

for thoughtful convictions, it does often seem to me, as if this supercilious wise-acre religion is entertained, because it serves as a cloak for personal immorality and dishonesty, or an excuse from soiling your hands to lift a fellow-man out of the ditch. I am happy to believe, however, that such a creed is not in the majority, that argument and knowledge are not confined to the dissolute, and that the sources of religious teaching were never more thoroughly investigated than in the New England of to-day. Religious discussions are conducted with good temper and the rivalry between sects grows less and less. After speaking of religion as the basis of social purity, and commenting upon the enormous number of human beings likely to dwell within the bounds of the United States, Mr. Bryce aptly enquires, "Suppose that all these men ceased to believe that there was any power above them, anything in heaven or earth but what their senses told them of, suppose their consciousness of individual force and responsibility, already dwarfed by the over-whelming power of the multitude and the fatalistic submission it engenders, were further weakened by the feeling that their swiftly fleeing life was rounded by a perpetual sleep. * * *

Would the moral code stand unshaken, and with it the reverence for law, the sense of duty towards the community, and even towards the generations yet to come? Would men say 'Let us eat and drink, for to-morrow we die?' History if she cannot give a complete answer to this question, tells us that hitherto civilized society has rested on religion and that free government has prospered best among religious peoples."

Matthew Arnold has told us in his usual frank manner, that "all the liberty and industry in the world will not ensure these two things: a high reason and a fine culture." It is a pregnant remark. You may not find in New England that wide diffusion of goodness and agreeableness for the many that has made France the most polite nation of Europe, but there is a great deal of hearty and cheerful intercourse, which is at once attractive and invigorating. It is idle to look for high reason and fine culture, as you might expect it in the historic centres of Europe. In the wild chase for money, the civilization of the people has the appearance of being manufactured and wound up like a machine. "That is why," says Paul Bourget, "in spite of that immense culture and what is better still, that appetite for culture, there is as yet no purely American Art, no purely American literature, no purely American poetry. The great artists, the great men of literature, and the great poets in the United States—remain exceptional and solitary." Whether this criticism is fully justified I will leave others to say. Certainly it is true that the great bent of American civilization has been toward the accumulation of wealth. When we consider that less than 25,000 people own more than half the wealth of the country, when we behold the systematic bribery of public officials by soulless corporations, the inequality of distribution which every day grows more cruel, and the presence of starving men in the land of plenty, the spectacle is not at all enchanting. Let it be understood at once that I am not a revolutionist or an iconoclast. The principle of private property, if it cannot be defended on grounds of justice, is undoubtedly the most expedient. I have never yet been able to see how all the possessions of society could be cut and carved up, and then distributed according to the notions of supposed wisdom, public or private. But make what allowance you will for private thrift, encourage the principle of combination in every legitimate way, it does seem to me there is a limit and a very proper limit to the amount of property which should be controlled by a single man. The principle of private property has been abused in the United