

years the happy pair trod the tempestuous pathway of life together; but at last, one morning, grim-visaged Death paid the "canteen" an informal visit and carried off Mrs. Joey Beef. The bereaved husband concluded that he would have a funeral worthy of his better-half, and with this end in view he secured the services of a brass band to march in front of the hearse to the cemetery. At the grave Joey was a typical mourner, but the ludicrous part of the whole affair was when the procession was ready to start for home, Joseph straightened himself up, and, with the dignified air of a man who had just sold a choice corner lot in Bogusburg, ordered the band to strike up, "The Girl I Left Behind Me."

I see by the *Manitoba Free Press* that Winnipeggers came nearly having a sensation on their hands in the shape of a duel, which, but for the good judgment of the gentlemen appointed as seconds, would have taken place at daylight last Saturday morning. The principals are two French gentlemen at present residing at one of the hotels in that city. The dispute arose over a question of religion, the climax being reached by one of the principals being called a liar. This is an insult which to Frenchmen can only be settled in one way, and cards were at once exchanged and seconds appointed. The two seconds met on Friday, determined to take no "backwater," but upon second thought better judgment prevailed, and an apology from the offender was given and accepted. In the meantime every detail had been arranged, and witnesses and doctors were ready to rise at daybreak to witness what would have probably been the first duel in Manitoba. The choice of the arms fell to the offended party, who chose swords, which were obtained after a long search through the city. The affair was kept as quiet as possible, but a reporter being acquainted with one of the seconds was introduced as a physician and went to the needless expense of borrowing a physician's grip and supplying it with the necessary articles in case his man was wounded.

PERE GRINATOR.

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ETERNAL PUNISHMENT.

To the Editor of the *Victoria Home Journal*:

In the last issue of THE HOME JOURNAL there appeared a discussion of the doctrine of eternal punishment. In looking at this question it might be well to re-quote your proposition, namely:

"Whoever in Christian lands, and after arriving at years of discretion, dies without having surrendered to the will and believed in the sacrifice of the historic Christ, shall have his lot and part in hell. And he shall there suffer torments which, whether they be material or spiritual, are of such a nature and intensity as to be aptly represented by the torment of unquenchable fire. And from this torment he shall never have surcease nor respite, but shall be maintained in a conscious existence of unceasing anguish forever and ever."

This doctrine is given to us as an absolute fact, it has become a dogma of the Church, and, consequently, to doubt the existence of eternal punishment and the "Devil" is equivalent to doubting the existence of God. It seems curious that we are compelled to depend upon tradition for the support of this view of the future state of the "wicked." Such a support at the best is but a frail one, especially when we remember that the tendency of religious fervor is ever toward exaggeration. But a critical examination of this doctrine, together with the knowledge we have of the lives of the Armenians who formulated it, would at the least suggest to the rational investigator many doubts as to the truth of the statement contained in the above quotation.

It is apparent that the word "Christian" lands contracts its operations to a given portion of this world, and therefore it is not universal and inapplicable to mankind as a whole. It is also apparent that the minds which conceived such a monstrous idea were those of fanatics incapable of any charitable thought exercising the least charity or mercy towards their enemies—the unbelievers; and that, as the operation or effect of this doctrine is restricted to Christian lands, it is not, nor can it ever be, applied to mankind as an Infinite idea. The expression of Infinitude is all-embracing, and no rational, reasoning being could libel or blaspheme the All-Good by conceiving or promulgating such a belief, even though no weightier reason could be

adduced than that it did not apply to the inhabitants of every land.

God is a God of War to the Major-General, but a God of Dove to the pure in heart; and man's anterior conception of the essence of God and the rectitude of his actions, the purpose of his daily life, will ever correspond to his growth interiorly in the conception of truth, right and justice—faith, hope and charity. Therefore, bearing in mind that man can only comprehend the spiritual, the essence of the All-Good, and a discreet use of charity in proportion as his life embodies the practice of virtue, and in proportion to his knowledge of the spiritual and separation from the grossly material existence, it needs not any to point out the corrupted source of the doctrine in question.

Viewed in another aspect, this belief is presented as a most pernicious one, in that it contracts, from childhood, the ideas, the actions, the scope, and the ambition of the inhabitants of "Christian" lands. To those inclined to at all examine it, in conjunction with the popular belief in "Heaven," there is presented the cheerless prospect of but two circumscribed existences—one on earth and one in another world, the conditions of the latter being surrounded with an impenetrable veil pierced only by those who have left their "coats of skin" for the (so-called) "Great Unknown." Yet, happily for the human race, this ignorance of the future is peculiar only to Christianity. Never having pierced the "Veil of Isis," and held back from knowledge by fear, they have the presumption to form into a dogma a gross misconception of a principle in nature. It cannot scarcely fail to be recognised that to this gross belief is directly chargeable much, if not all, of the unhappy condition of Christian lands. Again, this tendency of the Christians to grossly misinterpret their Sacred Book works evil by a like deficiency in their conception of God. Had the minds, the hearts, and the lives of the early "Fathers" been pure, no such travesty on the laws of the Infinite Good would have found support in the Church—a higher, nobler, more sublime ideal of God would have been conceived and preached, and the miserable failure failure of Christianity to accomplish the design of the Supreme Teacher Jesus would have been un-