

party have left the rest of us to ourselves, we were thinking— Here, Mr. Hancock, you explain what our plan was.”

“It’s this way,” said Mr. Hancock. “Lady Snowdon was telling us about some gatherings which used to be called Conferences, given by some friends of hers at a well-known house in Hampshire. To these Conferences guests of all kinds were invited, whose sole bond of union was a common interest in religion. Converted crossing-sweepers testified against the errors of the higher criticism. Baptists and archbishops exchanged views as to episcopacy. There was naturally a Babel of doctrines; and the building of the tower of faith failed to proceed in the manner which the host and hostess anticipated. But why couldn’t we here—this is what Lady Snowdon asks—do something of the same kind in a more methodical manner? Why couldn’t we arrange to consider in some sort of order the subjects of which everybody this evening has been just touching the fringe?”

“Yes,” said Lady Snowdon. “Let us make out a list of questions, and deal with them one by one. Why, for instance, do we believe—or do we really believe?—certain bits of the Bible, when we none of us believe, or even pretend to believe, the rest?”

“The Bible!” echoed the voice of Captain Jeffries sleepily, as, roused from his reverie, he turned himself partly round. “We’re told now that it was written by Ezra or Esdras; anyhow, it wasn’t Moses. By the way, Rupert, you’ve provided us with a card-table in the drawing-room. I think I’ll see if I can’t get up a rubber.”

“Who,” said Lady Snowdon, as Captain Jeffries moved away, “will be able to doubt the spread of education after that? But to go on with what we were saying—let us take the various influences, of whose practical results Captain Jeffries is so bright an example—the influence of science and Biblical scholarship, and so on; and let Mr. Glanville, or let somebody else, deal with them, as I say, one by one, and give us some slight account, in language which even women can