

A CHAMPION OF SCEPTICISM.

Undaunted by the title, we read in the *Acadia Athenaeum* an article headed "Some Epistemological Observations," and we must say that we cannot accept the theories therein put forward. The very heading seems to us not in keeping with the tone of the arguments, for in that philosophy which denies the possibility of our having any knowledge a discussion of the origin of knowledge must mean a discussion of the origin of nothing; and we hardly suppose any one would select such a subject to show that

"He was in logic a great critic
"Profoundly skilled in analytic."

With instruments apparently borrowed from Balfour he draws between knowledge and belief a line of demarcation which clearly does not follow philosophic cleavage; and he strives to make us certain of the wisdom of universal doubt. He would have us sceptics in speculation, though not in practice, "inasmuch as not knowledge but belief is required as the ground of our activity." "That," he continues, "I may be stimulated to dig for gold in any place it is not necessary that I know there is gold there; but only at the most that I believe it; likewise that I may love and serve God it is not required that we know He exists, but only that we believe it, and act accordingly."

Whence comes the belief that prompts one to dig for gold? One does not come into the world with a store of ready-made beliefs. Belief is not of spontaneous generation. Belief is not an uncaused cause of activity. We believe there is gold in a certain place either because we know there is gold there, or because we know facts from which we reason there is gold there; else why dig in any one place rather than in another? He would be but a slave of credulity, a fool of his theory who, moved by a blind belief in a thing of which he has no knowledge—allowing for the moment that there is in this no contradiction—would seek for gold—where? Nor have we yet heard of that missionary who would try to save souls, not