

The Coming Day.

DECEMBER, 1891.

THE beginning of a new year, for a young Monthly Magazine, is always a rather trying time,—especially if the inspiring notes of it are independent inquiry and rational religious thought:—so few are really prepared for either the one or the other; and those who are prepared are so apt to go their own way, without the sense of comradeship.

Whatever may be the comparative merits of old orthodoxy and new rationalism, it is a fact that orthodoxy unites while rationalism disintegrates. That is quite understandable; but the tendency needs watching. What we have called “the sense of comradeship,” might be called the sense of duty; for surely it is the duty of the likeminded to stand by one another, and to back up the pioneers and the men who take the field.

We know that *The Truthseeker* (the forerunner of *The Coming Day*), during its 25 years of unbroken pioneer work, exerted a priceless influence in directing inquirers, consoling the distressed, heartening waverers, and enlightening doubters: but it was hard and, from a “worldly” point of view, profitless work; and it could not have lived if it had relied only upon satisfied rationalists and contented Unitarians. It was the inquirers, the distressed, the waverers, and the doubters who themselves encouraged and sustained it.

The Coming Day is doing, even more manifestly, the work of *The Truthseeker*, and under the same hard conditions. There are really very few publications of the kind: and, before evidence, one would imagine that tens of thousands of people, who agree with them and sympathise with their aims, would hasten to support them: but *everything of the kind* in this country has to struggle for existence, while cataracts of slush or nonsense are welcomed and are made to pay.

We only ask the serious-minded religious thinker to consider it. We do not want subsidies: we only want considerate and faithful friends who will stand by us, and commend us to those whom we might benefit. We might, however, go a step further and say that there are thousands of “well-to-do” people who are in entire sympathy with us and who might easily become missionaries, in a mild way, by taking a few copies each month, for distribution and posting. Wherever a vicar talks priestcraft or a curate talks nonsense, some one should be at hand to shed a ray of light from *The Coming Day*: and wherever an honest man or an unhappy woman has doubts and misgivings about the old, and as yet knows not the new, some one should make a similar use of our sunshine. If only five hundred of our readers would lay hold and co-operate, we should “do well.”

During 1892 we hope to profit by the experiences of 1891. Arrangements have

been made which will increase the carrying power of our sixteen pages, and we fully expect to find room for everything of real importance. We are resolved that every inch of our space shall be occupied only for a definite purpose, and with constant reference to the ideal indicated by our name. Every month, and in every word, we shall remember that it is our mission to speak for THE COMING DAY.

SUNDAY EVENINGS WITH JOHN RUSKIN'S "CROWN OF WILD OLIVE."

V.

RUSKIN's concluding subject, The future of England, could not help being, for him, the subject which, of all others, would strike out from him one of those apparently perverse and yet exquisite prophecies which make him at once the terror and the delight of sensitive and thoughtful but "practical" Englishmen. Of all living men whose words are cared for, he is assuredly the one Englishman whose soul seems to burn with even passionate antipathy against the foremost or the most urgent facts of modern life. He hates our machinery, and all that machinery involves. Especially he hates what Tennyson's *Northern Farmer* called the "kittle 'o steam" on the land, with "the Devil's own team." One of his main hopes for England is the return to "agriculture by the hand or by the plough drawn only by animals, and shepherd and pastoral husbandry." These he calls "the chief schools of Englishmen." "And this most royal academy of all academies you have to open over all the land, purifying your heaths and hills and waters, and keeping them full of every kind of lovely natural organism, in tree, herb, and living creature. All land that is waste and ugly, you must redeem into ordered fruitfulness; all ruin, desolateness, imperfectness of hut or habitation, you must do away with; and throughout every village and city of your English dominions there must not be a hand that cannot find a helper, nor a heart that cannot find a comforter."

This, from the end of the Lecture, is the real text, the key-note or motive that runs through all the unusual thoughts that fill it.

Ruskin thinks we are drifting on to troublous times. He says; "we are on the eve of a great political crisis, if not of political change"; and that "a struggle is approaching between the newly-risen power of democracy and the apparently departing power of feudalism; and another struggle, no less imminent, and far more dangerous, between wealth and pauperism. These two quarrels are constantly thought of as the same. They are being fought together, and an apparently common interest unites for the most part the millionaire with the noble, in resistance to a multitude, crying, part of it for bread and part of it for liberty." That may be; but the real truth is that we are always passing through crises and changes. The England of to-day is the product of a hundred crises; and every stage found its prophet on the watchtower, crying; "Woe, woe, woe," or "Repent and be converted." But it is undoubtedly true that we are approaching or passing through a great crisis now. The wage-receivers of England have found out both their humiliation and their power: and

there will be consequences. They have "begun to suspect," says Ruskin, "that one particular form of past misgovernment has been, that their masters have set them to do all the work, and have themselves taken all the wages. In a word, that what was called governing them, meant only wearing fine clothes, and living on good fare at their expense. And I am sorry to say, the people are quite right in this opinion also. If you enquire into the vital fact of the matter, this you will find to be the constant structure of European society for the thousand years of the feudal system; it was divided into peasants who lived by working; priests who lived by begging; and knights who lived by pillaging; and as the luminous public mind becomes gradually cognizant of these facts, it will assuredly not suffer things to be altogether arranged that way any more; and the devising of other ways will be an agitating business."

Undoubtedly. "Government" does, for many, simply mean the working of the will of an upper class, and keeping in order the "mob." That is all over; or, to ensure its being all over, the next great struggle will come. "Government" must come to mean, not the assertion of the force of power, but the offer of the help of it: and the governor must either give way or make himself of use as a minister of good. Ruskin is not the man to run down rulers and nobles, lords and ladies, princes and kings. He delights in them, and would allow much to them: but he also expects much from them: and he knows that if "the lower orders" scoff at them, and want to pull them down, it is the fault of these fine people. But it is a pity they should be pulled down, he thinks. "If you could live always in the presence of archangels, you would be happier than in that of men; but even if only in the company of admirable knights and beautiful ladies, the more noble and bright they were, and the more you could reverence their virtue, the happier you would be." But if these "admirable knights and beautiful ladies" come only to think of themselves,—of their station, their privileges, and their finery, presently the great mob will cease to admire, and will only growl out the question; "What is to be done with the House of Lords?" And serve that House right, too, if it does not stand to help the people; if it only stands to buttress up privilege, and the interests of an "upper class." And so thinks even Ruskin: but Ruskin also thinks that the case is not hopeless. These knights and noble persons, he thinks, have only to get out of the slough of their selfishness, and to be true leaders again, as real aristocrats, or the best, in order to win the hearts of the people. "The people," he says, "are crying to you for command, and you stand there at pause, and silent. You think they don't want to be commanded; try them; determine what is needful for them—honourable for them; show it them, promise to bring them to it, and they will follow you through fire. 'Govern us,' they cry with one heart, though many minds. They *can* be governed still, these English; they are men still; not gnats nor serpents. They love their old ways yet, and their old masters, and their old land. They would fain live in it, as many as may stay there, if you will show them how, there, to live;—or show them even, how, there, like Englishmen, to die."

There is a good deal of truth in that. This democratic mob, which is alarming so many, is strangely dependent upon leaders. They love a good leader: they even love to be gripped, and handled, and marched about by him; and are loyal beyond all expression. But they must feel that their leaders are good soldiers not mere gamesters,—the true redeemers of men, who also are ready for the cross.

Yes, again let it be said, true government is not so much repression as uplifting ;—the sword only by the way : the helping hand, the bright leadership, the self-denying guidance always. Hence the truth of Ruskin's remark ; "educate, or govern ; they are one and the same word." And here our rulers have been wise, for they have decreed that the people must be educated,—have even taken us personally in hand, to apply compulsion if necessary. All very well in its way : but what is "education" ? It is the greatest folly in the world to imagine that education is putting a boy through so many "Standards." That may be instruction, of a kind, but it may be anything but education. Education is personal development, personal training, training to see, training to think, training to distinguish, training to "behave," as Ruskin puts it. "It is not teaching the youth of England the shapes of letters and the tricks of numbers ; and then leaving them to turn their arithmetic to roguery, and their literature to lust. It is, on the contrary, training them into the perfect exercise and kingly continence of their bodies and souls. It is a painful, continual, and difficult work ; to be done by kindness, by watching, by warning, by precept, and by praise,—but above all—by example."

"Example." There we get back to our noble and ruling persons, and to their true calling and work : but what kind of example they have contributed Ruskin tells us from his own experience ;—"Only a few days since I had a letter from the wife of a village rector, a man of common sense and kindness, who was greatly troubled in his mind because it was precisely the men who got highest wages in summer that came destitute to his door in the winter. Destitute, and of riotous temper—for their method of spending wages in their period of prosperity was by sitting two days a week in the tavern parlour, lading port wine, not out of bowls, but out of buckets. Well, gentlemen, who taught them that method of festivity ? Thirty years ago, I, a most inexperienced freshman, went to my first college supper ; at the head of the table sat a noble man of high promise and of admirable powers, since dead of palsy ; there also we had in the midst of us, not buckets, indeed, but bowls as large as buckets ; there also, we helped ourselves with ladles. There (for this beginning of college education was compulsory), I choosing ladlefuls of punch instead of claret ; because I was then able, unperceived, to pour them into my waistcoat instead of down my throat, stood it out to the end, and helped to carry four of my fellow students, one of them the son of the head of a college, head foremost, downstairs and home. Such things are no more ; but the fruit of them remains, and will for many a day to come. The labourers whom you cannot now shut out of the ale-house are only the too faithful disciples of the gentlemen who were wont to shut themselves into the dining-room."

Of course that is very much altered now, and one may hope that at last, from the high places, the true light and leading may come. But the hope still limps, and there is much need of the remaining aids of faith and charity. Robert Lowe, seeing that "working men" are in a vast majority, once said that we ought to educate our masters before we enfranchise them. But "working men" are not likely to be our masters yet. Do what we will, rank and skill, leisure and money, are likely to be our masters for many a day, and the real question ought to be, whether we ought not to educate the "upper classes" before we entrust them with so much power. Ruskin suggests the retention of "honorary titles" but the abolition of "honorary incomes"

—a suggestion of immense value. He also suggests that when the question is the reduction of wages, we should begin with the idle classes, and not the industrious classes. Again a valuable suggestion, the carrying out of which on a large scale, and in a large sense, might do much to brighten "The future of England."

But, as to this matter of education. "All education begins in work. What we think, or what we know, or what we believe, is in the end, of little consequence. The only thing of consequence is what we *do*: and for man, woman, or child, the first point of education is to make them do their best. It is the law of good economy to make the best of everything. How much more to make the best of every creature! Therefore, when your pauper comes to you and asks for bread, ask of him instantly—What faculty have you? What can you do best? Can you drive a nail into wood? Go and mend the parish fences. Can you lay a brick? Mend the walls of the cottages where the wind comes in. Can you lift a spadeful of earth? Turn this field up three feet deep all over. Can you only drag a weight with your shoulders? Stand at the bottom of this hill and help up the overladen horses. Can you weld iron and chisel stone? Fortify this wreck-strewn coast into a harbour; and change these shifting sands into fruitful ground. Wherever death was, bring life; that is to be your work: that your parish refuge; that your education. So and no otherwise can we meet existent distress. But for the continual education of the whole people, and for their future happiness, they must have such consistent employment as shall develop all the powers of the fingers, and the limbs, and the brain."

There is a programme for you, if you want one! Only let Parliament set about helping us in that direction, and all might be well. Let the great central Imperial authority be a real heart, to speed the life-torrent on to every atom of the body politic. Instead of hindering the extremities, or sucking from them the vitality which exists there, let Parliament concern itself with fostering, guarding and guiding, by assisting every locality to make the most and the best of its means—on the land, and in every way. Let self-government be given to every parish in the kingdom, for the express purpose of putting to the best use every one and everything in that parish: and let every pair of hands be offered something to do, and be aided by governing brains to see what they can do best. That is the English question for to day, as, indeed, it is the Irish question, and the question everywhere where men, women, and children who have to win daily bread by daily work are concerned. And that mainly is the true object of government,—to help the people in every corner of the land, to make the best of it and of themselves.

Perhaps, after all, then, Ruskin is partly right; and perhaps there is some "method" in his "madness" when he protests that salvation is to be found only in putting back the people on to the land, that by hand labour the ground may be perfectly tilled and made fruitful. Perhaps, too, his ideal, which is to banish manufactures altogether from the land, and to fill "this little white gleaming crag with happy creatures, helpful to each other" is a vain dream. And yet, when you go into the back streets of our great towns, and see the sickening sights, and even taste the sickening smells, and perceive how light and air are poisoned or killed, and mark amid what depressing anxiety and squalor the great majority have to live, one cannot help thinking that a great town is, at best, a painful necessity: and one might do worse things than listen to the recital of one of Ruskin's dreams.

Those dreams, indeed, may be to us, to day, only like the blissful little Summer holiday which a poor Shoreditch or Whitechapel child gets when it is lucky enough to be selected by charity to see the grass and smell the hay for once ;—a joy for which it pays when, after its fortnight is up, it goes back to its filthy London slum, and cries all night for the sweet white bed it left behind.

Ah, yes ! but surely it will not hurt us in the end, to be taught to hate inevitable stench and dirt and misery ; for only so shall we make efforts to escape ; only so shall we fight this real devil of squalor and degradation ; only so shall we make the rich man do right, and shame him—if love and justice will not do it—and shame the powerful and the governing classes—into making a great town less like a prison, where, under the name of Liberty, the great majority are condemned to hard labour for life, shut up in gloomy cells.

You may not believe him : you may regard him as only a vain or even misleading dreamer,—but listen, listen, to the message of a Seer such as God sent to Palestine and Greece and Rome in days of old—and more than once has sent to England, in these latter days ;—“ You may make England itself the centre of the learning, of the arts, of the courtesies and felicities of the world. You may cover her mountains with pasture ; her plains with corn, her valleys with the lily, and her gardens with the rose. You may bring together there in peace the wise and the pure, and the gentle of the earth, and by their word, command through its farthest darkness the birth of ‘God’s first creature, which was Light.’ You know whose words those are : the words of the wisest of Englishmen. He, and with him the wisest of all other great nations, have spoken always to men of this hope, and they would not hear. Plato, in the dialogue of Critias, his last, broken off at his death,—Pindar, in passionate singing of the fortunate islands,—Virgil, in the prophetic tenth eclogue,—Bacon, in his fable of the new Atlantis,—More, in the book which, too impatiently wise, became the bye-word of fools—these, all, have told us with one voice what we should strive to attain ; *they* not hopeless of it, but for our follies forced, as it seems, by heaven, to tell us only partly and in parables, lest we should hear them and obey. Shall we never listen to the words of these wisest of men ? Then listen at least to the words of your children—let us in the lips of babes and sucklings find our strength ; and see that we do not make them mock instead of pray, when we teach them, night and morning, to ask for what we believe never can be granted ;—that the will of the Father,—which is, that His creatures may be righteous and happy,—should be done, *on earth*, as it is in Heaven.”

A SCIENTIFIC BASIS OF BELIEF IN A FUTURE LIFE.

VII.

[CONCLUDED.]

SHAKESPEARE finely makes Lorenzo say of the harmony even now “in immortal souls,” that we cannot hear it because “this muddy vesture of decay doth grossly close it in ;” and, time out of mind, the finest, rarest, noblest men and women have thus discoursed of the inner self. Wisely said one of the Fathers of the Church that

“the soul hath the human form, the same as its body, only it is subtile, delicate, ethereal.”* And wisely said a brilliant thinker of our own day :—“Such idea as I have been able to form of the *rationale* of Immortality is, that Life—vegetative, animated, conscious, and self-conscious—forms a series of evolutions, not merely in the sense of a higher and more elaborate organization, but of a subtler essence—a series of sheaths out of which finer and finer shoots grow successively, till at last comes the flower of full consciousness, into whose heart the Divine sun pours His beams directly, and wherein is formed a seed which does not perish when the petals fall into the dust.”† And wise and most significant is that explanation of spirit-existence lately given by a vigorous German scientist,‡ in which he actually describes the soul of man from a scientific point of view, as a refined, continuous, subtile substance permeating the whole material structure of the body, and attaining to the grade of spiritual being because it has attained to the grade of *conscious* and *intelligent* existence—an explanation now being rapidly adopted, with some surprising experimental results, by many of the most advanced scientists in Germany and elsewhere. Notably has this explanation been given in our own country by the authors of the book to which I have already referred, *The Unseen Universe*. Adopting the view that man has now this inner invisible body or spirit, they shew how, on strictly scientific principles, this body or spirit is developed in self-consciousness, with memory and all that belongs thereto. They say :—“Let us begin by supposing that we possess a frame, or the rudiments of a frame, connecting us with the invisible Universe, which we may call the spiritual body. Now each thought we think is accompanied by certain molecular motions and displacements in the brain ; and part of these, let us allow, are in some way stored up in that organ, so as to produce what may be termed our material or physical memory. Other parts of these motions are, however, communicated to the spiritual or invisible body, and are there stored up, forming a memory which may be made use of when that body is free to exercise its functions. Again, one of the arguments which prove the existence of the invisible Universe demands that it shall be full of energy when the present Universe is defunct. We can, therefore, very well imagine that after death, when the spiritual body is free to exercise its functions, it may be replete with energy, and have eminently the power of action in the present, retaining also, as we have shown above, a hold upon the past, inasmuch as the memory of past events has been stored up in it, and thus preserving the two essential requisites of a continuous intelligent existence.” This is precisely what Swedenborg said, 150 years ago :—“Man has an external memory and an internal memory ; an external memory which is his natural man, and an internal memory which is of his spiritual man. Everything which man thinks, wills, and speaks, or which he has done, heard, or seen, is inscribed on his internal or spiritual memory ; and whatever is received into the spiritual memory is never blotted out, for it is thus inscribed on the spirit itself, and on the members of its body, for the spirit is *formed* according to the thoughts and acts of the will.” It is, then, this spirit-body which goes out from the physical body at death—a conscious, active, intelligent being ; not less but more because of “death,” not defeated but enfranchised, not blind and senseless, but now for the first time truly full of light and intelligence ; for death is an orderly stage in a natural process, and

* Tertullian.

† Frances Power Cobbe.

‡ Uriel.

only dissolves that which is outermost in order that the real man may take the next great step in the ceaseless march of progressive being.

I can pursue this great subject no farther; but hope I am entitled to say, in the words of that profound thinker, Kant:—"It is, therefore, as good as demonstrated that even now in this life the human soul stands in an indissoluble communion with all the immaterial beings of the spiritual world, that it produces effects in them, and in exchange receives impressions from them." "It would be a blessing if such a systematic constitution of the spiritual world, as conceived by us, had not merely to be inferred from the hypothetical conception of the spiritual nature generally, but would be inferred, or at least conjectured, as probable from some real and generally acknowledged observation."

I will now only name two or three inferences that appear to me to be of practical value. The first is that it is just possible we may, to a very serious extent, be the determiners of our own immortality. If a future existence is in any way determined by the growth and development of the unity of Life we know as self-consciousness and thought, it is just possible that some human beings may come short of it. It is very difficult, at every stage, to mark the boundary lines of the various grades of Life, in the ascending scale, and to say when the mineral ends and the vegetable begins, when the vegetable ends and the animal begins; and it may be difficult to say when the animal ends and the spiritual begins. They everywhere seem to merge and melt on the boundary lines; and, as we ponder this, Paul's words gather a very solemn significance, beyond, perhaps, even his own meaning:—"I count all things but loss . . . if by any means I might attain unto the resurrection of the dead."

But, even though our immortality be sure, it is certain that the view we have now taken of the Future Life does make us the determiners of what that life shall be to us. It sweeps utterly away all unrealities, all schemes of salvation founded on arbitrary decrees, all pardon through imputed righteousness or atoning blood, all redemption not identical with personal emancipation from evil. It leaves us alone with personal character, and with that great law of all life, "Whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap." We shall have, in the unseen Universe, what we *are*. Behind the veil we shall be seen without the veil, for that is the sphere of absolute realities.

And one thought more—to every one of us a thought full of consolation. All God's universe is beautiful with the law of progress; and all things move on to the music of His own heavenly will. Death, therefore, is advancement. What may it not be to the weary and heavy-laden who have all their life long dragged a maimed or poisoned body along, who might have cried out with Paul, "O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from this death-like body?" What may it not be to millions of us who have always been forced to think of our weaknesses and our liability to exhaustion, who have been painfully conscious of our slowness of thought, our feebleness of will, our easily besetting sin? All these hindrances are probably physical, and will disappear when the kindly earth or fire receives the body that will be needed never, never more. What may it not be to those of us who have sent our oldest friends on before—to those of us, the light of whose eyes has been taken beyond the veil? I will tell you what it may be. It may be the emancipation from

all that dimmed the vision and oppressed the heart : it may be the discovery that heaven and earth are not far apart but near, and that the very beings we thought we had lost, had all along been preparing our place for us, even as Jesus said it would be with him : it may be—but why should I say it “ may ” be †—it *will* be the passing out of our darkness into God’s marvellous light.

GUIDING THOUGHTS ON GREAT SUBJECTS.

GOD is “the soul of goodness” in all things,—even “in things evil.”

REVELATION is discovery aided by the unseen powers ;—the gradual understanding of God by man.

INSPIRATION is insight, made fruitful by the inbreathing of the Father’s holy spirit.

THE BIBLE is a record of man’s experiences, mainly in the sphere of religious aspiration. It is “the word of God” only in the sense that He is in all things : but just as there is all the difference in the world between God’s air pouring from a mountain-height and God’s air in a prison-cell, so there is all the difference in the world between God’s word in the Book of Joshua and God’s word in the Gospel according to St. John. The Bible is, in reality, the word of man at enormously varied stages of his development.

JESUS CHRIST was a real man, one “among many brethren” ; a saviour of man in so far as he made effective in the world’s history the redeeming power of love, and a revealer of God in so far as he unveiled the eternal Fatherhood in the light that lies beyond man’s fears.

CHRIST’S SACRIFICE is a symbol. The true “atoning sacrifice” never ceases. It appears through all the generations, in the surrenders and sacrifices of the world’s innumerable saviours, great and small, who strive to assuage sorrow, to beat down injustice, and to conquer sin.

SALVATION is uplifting, cleansing, emancipation.

THE SPIRIT-WORLD is the world of enduring causes, and the recipient of enduring consequences. Modern Science confirms the ancient Apostle, who declared that “the things which are seen are temporal, but the things which are not seen are eternal.”

THE SPIRIT-MAN is the real man. A spirit is simply a man, woman, or child, who has parted with the earthly body, and is now in immediate contact with causes and consequences.

HEAVEN is the harmony of wisdom, purity, and love ;—not a place but a spiritual condition, and always progressive.

HELL is discord :—also not a place but a spiritual condition, and always improvable.

WHERE ARE THE DEAD?*

EIGHTEEN writers, all ministers, reply to this great question. The most remarkable thing about their book is the almost entire absence of any reference to "the lost." What a change! Another notable fact is that all these ministers almost entirely omit the old "Gospel" of salvation by "faith." They say, "The good are with God, and they are safe." "To be righteous is to be safe." A third noteworthy fact is that they all seem to be spiritualists. They say, "They are near to us now. . . . They sit at our tables, attend us on our journeys." They talk of a "thin veil" which only just "conceals us from the spirit-world." A final significant fact is the very general surrender of the deplorable old "sleep in the grave" theory. Two or three talk a little in their sleep about "the resurrection of the body," and "a resurrection day," and one poor man murmurs something about the union "between soul and body" being dissolved at death, and "resumed" at "the resurrection," but statements such as the following abound,—"The life of the soul is altogether independent of the body in which it dwells." "Our dead are alive . . . they are not unclothed, but clothed upon with spiritual bodies; they are not alone, or homeless, but at home with the Lord, and are gathered together in a spiritual city with just men made perfect out of all times and lands.

All this is delightful, and an immense advance. If these good men will go on advancing on these lines they will soon shed the almost funny resurrection rags that cling about them—notably about good Dr. Thain Davidson, who, after his vivid outburst about the radiant angels around us, actually somnambulises about "the enjoyment of a higher and sinless state, to be perfected by-and-by at the resurrection of the body."

We will only add the remark, that when Dr. Clifford applies the law of Continuity to the passing on of the earth-pilgrim at death, he virtually admits that for every human being there is a chance, and more than a chance of rescue and development on the other side.

LIGHT ON THE PATH.

OUR FATHER'S CHURCH. The proposal is now fully worked out; and a document, containing a statement of the Ideal and all information concerning its working, is now ready. Copies may be obtained, by post, free, from J. Page Hopps, Lea Hurst, Leicester. As soon as possible a Council will be formed, and names will be announced.

THE NEW BOOK OF COMMON PRAYER.
An unexpected and most gratifying

amount of interest is being taken in this compilation of prayers, chants and hymns. Many valuable suggestions have been made, and it has been decided to at once proceed to a new edition embodying these. Proofs of this new edition will be sent to a very large number of ministers with an invitation to send in suggestions or corrections of any kind. In this way we shall hope to offer early in the New Year a thoroughly accurate and generally acceptable book. The price of the new

* "Our Dead. Where are they!" A Symposium. Edited by T. H. Stockwell. London: E. Stock.

edition, well printed and bound, will probably be sevenpence, post free.

“A GENTLEMAN.” We have received a remonstrance, with reference to the quotation from Brough’s poem, as though *we* had advocated the abolition of the word “gentleman.” What we did was to quote a rebel’s protest against a palpable degradation. The degradation was very real in Brough’s days: and is nearly as real now. It is still too much the fashion to reserve the word for that queer ring known as “Society,” and to call a man a gentleman because he has not been a tradesman, or because he lives in a particular locality, or because he drives his carriage, or because he has £1000 a year. It was this that made Brough a rebel, and drove him to the superb audacities of his “vulgar declamation”:—small blame to him.

THE book on the question “Who was Jehovah?” seems to have troubled the reviewers. They do not appear to know what to do with it. They call it novel, strange, original, debateable, and then lay it down as something hot or uncanny. Not one has yet explained how any one

“Jehovah” could have done or said all the contradictory things attributed to him in the Old Testament; and not one attempts to account for the very curious “Spiritism” (to use Mr. Gladstone’s word) of the Old Testament. We only ask for the gravest possible criticism of the book, believing, as we do, that it is both “original” and true.

“OUR FREEDOM.” Just a little behind the scenes. How is it that congregations, as a rule, resist or even resent suggestions of change? How is it that they feel so little free to try experiments? Is there one minister in twenty who is strong enough to select his own tools, and to use them in his own way? We are aware of the difficulties in the way of freedom and flexibility: but we do not comprehend the conventionalism and the rigidity. A good minister, who moans under both, says in a letter; “We use the old Martineau hymn book still; and I have had difficulty in introducing the Essex Hall book as a supplement. The mention of a new Service Book would be fatal.” Such letters are by no means uncommon; but they never cease to be hard to understand.

NOTES ON BOOKS.

“A Scottish hero. The Story of Dr. Chalmers.” By Frances E. Cooke. London: Swan Sonnenschein & Co. Some of Miss Cooke’s readers, who have long followed her in her pleasant biographies, will perhaps be a little surprised at her choice of a subject this time. They will justify her, however, when they read her book, which is all the more useful and interesting because it tells the double story,—of a good and strong man’s life and of a remarkable

movement about which not much is known on this side of the Tweed. The mighty master has had his influence over the writer of this little book. It is as noticeable for its vigorous style as for its lucidity; but we very much doubt whether the young-people for whom Miss Cooke writes will care about the Chapters on “The Church Extension Scheme” and “The Veto Act.” Under proper guidance, though, these might be made really enlightening and fruitful.

"The Epic of the Inner Life: being The Book of Job, translated anew, and accompanied with notes and an introductory study." By J. F. Genung. London: J. Clarke and Co. An American book. To the writer, the Book of Job is "a poem, a work of literary art, to be read and judged as we would read and judge any poem." He might have gone farther and fared no worse. The Book of Job is not history. Why not frankly say it? But there is a pleasant and very refreshing touch of

unconventionality in this volume. The writer has evidently an independent mind, backed up by fair scholarship, and the means of knowing all that can be said on disputed points. Add to this, a keen interest in the business, and we have all the requisites for a good book on a difficult subject. Unfortunately, he has little to say about the appearance of Satan, lounging among the angels in the beginning, and the curious bluster attributed to Jehovah at the end. The translation is full of life and insight.

MESSAGES FROM OUR FORERUNNERS.

THE discoveries which in one age are confined to the studious and enlightened few, become in the next the established creed of the learned, and, in the third, form part of the elementary principles of education. The harmony in the meantime which exists among truths of both description, tends perpetually, by blending them into one common mass, to increase the joint influence of the whole; the contributions of individuals of this mass (to borrow the fine allusion of Middleton) "resembling the drops of rain, which,

falling separately into the water, mingle at once with the stream and strengthen the general current."—*Dugald Stewart*.

He that is a good man is three quarters of his way towards the being a good Christian, wheresoever he lives, or whatsoever he is called.—*South*.

Have patience awhile; slanders are not long-lived. Truth is the child of Time; ere long she shall appear to vindicate thee.—*Kant*.

NO ROOM IN THE INN.

ON Bethlehem's height the Christ was born,
 Within a stable dim,
 For "in the inn," the story says,
 "There was no room" for him.
 For other guests—the rich, the known,—
 Quick hands and willing feet;
 For strangers poor, from Nazareth,
 The stable or the street.
 'No room' for thee, thou blessed child!
 This was thy greeting here,
 When to the sad, sin-laden world
 Thou cam'st, God's messenger;
 And this the sound that howled around
 Dark Calvary's hill of doom,
 "Not this man, but Barabbas, loose!
 Away with him!" "No room!"

Still, as each Christmas-tide returns,
 Christ by the world's heart stands,
 With patient, loving, listening face,
 Pierced brow and nail-torn hands.

Wailing and strife be hushed! from heaven
 Light streams; and angels still
 Sing as of yore, "Glory to God!—
 Peace among men—goodwill!"

Dear Jesus come! and, as of old,
 Make our blind eyes to see,
 That we may rise with happy haste,
 And welcome give to thee.

Less worthy guests may we cast out,—
 Creatures of sin and gloom,—
 And in our hearts, all cleansed and fair,
 Make for thee, Master, "room." E.G.