

for familiar error and to the rejection of known truth.

Years pass, and on the death of Ingersoll, the North American Review (Sept., 1899) reprints his defense of Agnosticism, together with an article by Mr. Field on The Influence of Ingersoll. The erroneous brain record, growing more indelible by unnumbered repetitions, becomes a rut so deep that a stray fact falling into it is lost past all chance of rescue. The disease is real, and as irresistibly progressive as a cancer.

For our present purpose it is only necessary to make one quotation from Mr. Field:

"It is but a few years since Tyndall proudly declared before the British Association that 'in matter would be found the promise and the potency of all life.' What need, then, of a creator over our heads, when we have a creative power under our feet? But, even then, a greater man of science, Lord Kelvin, assured me with a smile, that this ardent explorer would not long adhere to his bold declaration, a prediction that was soon realized. One day, as we were riding over the Berkshire hills, he looked up to the clouds that were floating across the sky, which recalled to him how Pasteur had sent balloons up to a great height above the hoary head of Mont Blanc, and found there such evidences of life as gave a death blow to a theory that had been adopted by the French, to which they had given the pompous name of Spontaneous Generation!"

The great men of science he relies upon are Newton, Faraday and Kelvin. Newton, a Unitarian, therefore not orthodox—lived before Darwin. Faraday, when asked how he reconciled what he knew of science with his theology, said that when he entered his laboratory he left his creed behind, and when he went to church he left science behind. He did not compare them. He had his little theological weed patch fenced against facts. If we are to trust to Mr. Field's memory, it was Tyndall, and not Kelvin, it seems, who, with a smile and his eyes raised to the clouds, based a rejection of the theory of spontaneous generation on the presence of germs high in the air. Tyndall, of all men!

It did not take a Pasteur to discover living microscopic germs in the atmosphere; the height is immaterial, so far as any question raised by Mr. Field goes. But, the question at issue was the conclusion reached by Dr. Bastian that living organisms originate at the present time from not-living matter. Few experienced investigators will claim that it has been proven, or rendered even probable, that living protoplasm did not naturally form millions of years ago, under the then favorable conditions—as

the basis of all living organisms that here exist.

Dr. Bastian had heated in boiling water chemical flasks containing infusions rich in infusorial life. They were hermetically sealed to exclude germs, and after, as he supposed, all life had been destroyed within them, in the course of time living organisms began to grow in some of the flasks. These facts he held supported the idea that life now originated according to the hypothesis of abiogenesis.

The experiments were gone over by Pasteur, Dallinger, Drysdale and others, and it was found that when heat was raised to a higher point than the boiling point of water, a larger percentage of the flasks remained sterile. Finally a degree was reached above which all were sterile. Every housewife is familiar with the principle in canning fruit.

The man with the fixed theological mind, when "riding over the Berkshire hills," got live germs "above the hoary head of Mont Blanc" mixed up with boiled ones in turnip water sealed tightly in glass flasks in the laboratory of a chemist. He utterly fails to grasp the real significance of the experiments. The flask experiments left the theory of present spontaneous generation not proven; the renewed interest in air germs led to a number of interesting and most valuable discoveries relating to germ diseases.

It takes a lively imagination, possessing much orthodox spirituality, an attribute of a theological mind, to detect any considerable degree of parallelism between the conditions obtaining in these tight flasks and those which in all probability prevailed in the free and boundless universe when protoplasm first formed on the new earth—a planet and all its molecules thrilling and vibrating in instant response to innumerable forms of energy.

Muskegon Heights, Mich.

President J. E. Hosmer.

When we were making up our minds to come to Oregon to take part in the Liberal University, we had no little anxiety about the position that Mr. and Mrs. Hosmer held and were expected to hold in the University. We had been told that there was some opposition to him, that he had been a Methodist minister, who had suddenly changed to a kind of half intelligent Liberal; and then started the idea of a Liberal school or University for his profit or livelihood, when he was not fitted by his learning, or his experience in Liberalism to become the head of any such undertaking; that he was opposed to the American Secular Union; had opposed the joining of the Oregon Secular Union

to it as an auxiliary; and had said at the last Oregon Secular Union Convention that the president (Mr. Remsburg) and the secretary (Mr. Reichwald) of the National Secular Union, were "Free-lovers."

From the statements of reliable persons we were convinced that there must be some misapprehension about these statements; and so, among other things, we were determined to keep still, and find out the truth when we arrived on the ground. We have taken the time and pains to do so, and find that the statements above made are not true.

Mr. Hosmer was not a Methodist minister, nor a minister at all. He made no sudden change to Liberalism, but was fairly educated into it while teaching school and pursuing his studies. When he became a Liberal there was nothing more right or natural than that he should head a Liberal school. When he was fairly successful in that, there was nothing more right or natural than that he should wish to see Liberal education in its higher branches opened up to Liberals; and so he proposed to have his school developed into a University, and have the Secular Union of Oregon father and help the enterprise. When it was found that the Secular Union as a propaganda organization could not properly and effectively run a school or University, they were separated for the benefit of both. The Liberal University, Oregon, with its fine building, now nearing completion, and fifty students as the result of his labors and his co-workers, especially Mrs. Hosmer and Mr. Geer, are the result—a result that speaks for itself.

As to his fitness for manager and active president of the University, all doubt was dispelled the first day we saw him take hold at its opening and arrange its classes, program and routine. We saw at the start that he was a natural born teacher, and had learned his business well.

As to his learning, we find that he is well up and thorough in English branches, Mathematics and Physical Sciences. We find that he is generally respected by those who have known him long, for his ability, honesty and enthusiasm as a Liberal. He has lectured at Portland and other places as a lecturer authorized by the Secular Union of Oregon, and is a constructive Liberal of the same general views as I have been expounding for years. The students have such confidence in, and respect for him, that discipline, or rather order, is a matter of course.

He is not opposed to the National Secular Union, and never has been. Notice his editorial on its next Congress and Call, in this paper. He voted in the convention for the Oregon Secular Union to join the American Secular Union as an auxiliary, and spoke in favor

of so doing. Nor did he do this to be with the majority, for the convention was about evenly divided on the question, and it was in doubt when he spoke and voted.

In his remarks on this subject, he stated both sides of the question, and in stating the opposition side he referred to what he had heard as fact—that free-love influences had been influential hitherto in the American Secular Union, which he regretted, but said that if so, the only remedy was to join the Union, for that was the only way to have any influence in it. During this discussion it has been said that he called Mr. Reichwald and Mr. Remsburg free lovers. He has always emphatically denied that he ever so said. On the contrary, when asked during that discussion if he referred to those gentlemen and Miss Wixon and T. B. Wakeman as free lovers, he said, by no means, and that he held them all in the highest respect. It seems that some one misunderstood what had been said and wrote to Mr. Reichwald, that Mr. Hosmer had called him and Mr. Remsburg free lovers. Mr. Reichwald was indignant, and resented it. As soon as Mr. Hosmer heard of this he wrote a letter to Mr. Reichwald denying that he had said anything of the kind, and said, because it was obstructive to Liberal work, "let it pass". Mr. Reichwald seems to have taken these words, "let it pass," as a "confession", which was an entire misapprehension, for the "it" referred to this false report, which had been expressly denied in the first part of the same letter. Yet this false report and imagined "confession" has been circulated as if to injure Mr. Hosmer and the University. This report and "confession" are both misapprehensions and totally untrue. I have seen the letters of those who were at the convention, and heard the statements of many of those present since I came west. They all concur that Mr. Hosmer's statements were such as I have above condensed; that instead of stating that the gentlemen named were free lovers, in reply to a question, he said the contrary. He never had any reason to think or say otherwise, and regards the report as so contrary to his appreciation of those noble workers in the Liberal cause that he will not spend time in hunting down a false and foolish story—further than to deny it as soon as he heard of it, and say "let it pass". I do the same, and would not have referred to it at all if it had not been circulated as a reflection upon the gentlemen referred to, and an injury to the Liberal cause.

Prof. Hosmer has not seen this letter and knows nothing of its contents.

T. B. WAKEMAN.
Silvertown, Ore., Oct. 9, 1899.