

“ ‘Well,’ he said, ‘there is nothing better than a promissory note if the amount is not very large and you get a good man, and I think I can find you one.’ A trader was here this morning asking for a loan of about that amount. He is not an educated man—in fact cannot write his name—but he is doing a good business and is reputed to be worth at least \$20,000. He will make a cross for his signature to the note, and I will witness it, which will make it just as good as a written signature.’

“I was satisfied, and the next day lent the money, taking a promissory note executed in the manner indicated. When the note became due, the maker repudiated his signature and refused to pay. I consulted my solicitor, who advised me to commence legal proceedings immediately, as he could, of course, prove the signature, adding that as he was the witness in the case I had better employ another lawyer.

“I should here tell you that my solicitor was an elderly man of unblemished character, known to every one in the town (where he had spent the whole of his life) and universally beloved and respected for his philanthropy and high moral tone. He, however, belonged to the school of thought of which Mr. Herbert Spencer, Professor Huxley, and many other eminent men of the present day are such well known members, and was unable to accept what are generally considered the evidences of revelation.

“The suit was taken, and on the day appointed for the hearing, my case was called and my solicitor went into the witness box to give his evidence. To the amazement of every one, the attorney for the defendant—a disreputable practitioner—rose and informed the judge that before the witness was sworn, he wished to put two or three questions to him. He, then, addressing the witness, asked:

“ ‘Do you believe in God?’

“ ‘Most certainly I do,’ was the reply.

“The next question was: ‘Do you believe in a future state of rewards and punishments?’

“ ‘I know nothing of what the future may have in store for us,’ answered the witness, ‘and a man cannot be said to “believe” in any theory without having reasonable grounds for his belief. In that sense I must answer your question in the negative.’

“ ‘Well, then, your Honor,’ exclaimed the attorney, ‘I object to this witness being sworn.’

“At this a murmur of indignation ran through the Court. The judge, addressing the attorney, protested against the course he was pursuing, and said it was an outrage to refuse to allow the witness to be sworn, nevertheless he was powerless to insist upon it as the law