible. But, practically," Mr. Hancock continued, gesticulating with an emphatic hand, and upsetting a pyramid of French bon-bons as he did so, "practically, I say, whether our wills be free or no, we are bound to assume that they are free, as a kind of working hypothesis. We had to-night a remarkable proof of this. Everybody at this table, except Mr. Glanville himself, has shown that what I call this 'working hypothesis of freedom' is practically instinctive in his mind or in hers; and Mr. Glanville himself, as I very shrewdly suspect, is pulling our legs when he affects to think differently."

"I don't doubt it," said the Bishop drily. "Glanville, I must confess that I utterly fail to see what all this discussion is driving at. You agree with me that we, as practical men, cannot palter with the fact that we are free and responsible agents. Any child might have told you the same thing; and to play at turning the most sacred beliefs into doubts merely for the sake of reviving them under the name of 'working hypotheses' seems to me not only a useless but also a dangerous game."

"You must remember," said Glanville, laughing, "that to-night it was you who started it, by saying that an hereditary drunkard cannot morally be blamed for drinking. Some of us may be born drunkards, but nobody is a born blackguard. This is what you have told us. I don't say myself that both state-