

QUACK RELIGION.

It was a sudden spring shower, and the gutters roared like young rivulets. We were umbrellaless, and took shelter in the doorway of the postoffice. Two gentlemen descending the stairway leading from the offices on the floor above, finding the sidewalk flooded, also sought refuge in the generous entrance of the postoffice. They were in an animated conversation, and from where we stood we could but choose to listen.

"I don't want any other proof; that is enough for me."

"But you ought not to be satisfied, without good and sufficient evidence, in a matter of such importance."

"I call that 'good and sufficient.' Here I go into that billiard room (pointing to the block above and find) A and B, members of the church, playing billiards and carousing with the rest. I go into a drinking saloon on this street, and find C and D, members of the church, drinking there and as much at home as if they never pretended to belong anywhere else. I take an evening walk and meet E and F on the street corner in a tearing passion, and showing quite as much anger and as little magnanimity as is common in such cases, to those who make no pretense of being better than their neighbors. I buy goods of G and H, members of the church, and find that I am cheated, if anything, a little worse than I was in my last purchase of the same article from a man whom I know to be a scoundrel.

"Thus I go through the alphabet, and find that there is not really any difference—at least for the better—between the actual lives of these men who belong to the church and those who make no such professions. I therefore conclude that the whole body of church-members is unsound, and that religion itself is either a cheat or a delusion, and that the less I have to do with it the better for me."

"Does that seem to you sound reasoning?"

"Why is it not?"

"Do you not reason from exceptions to the rule?"

"I claim that these instances form the rule."

"Can you prove it?"

"Perhaps not."

"Do you really believe it?"

"Why should I not?"

"You are a physician?"

"Yes."

"Regular bred?"

"I hope so. Three years in Paris and ten in the hospitals, upon the top of the regular course, ought to entitle me to use that language."

"Suppose I say you are a quack?"

"I should deny it, and be indignant with you if you insisted."

"But I go through San Francisco, and find an Indian doctor in one street, who cures everything by one herb; and a cancer doctor in another, who will conjure your cancer into a quart bottle, for a consideration, and a mesmerist doctor in another, who will turn you inside out, and tell you how to repair all damages, for one dollar; and in another a spiritualist doctor; and so on, with a crowd, whose name is legion, who are obviously mere quacks, and nothing else. Shall I hence decide that all physi-

cians are quacks, and that, since you are a physician, you are a quack also?"

"Hardly good logic, I should say."

"As good as yours, in my judgment."

We thought so too. Doubtless there are many professed Christians whose lives bear melancholy witness that their professions are insincere; but the very discrepancy which obviously is between their lives and the ideal of Christian life should teach us that there is genuine gold, though base metal sometimes seeks to palm itself off in its place.—*The Parish Guide*,



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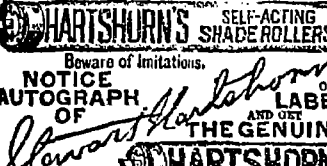
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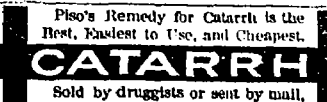
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