tages of the new system would speedily be recognized. One of the principal uses of a Congressman has hitherto been the obtaining of small federal offices for his "constituents." Under the dawning régime of reform this degrading misuse of representatives will be done away with, and "open constituencies" will be more possible and more probable in America.

Is the Old Faith Dying?

THE question as to the present status of Christianity in Christian lands is now under discussion; and the statements made by debaters on either side as to the facts of the case are curiously variant. On the one side, it is asserted in the most unqualified manner that belief in the facts and doctrines of the Christian religion is nearly obsolete; that the faith of our fathers has no longer any practical hold on the community; that the intelligent and influential citizens have nearly all parted company with the churches; and that the day is not distant when Christianity will be numbered among the effete superstitions. The truth of this statement seems, to those who make it, so obvious that they take no pains to prove it; it is assumed, as a postulate, in all their reasoning; it would be superfluous, they think, to show *that* these things are so; all that is required is to show *why* they are so.

On the other side, the disputants begin by denying the existence of any such facts as these antagonists assume, and by demanding the production of them. Not only so, they have recourse to the census of the United States and to the various year books and published records of the various Christian sects, to show that Christianity is gaining instead of losing ground; that the number of communicants in the various churches is increasing faster than the population; and that the sittings in the churches are now three times as numerous, in proportion to the number of the people, as they were in the days of the Revolution; so that if one-third of the room in them is now occupied, the church attendance must be at least as large, relatively, as it was one hundred years ago. Every habitual church-goer knows that more than one-third of the room is occupied at the ordinary Sunday services; while the extent to which the church is used for purposes of worship and instruction is greatly increased by the multiplication of services, both on week-days and on Sundays, and especially by the rise and progress of Sunday-schools. In most Protestant churches, the congregation which meets at the Sunday-school service is nearly as large as that which gathers for the morning preaching-service, and the two congregations are composed, to a large extent, of different persons — not one-half of the members of the Sunday-school being present at the preaching-service. This state of things may not be desirable; but the fact must be noted in making up our estimate of the number of persons in the community brought under the influence of the churches.

To this class of facts constant appeal is made by those who dispute the assumption that Christianity is a waning faith. The volume of the Rev. Daniel Dorchester, in which figures compiled from the census and from the official records of the different sects are clearly presented, makes a striking presentation of the growth of the Christian faith. By tables which have been for some time before the public, and which have not, so far as we know, been controverted, it is made to appear that the number of communicants in the evangelical Protestant churches has increased, since the beginning of this century, three times as fast as the population. Some of these figures, with others confirming them, have lately been adduced by Dr. Ward in a discussion of this subject in the "North American Review." The showing made in this compact and vigorous article should have the effect to push the debate back to the settlement of the question of fact. Before any further arguments are constructed to show why Christianity is obsolescent, it would be necessary to bring forth some reasons for believing that such is the case. To prove mathematically that Christianity is true, or untrue, may be somewhat difficult; but there can be no serious difficulty in making it appear whether or not it is losing its hold upon the thought and life of the people. And it would be a much more scientific method of procedure if those who maintain the decadence of the popular faith would take a little trouble to acquaint themselves with the facts that bear upon this particular point.

It is often said specifically that men of affairs, as a class, have lost their interest in the churches, and an attempt was lately made to test the truth of this assertion. In an Eastern city, with a population of a little less than forty thousand, the president and cashier of one of the national banks were requested to furnish a list of the fifty strongest business firms in the city, with the name of the head of each firm. The gentlemen furnishing the list had no knowledge whatever of the use that was to be made of it. In classifying fifty-four names thus given, it was found that there were seven whose relation to the churches was unknown to the gentleman who had obtained the list; six who were not identified with any of them; and forty-one who were all regular attendants upon the churches and generous supporters of their work — the great majority of them communicants. In a Western city of a little more than sixty thousand inhabitants, a similar list of fifty-two names was obtained in the same way; and the analysis showed three whose ecclesiastical standing was unknown; one Jew; six not connected with churches; and forty-two regular church-goers, of whom thirty-one were communicants. These lists were both made up by well-informed and sagacious business men; the cities represented by them are not conspicuously religious communities; and the composition of them gives small color to the notion that the business men of our cities are estranged from the churches. It is astonishing that such a notion should ever have gained currency, in the face of the palpable fact that so much money is contributed every year for the support of the churches and the prosecution of their charitable and missionary enterprises.

It is possible that a fair showing with respect to the business men of other cities might be less favorable than that here presented; but it is almost certain that a complete induction of facts would correct the impression that the churches have lost their hold upon this class of men.

It is true that a comparatively small number of very respectable persons have withdrawn from all connection with the churches, and have shut their minds, in a temper the reverse of scientific, against all ideas and

influences which proceed from this source. But for this, they would be made aware of two facts of which they now seem oblivious: first, that many of the churches are quietly and cautiously adjusting their current teaching to the growing light of the age, so that there is much less repugnance between their doctrines and modern science than is often imagined; second, that they are learning to enter, by a truer sympathy and a more intelligent ministry, into the real life of men, and thus to maintain and strengthen their hold upon the masses of the people. Unquestionably, the "non-church-goer" who started this discussion, and all that class of outside critics to which he belongs, have much to learn respecting the real condition and prospects of the church of Christ in America. If their information were better, their estimates would be more hopeful and their judgments more sympathetic. And they cannot too soon disabuse their minds of the belief that the Christian religion is in its decadence. Such facts as those to which we have referred show its outward growth; but the real signs of its progress cannot be expressed in figures. It is the gospel of the leaven rather than the gospel of the mustard-seed whose triumphs are most signal and most sure. The one grand fact on which defenders of Christianity should rest their case is presented in these words of Canon Fremantle: "The Spirit of Christ is supreme over the whole range of the secular life,—education, trade, literature, art, science, and politics,—and is seen to be practically vindicating this supremacy." If this can be seen, it is worth seeing. No fact could be more significant or more impressive.

OPEN LETTERS.

Matthew Arnold in America.

ONE of the signs that this country has reached its majority—reached it through the ennobling sacrifices of the civil war, which changed our political boyhood into manhood—is the fact that Americans are no longer sensitive to foreign criticism. The nation is too big, prosperous, good-natured to care what Europe thinks. The continent no longer trembles when a distinguished foreign critic sets his foot on it. He is welcome to fill his note-book and go his way; and by and by, when he publishes his "Notes of a Short Journey in the United States," or "Observations on the Social and Political System of American Democracy," we will read his little book, perhaps with amusement, perhaps with profit to ourselves, but certainly without that eager curiosity to know how we look to our visitors that used to possess us in *ante-bellum* days.

Yet the arrival among us of so acute a social observer as Mr. Matthew Arnold deserves a passing notice. I am not going to try to prophesy what Mr. Arnold's experiences here may be, nor to anticipate his judgment of society in the United States. What he thinks of us in a general way we already know from the preface to "Culture and Anarchy," and from his article last year in "The Nineteenth Century," "A Word about America." The opinion there given was evidently quite firmly held, although modestly expressed, and there is little reason to expect that a brief stay in this country will modify it much. But as our critic is always insisting upon the need of a greater flexibility of mind and accessibility to ideas in people of British stock, we may predict that he will in this instance practice that favorite virtue, and hold his opinion subject to some revision. Indeed, he has acknowledged that it is difficult "to speak of a people merely from what one reads."

There are one or two things, however, which, it may with confidence be predicted, he will find here, and will find perhaps worth studying. He will find, for instance, that democracy which he foresees to be inevitable, and that equality which he thinks desirable in modern society. But whether the particular type of democracy and equality which we have developed will seem to him admirable is doubtful. "In America perhaps," he once wrote, "we see the disadvantages of having social equality before there has been any high standard of social life and manners formed." Again, Mr. Arnold has written much and ably on the question of secondary education, and has advocated the establishment in England of higher schools for the instruction of the middle class, which should enjoy state support and supervision like the French *lycées*. He will, therefore, naturally be interested in the public school systems of our cities, and in the state universities of some of our Western States. It is true that he has expressed in advance an unfavorable opinion of our secondary schools, and has intimated that, like the English classical and commercial academies, they have not "a serious programme—a programme really suited to the wants and capacities of those who are to be trained." I venture, however, to express the hope that he will have time to look closer into this matter, and to give us the results of his observations.

Finally, he will find the Philistine here in great rankness and luxuriance; and my chief object in writing this letter is to say why I think that we need not be overmuch disquieted by the presence of the Philistine among us, or by Mr. Arnold's discovery that he exists here in overwhelming numbers and in flagrant type. It is well known that our critic has divided English society into three classes, which he politely names Barbarians, Philistines, and Populace. In America, he tells us, there are no Barbarians and hardly any Populace. The great bulk of the nation consists of the Philistines; a livelier kind of Philistine, he admits, and more accessible to ideas, than his English brother, but left more to himself, and without the social standard furnished by an aristocracy. I believe it was Mr. Arnold who, in his essay on Heine, first imported the word Philistine into English, and he has succeeded in domesticating it by dint of repetition in his later essays. Yet even now it may be doubted whether the great British and American public has any clear notion of