

curious survival of the France before the Revolution, in which the basis of the peasant's character remains unchanged, and his political submissiveness is almost as great as ever, though the power over him once shared by the king and the seignior is now vested almost entirely in the priest. Nor is it easy to say what will be the limit of French development, since the priests encourage early marriages, and the women overcome by their fecundity the race which has overcome the men by the sword. In this respect the case of the French of Quebec resembles that of the Irish; perhaps not in this alone: for there can be little doubt that the comparatively feeble race over which the priest rules in the South of Ireland would have been subjugated by the stronger race of immigrants from the North had it not been for the connection with that Imperial Government which Irishmen accuse of compassing their extirpation, but which is at this moment restraining the Orangemen from what, to judge by the result of all past encounters, might prove a career of victory. Let ambition mark that Chatham's most famous enterprise has not only turned out barren of anything except glory, but has had an effect the very opposite of that which was contemplated by its projector. In the days before morality, to which conquest belonged, the conqueror had no scruples, nor did he leave his work half done. In the rough infancy of things, he may have acted as an indispensable force of selection; evolutionary science, at least, will be ready to credit him with the performance of that function: but modern conquest seems in some cases to invert the part, and to preserve that which had better not have been preserved.

MR. C. DAVIS ENGLISH's tract on the "Philosophy of a Future State" is a severely scientific and somewhat peremptory rejection of all the popular arguments in favour of the Immortality of the Soul. No doubt untenable arguments were put forward and found acceptance, even with intellects so powerful as that of Butler, in the days when science had not yet clearly traced out the connection between the different portions of our complex nature. Nobody would now think of talking about the "indiscernibility" of the soul, or concluding that the soul must survive the body because the reason and the character are not affected by the amputation of a limb, or because power of thought and will is in certain cases manifested, notwithstanding the ravages of local disease, up to the moment of death. There is a very striking passage of Mill arguing for the possible continuance of thought without physical organs; but the idea is at once too recondite and too conjectural to sustain ordinary faith. We exist in consciousness; and that our consciousness is not independent of our physical organism is proved at once by its suspension during sleep or in a swoon. We awaken from sleep; we revive after a swoon; and Butler suggests that there may, for aught we can tell, be the same awakening or revival after death: there may be, but we have no experience to tell us that there will. To contend that the soul is self-existent is, as Mr. English truly says, to contend that it must have existed from eternity, as well as that its existence will never cease. Neither in physical nor metaphysical arguments will any sure anchorage be found. It is on another and less philosophical, but far more substantial, ground that the great mass of mankind, all indeed who ever reflect at all upon their own moral condition and destiny, believe more or less definitely, not perhaps in immortality, which, if the term is taken in its strict sense, introduces questions beyond the possible range of our intelligence, but in a future state. No man probably ever persuaded himself that at the close of life it signified nothing to him whether he had lived well or ill, whether he had done good or evil. Let the good man be as unfortunate as he will, and as nobody can deny that good men often are, he still feels that it will be well with him in the sum of things. Let the bad man be as fortunate as he will through life and enjoy any amount of pleasure that he may, he will at the last, unless morally drugged and stupefied by indulgence, wish that he could die the death of the righteous and that his end could be like theirs. This hope and this fear, however indefinite, are indelible. Why, then, are we not to trust the evidence of our moral nature as much as that of our senses, on which physical science is based? On what does the bodily sense or physical science found its claim to a special prerogative of certainty? This is a question to which, as it concerns the very foundation of their system, we should be glad to see the attention of ultra-physicists turned. We are living just now amidst a rush of physical discovery, which can hardly fail to have a temporary effect on our impressions as to the relative spheres and claims of the physical and the moral. Of one thing, however, Mr. English, and all those of his way of thinking, may rest assured; they will never be able to school man to indifference or contented acquiescence in blank doubt with regard to his own origin and destiny. Suppose the philosopher were suddenly conveyed by some mysterious power to a strange place and there set down, having everything provided for him, but having been told

nothing about the purpose for which he had been brought or his ultimate destination, except that he was soon to be transported elsewhere, would he be able to eat, drink and sleep without conjecturing or trying to make out from the indications of the things about him in what hands he was, with what intention he had been brought thither, and whither he was bound? Would he not anxiously interrogate and scrutinize his environment for a clew to the secret of his situation? The secret, says the Agnostic, is a part of the Unknowable. But on the Theistic hypothesis, which remains yet unconfuted, as the Agnostic by repudiating the name Atheist admits, there must be One at least to whom the secret is known; and by His good pleasure and the extent to which He may see fit to reveal Himself to the conscientious seeker after truth, not by any dogmatic decree of the Evolutionist, the limits of the knowable must be fixed. Even Theists, perhaps, do not always distinctly see how much is implied by the belief in a Living God.

In the *Nineteenth Century* there is a curious paper by Dr. Jessopp, the mediæval archeologist, on the number of people swept off by the pestilence called the Black Death, which appears to have been a variety of the Oriental plague, and which ravaged England in common with the rest of Europe in the reign of Edward III., proclaiming a dread truce in the midst of the great war, and arresting the career of the victor of Creci. Dr. Jessopp has found new and apparently trustworthy data for the circulation in the Diocesan Registry, and the Roll of the Manor Court, of which the first recorded the demises of incumbents, the second the death of all holders of property in the Manor. By his examination of these Dr. Jessopp is led to the conclusion that in the Counties of Norfolk and Suffolk, which he takes as a specimen district, certainly half, and probably more than half, of the population perished. What a sanitary condition, and what a dietary among the people does this indicate! Yet, this is the period of economic history to which agrarianism has been pointing as the golden age of agricultural labour, and which has been invidiously contrasted with the industrial relations of the present day. It is true, the plague by thinning the labour market caused a rise of wages, which again led to a conflict between employers and employed, and to the insurrection of the Serfs; but if half of us were now to be swept off by the cholera, consequences not less happy might ensue. Nothing can be more certain than that our much-abused age shows, compared with the middle ages or even with much later times, an enormous increase in the number of persons who are well-off, while sanitary improvements, the regular administration of relief, and above all the quickened sense of responsibility on the part of the rich, have made the lot of the poorest more tolerable than it was in former days. With the general growth of population the amount of destitution from various sources, including vice, indolence and disease, has also numerically, though by no means proportionally, increased. This and the keener sensitiveness engendered by education in the breast of poverty are the only facts really corresponding to the perpetual threnody about the rich ever becoming richer and the poor ever becoming poorer. Nor is the gulf between rich and poor, about which it seems Mr. Matthew Arnold has been talking, any more of a reality than the connection between progress and poverty. In the middle ages there was a gulf indeed between the Lord and the Villain. Now, not only is there nothing impassable between the lowest industrial grade and the highest, three-fourths of the fortunes on this continent having been made by men who rose from the ranks, but the interval between the greatest wealth and the greatest poverty, though wide, is filled by innumerable degrees of opulence, among which it is impossible to draw a sharp line. This is no reason for relaxing Christian and philanthropic endeavour to raise the lowly, improve the lot of labour, and bring about a real brotherhood of men, as far and as fast as is permitted by the conditions of the social organism, over the fundamental structure of which we have no control; but it is a reason for not having recourse to dynamite while Christianity and philanthropy are striving to do the work.

A BYSTANDER.

"FOR God's sake, read it, I am in need of bread," said a ragged down-at-the-heel literary tramp to Labouchère, of London *Truth*, who poses as a great critic of literary matters. "Labby" was impatient to be away, and had at first refused to even read the poem, but he did so, and then declared that it was trash, saying: "You can make more money as a rag-picker or sailor than trying to worm your way into journalism, with no ability to back you." "Labby" refused to give the author a pound for the "stuff," but offered him a few shillings in charity. Then the tramp threw off his disguise, and lo! there stood "Labby's" great club crony, Bret Harte, whom he had begged to write a poem for him. He would have been glad then to get the "trash" at any price, but alas! he did not, nor will he ever again get any of Harte's matter.