

he has already betrayed me. It was this," she went on, as she turned again to her neighbour. "The order and connection of one's ideas is the order and connection of things. That, as I gather, was one of Spinoza's sayings, and it seems that many wise men have quarrelled as to what was his meaning. I dared to think it was simple, and meant what I'd thought before—that all our thoughts and feelings and our belief in the order of nature are merely a pocket edition of the order of nature itself, printed on pages that otherwise would be quite blank; that we believe in causes because nature is a system of causes; that we believe nature to be uniform because, as a fact, it is so, just as the reflection of my own hair in the looking-glass is what it is because—well, just because, I suppose, my hair is what it is."

"My dear Miss Leighton," said Glanville, "the dirtiest sage who ever spilt his soup on his beard couldn't have put the matter more clearly than you have."

"I thought I was right," she answered, "and I'll tell you why. I once had occasion," she went on, dropping her voice, "to ask the advice of a cousin of mine, a Catholic priest. We had many talks, and I said to him what I've said just now. I forget how the point came up. Well, you never saw a man so horrified. Spinoza, he said, was an atheist; and his doctrine of our ideas was atheism. And then I'm afraid that I horrified him still more."

"What did you say?" asked Glanville.

"I said," she replied, "I didn't think that an answer. I said that we ought to square our faith with our facts before we asked if facts squared with our faith. He thought that terrible. He was a very good man, and, I think, in some ways a wise one. Priests know so much about human nature—unlike English clergymen. Hearing confessions, they must. I believe he burnt endless candles in the hope of altering my opinions; but the nonsense that he and several other priests have talked to me has put out more faith than any candles can light again."