

## A RIDICULOUS GOD—II

### III

NOW the conception of the *Grand Etre*, as set forth last month in this Review, and the service due to it, which at first sight seems rather grand and magnificent, has a curiously close analogy with the ordinary conception of life of the ordinary man who is called "practical." He, too, is in hot pursuit of metaphysical abstractions, led by the nose by words and phrases; by heaven knows what "select, responsible and ridiculous" phantoms of his bustling, fussing world. Does he so much as attempt to rule his actions by the really important issues of life? Does he select for pursuit those things that enlarge his powers, his appreciation, his sense of beauty, of joy; which give him true satisfaction, health of body and peace of mind? Does he not steer his course by the nearest glaring electric light that sears his vision and points nowhere, leaving sun and stars to offer their safe and tranquil guidance over the perilous seas, unregarded?

He throws away as fast as it arrives the only part of life that is truly his, in his haste to glorify and endow that which he can never possess.

"Who supposes that the future arrives?" asks Benjamin Swift; "the future recedes."

And if *this* "present" determines the other "presents" when they come, yet it is the man rendering himself daily more incapable of possessing hereafter that of which he is now despoiling