

more fully the place the human imagination has hitherto supplied with Deities so unsatisfactorily that even now monotheism is not quite agreed about their number . . ."

"Never mind me!" said the Rector, who thought Challis hesitated. "Go ahead!"

"Well—it was Brownrigg, you know; it wasn't me."

"It's all quite right, my dear fellow! I want to know now about the Education. Suppose a member of the human race refuses to pay any attention to the Apparent Aims of the Metaphysical Check . . ."

"He will come into collision, clearly, with the Doctrine of Retributive Inconvenience. In the case of young persons, on whom a certain amount of Inconvenience can be inflicted without overtaxing the Salaried Suggesters who will take the place of the so-called Educational Classes, an exact system might be formulated. Brownrigg gave as an example the case of a child refusing to comply with the System of Hypothetical Notification, under which it would be required to address propitiatory sentiments, or requests for personal benefit, to an unseen Metaphysical Check, whose hearing of the Application the Salaried Suggester might hold himself at liberty to guarantee. He might also—this was Brownrigg's point—endorse his suggestion, in the case of a child refusing to Notify, by the infliction of a certain amount of Inconvenience, tending to produce, if not an actual belief in the existence of the Metaphysical Check, at any rate a readiness to confess it, which would be for working purposes exactly the same."

The Rector shook his head doubtfully. "At present," said he, "the practice in this village is to threaten rebellious youth with the wicked fire. Would Brownrigg's substitute be as effectual?"

"You remember what he said in September—that Graubosch meant to retain the Personal Devil until the new System had had time to settle down? Just as people keep the gas on till the electric light is a certainty!"

The Rector laughed. "You'll make me as bad as yourself, Challis, before you've done." Then he became more serious. "I would give a good deal," said he, "to know what you *really* think on matters of this sort."

But Challis was persuading a pipe to light inside his hat,