

the respect which their source demands the strictures of Mr. Richardson upon large uses of patented appliances, as, for example, farmers, manufacturers, and railroad companies. His ignorance of the facts should be the excuse for his intemperate language. Given the facts that you cannot lift up your foot and put it down again, or buy the simplest tools the market affords for tilling an acre of ground, or for making the simplest articles of consumption, or drive a nail into a railroad car, without coming against patents and patents; that at least eighty per cent. of all the patents issued are of value to the patentee only as they are used by others; and that more than ninety per centum of the infringements of patents for which claims have been made have been innocent by reason of ignorance on the part of the infringer:—yet you find that

when, after such ignorant use the claim is made, if the alleged infringer has the ability and the disposition to investigate the claim, and under advice of counsel refuses to entertain it, he is classed as a "chicken thief" or a "pickpocket."

The writer gives this public and authoritative statement that the facts in the above case are mild in comparison to those which have characterized each and every one of the claims which have been refused by the members of the Western Railroad Association. It is deeply to be regretted that the people at large, by reason of the great variety in avocations and trades, are not enabled by associations and otherwise to give these claims a just investigation, but are obliged so frequently to be subjected to the black-mailing of "patent sharks," who present frivolous and invalid claims.

TOPICS OF THE TIME.

Religion in These Days.

MAN'S place in nature has never been so sharply and profoundly questioned as it has been during the past ten years. The answer which science presumes to give, when it presumes to give any, is not one which pleases or in any way satisfies itself. "Dust thou art and unto dust shalt thou return." Matter and force have manifested themselves in man, in form and phenomena, and the matter and force which have made man shall at last all be refunded into the common stock, to be used over and over and over again, in other forms and phenomena. There is a body, but there is no such thing as mind, independent of body. The dualism of constitution in which we have believed, and which lies at the basis of all our religion and philosophy, is a delusion. Out of all the enormous expenditure of ingenuity, or of what appears to be, or seems like, ingenuity, nothing is saved. The great field of star-mist out of which our solar system was made has been hardened into planets, set in motion and filled with life, to go on for untold ages, and then to come to an end—possibly to become a field of star-mist again; and nothing is to be saved out of the common fund of matter and force that can go on in an independent, immortal life. Man is simply a higher form of animal. God as a personality does not exist. Immortality is a dream, and the Christian religion, of course, is a delusion.

These conclusions seem to be the best that science can give us. Science believes nothing that it cannot prove. There may be a personal God, who takes cognizance of the personal affairs of men, but science cannot prove it; therefore a belief in a

personal God is "unscientific." There may be such a thing as the human soul—a spirit that has a life, or the possibilities of a life, independent of the body; but it cannot be proved. Indeed, it seems to be proved that all the phenomena of what we call mind are attributable to changes that take place among the molecules of the brain. Therefore, a belief in the human soul is unscientific. Of course, if there is no human soul, there is nothing to save, and if there be nothing to save, Christ was, consciously or unconsciously, an impostor; and the hopes and expectations of all Christendom are vain. And this is the highest conclusion to which science seems to be able to lead us. Can anything be imagined to be more lame and impotent? We should think that every laboratory and every scientific school, and every library and study of a man of science, would seem like a tomb!

That this attitude of prominent men of science toward the great questions that relate to God, immortality, the nature of the human soul and the Christian religion, has sadly shaken the faith of a great multitude, there is no doubt. Society is honey-combed with infidelity. Men stagger in their pulpits with their burden of difficulties and doubts. The theological seminaries have become shaky places, and faith has taken its flight from an uncounted number of souls, leaving them in a darkness and sadness that no words can describe. All this is true. It is so true that tears may well mingle in one's ink as he writes it; but, after all, we have everything left that we have ever possessed. Nothing is proved against our faith. Science has never proved that there is no personal God, no soul, no

immortality, no Christ, and these are matters that we have always taken on faith. Not only this, but they are matters which science is utterly incompetent to handle. They are outside of the domain of science. Science can no more touch them than it can touch anything that it confesses to be "unknowable."

Now, there are several important things that are to be got out of the way before thoughtful Christendom can be induced to give up its faith in a personal God. First, there is the moral nature of man which infallibly recognizes a personal God. A sensitive moral nature and a quickened conscience, whose outcome is a sense of moral responsibility, would be lost in the marvel of their own existence without the certainty of the personal God to whom they owe allegiance. They would have no meaning, no authority, no object, without this certainty. There is also the religious nature of man. Reverence for God, love to God, devotion to God,—all these, actually or potentially, exist in man's nature. They underlie character. They are potent among motives; and if there be no personal God who exists as their legitimate object, what, in the economy of nature, do they mean? There is a question for science to answer that is quite worth its while. Why! a man cannot admit the evidence of design in creation without admitting the existence of a personal God, and when men get so far bankrupt in common sense as to deny the existence of design, are they worth minding?

When we admit the existence of a personal God, the rest all comes. This doctrine lies at the basis of all faith. If there is a great, conscious, spiritual personality in existence, there are likely to be smaller spiritual personalities. If there is a personal God who has begotten a family of children capable of recognizing and loving him, is it probable that he has destined them to annihilation? Is he to get nothing out of this great experiment—to carry nothing over into a higher life? What are the probabilities? And why has he planted this desire for immortality in all nations and races of men—not only the desire but the expectation? The truth is that every unsophisticated man, looking into himself, knows, with the highest degree of moral certainty, that he is a living soul, and that the mind acts upon the brain as often and as powerfully as the brain upon the mind. How often has the brain been paralyzed, and the body been killed by a purely mental impression! Common sense that recognizes all the facts of being and consciousness is a great deal better than science that only recognizes what it can prove.

Admitting the existence of a personal God, and the relations of man to him as they are shown in his moral and religious nature, a revelation in some form becomes probable. Man naturally yearns for this recognition and this light, and is supremely happy when he believes he possesses it. A great number of people, through a great many centuries, have believed in this revelation. They have hugged it to their hearts through days of toil and sorrow, and rested their heads upon it through nights of

weariness and pain. The revelation of God in Christ has done too much for the world to be put aside at the behest of science. If science is right, then Christianity is a falsehood; but did ever falsehood do such work as true Christianity has done? Can a lie transform a base and cruel life into one that is pure and brotherly? Can a lie inspire the heroisms and the sacrifices of self which have illustrated the path and progress of Christianity from the earliest times? Can a lie sweeten sorrow, strengthen weakness, make soft the pillow of death, and irradiate the spirit shutting its eyes upon this world with a joy too great for utterance? This is what Christianity has done in millions and millions of instances. It is busy in its beneficent work of transforming character all over the world to-day. Man of science, what have you to put in its place? The doctrine of a world without a personal God, and a man without a soul! God pity the man of science who believes in nothing but what he can prove by scientific methods! We cannot imagine a sadder or more unfortunate man in the world. God pity him, we say, for if ever a human being needed divine pity he does. An intelligent man, standing in the presence of the Everlasting Father, studying and endeavoring to interpret his works, and refusing to see him, because he cannot bring him into the field of his telescope, or into the range of a "scientific method," is certainly an object to be pitied of angels and of men. The marvel is that in his darkness and his sadness men turn to him for light—turn to a man for light who denies not only God, but the existence of the human soul! Alas! that there should be fools more eminent in their foolishness than he!

Art as a Steady Diet.

THE spread of art and art ideas in this country has been accepted as a sort of new gospel. A new and advanced religion could hardly be welcomed more cordially or hopefully. A fresh significance has been given to life, and in everything—in architecture, in painting, in sculpture, in pottery, in home decoration, in embroidery, and in all the multitudinous ways in which the æsthetic in men and women (especially in women) expresses itself—there has been a great revival, or an absolutely new birth. Partly, this is the result of the Centennial Exhibition, and partly it is the result of a contagion that seems to swim in the universal air. The whole world is growing artistic. The nations are stimulating one another, and exchanging ideas. Our own country, though it has been the last to awaken out of sleep, bids fair to run its new enthusiasm into a craze.

We were about to write that this new enthusiasm had spared neither age nor sex. It has spared no age among women; but where men have felt the new impetus in a considerable degree, women have felt it in a supreme degree. Distinct from the great mass, there are two classes of women who have seized upon the new ideas and new influences to help them out of trouble, viz., those who have nothing to do because they have no physical wants to provide