

incident to their peculiar enterprise. Treatment against which an ordinary traveller, minding his own business in a foreign country, might reasonably protest to his Government should be borne uncomplainingly by Christian missionaries who are in the country for the special purpose of interfering with its established customs and traditions concerning the one subject which everywhere awakens the strongest prejudice and the most passionate feeling of humanity. —*New York Sun.*

THE PAGAN QUESTIONING DEATH.

O mist of night and blindness, that must hang
Before the life to come!
O tomb that closes once with iron clang,
And is forever dumb!

Ships which go forth upon the boundless main
And perish far at sea,
Are tossed in fragments to the land again—
But not returns from thee.

No whisper comes from all the generations,
Through the dark portals thrust;
No breath of life among the buried nations
One moment stirs their dust.

No soul beneath, e'er struggling into sight,
Heaves up the silent ground;
Though the green sod above them is so light—
So frail the crumbling mound.

I listen by the sea to catch some tone
From spirits that are fled;
There is no voice in its eternal moan—
No voice of all its dead.

The stars look coldly down when man is dying,
The moon still holds its sway,
Flowers breathe their perfume round us: winds keenly
sighing;
Naught seems to pause or stay.

Yes! blindly on—o'er all that thinks and feels
The universe must roll;
Though at each turn its adamant wheels
Crush cut a human soul!

Toward yon bright vault of heaven I dare not raise
The cry of my despair,
Lest I should hear the echo which betrays
That all is empty there.

Yet has my soul within the gift of seeing
Beyond this earth and sky;
I feel the immortal instinct of my being—
I know it cannot die!

—*Quoted from Flaneur, Toronto Mail.*

"PEACE ON EARTH, GOODWILL TO MEN."

The domestic unhappiness arising from difference of belief was probably almost or altogether unknown in the world before the introduction of Christianity. . . . The deep and widening chasm between the religious opinions of the most highly-educated men and of the immense majority of women is painfully apparent. —*Lecky.*

It may prove useful to have learnt from history the elementary lesson that no opinion is true simply because it has been held by the greatest intellects, or by the largest number of human beings, at different periods in the history of the world. —*Max Muller.*

A Corpse Transmogrified.

BY M. C. O'BRYEN.

THERE is not the least necessity for "any pious Christians" to "look up the story of Paul and Agrippa, to see how it tallies with the newly-discovered letters," etc. (See *SECULAR THOUGHT* of May 12.) It is really astounding, however, to observe, how rapidly and certainly the popularization of what is termed Education is increasing the number of omadhauns on the American continent. The interesting narrative,—originated in New York,—of the discovery of a tablet containing a literary correspondence conducted by Jesus of Nazareth and "King Agrippa" is nothing more than an old lie mutilated almost beyond recognition, except by experts. For King Agrippa read Prince (*Dunastes*) Abgarus, of Edessa, and then find, in the thirteenth chapter of the first book of Eusebius' Ecclesiastical History, the complete narrative of an infamous Christian fraud.

Life is too short for even the critical Don Quixote to tilt against the dead giants of ancient imposture thus ludicrously strapped on horseback and sent cavorting down the lists of the American press. "A wicked doer giveth heed to false lips, and a liar giveth ear to a naughty tongue," which is probably the reason why the free and independent citizens of the Republic whose "Father" would not lie to escape a whipping are always so eager to qualify themselves for prominent positions "in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone," and to welcome every Pseudochrist that presents himself. Two years ago the papers,—whose Christian zeal is most unremitting,—even went so far as to print fac-similes of a portion of the "Gospel of Peter," found in an Egyptian tomb. This they did to clinch for ever the "cumulative evidences" of the truth of Christianity, with characteristic republican indifference to the fact, recognized even among primitive Christians, that this so-called gospel was an impudent "heterodox" forgery, whose probable author was the infamous forger Leucius. ("Evangelium Petri fuisse reor figmentum Leucii haeretici, seculo secundo, plura ejusmodi eudentis, eoque nominibus apertolorum supponentis," are the words of the learned Grabe, written in 1698 and assented to by later scholars.)

In justice to a long line of erudite Christians, it is right to say that this malodorous Abgarus forgery was first branded as such by men of undoubted orthodoxy. "Epistola Jesus ad Abgarum Regem apocrypha" are the words of condemnation used by the council of Rome in the time of Pope Gelasius, anno 496. I will not insult the intelligence of the reader by observing that if a hundred tablets containing these letters were discovered it would not alter the character of the fraud. Nothing is more likely than that the Edessans,—a people so superstitious that their city held three hundred monasteries early in the fourth century,—would do their utmost to perpetuate a story so well calculated to gratify their local pride and their religious imbecility. One is at a loss, however, to understand why the American newspapers are so warmly interested in resurrecting these old putridities. On this line of development the time will soon come when every editorial desk will have its reliquary, enshrining pieces of finger nails, knuckle bones, and relics of parthenical sacrifice.

CHRISTIANITY AND SLAVERY.

In all ancient Christian literature there is not one word that tells the slave to revolt, or that tells the master to liberate the slave, or even that touches the problem of public right which arises out of slavery. —*Renan.*