

travelling at the same rate from the nearest fixed star, how far is that star from the earth, reckoning 365 days and 6 hours to each year, and 28 days to each month?—Answer, 40,633,740,000,000 miles."

To one of the questions, the following note is appended:—

"The proposer observed that the answer was not correct; the boy said it was, and requested the proposer to work his sum over again. During the operation, George said he was certain he was right, for he had worked it in another way, and before the proposer found that he was wrong, and that the boy was right, the latter told the company that he had calculated it by a third mode!—W. SAINT, Norwich."

I will give only one other example:—"A gentleman in London inquired of George how many bulls' tails would reach to the moon. He immediately answered, 'One,—if it was long enough!'"

In a recent article in the *Spectator*, it was implied that the powers of Bidder were undoubtedly surpassed by those of Zerah Colburn or Colborne. The following extract from the pamphlet goes to show that the contrary was the case:—

EXTRACT FROM A LONDON MORNING PAPER.—"A few days since, a meeting took place between the Devonshire youth, George Bidder, and the American youth, Zerah Colborne, before a party of gentlemen, to ascertain their calculating comprehensions. The Devonshire boy having answered a variety of questions in a satisfactory way, a gentleman proposed one to Zerah Colborne, viz.,—If the globe is 24,912 miles in circumference, and a balloon travels 3,878 feet in a minute, how long would it be in travelling round the world? After nine minutes' consideration, he felt himself incompetent to give the answer. The same question being given to the Devonshire boy, the answer he returned in two minutes, viz.,—23 days, 13 hours, 18 min., was received with marks of great applause. Many other questions were proposed to the American boy, all of which he refused answering, while young Bidder readily replied to all. A handsome subscription was collected for the Devonshire youth."

If I am not trespassing unduly on your space, I should like to conclude with one other amusing extract:—

IMPROMPTU.—Addressed to the wonderful phenomenon of England, on witnessing his astonishing, accurate, and almost instantaneous mental calculation:—

'Aethalides' great powers you boast,
And were the Muse of Numbers lost,
I'd vow where Jove had hid her;
Were such numeric talents sold,
Had I a mine of paltry gold,
I would become a Bidder.'

February 13th, 1816.

J. T. B.

—I am, Sir, &c.,

Shelton, Stoke-on-Trent.

CHARLES M. OSMOND.

LEO XIII. ON REBELLION.

[TO THE EDITOR OF THE "SPECTATOR."]

SIR,—Mr. Archer Gurney thinks that the Pope is endeavouring "to advance in the direction of true order and liberty;" and you call the Encyclical "a very sensible sort of document." As the text was not, I believe, published in England until last Friday, you may not have had time for its full consideration; and I still hope to see this view replaced by a very different one, in next week's *Spectator*. To me, Leo's last move seems a bid for alliance with the Princes against the people,—a proposed scheme for the repression of aspirations which are inconvenient to the Vatican and the Palaces.

I am neither Socialist, Communist, nor Nihilist, so far as I understand the current definitions of those rather vague terms; but I cannot regard a hand-shaking by Leo and Bismarck, across the scourged backs of the Socialists, as "an advance of great promise."—I am, Sir, &c.,

Epsom, January 18th.

M. W. M.

[TO THE EDITOR OF THE "SPECTATOR."]

SIR,—Permit me to remark that the Pope, whose teaching in the recent Encyclical is, as you observe, "rather Conservative," holds the doctrine about rebellion which is held by the great majority of Catholic divines. There are some, however, of great authority, whose teaching is a little different. I do not know that you can make much of the "Irish Rebellion of 1848." Its area was so limited that it could not fairly be called an Irish movement, in the sense that the people of Ireland generally took part in it. There were Catholics engaged in it, no doubt; but I hardly think that any of them, *qua* Catholic, could be described as "admirable." Very few prominent ecclesiastics (certainly no Bishop) manifested any sympathy with them. Father Kenyon, of Templeberry, is said to have shut his door upon those whom his writings were thought to have stirred into action, when they were outlaws and fugitives.

I must say, in candour, at the same time, that your remark about "Catholic rebellions" seems very apposite to the case of Belgium. Most of us have seen the monument to Count de

Mérode, in the Church of Ste. Gudule, at Brussels. I doubt whether Mgr. Pecci, when Nuncio in that capital, would have expressed to members of the De Mérode family precisely the same opinions as Leo XIII. now teaches. This is by no means to be taken as implying that Leo XIII. is wrong, or that I think him so.—I am, Sir, &c.,

VITAM IMPENDERE VERO.

FATE AND FREE-WILL.

[TO THE EDITOR OF THE "SPECTATOR."]

SIR,—Is it against your rules to allow a brief comment on "J. W.'s" forcible argument for Free-will, in the second part of his most interesting dialogue? "Theletes" says:—"I feel, when I have done wrong, that I have done something I could have avoided,—the accusation of conscience directed against that which I mean when I speak of myself." Admirably stated, first expressing our *sense* of freedom in choosing, and then giving the interpretation of that sense, namely (in the case of wrong-doing), the moral reproach against the *self* as agent. Now, I say that all the *Determinist* theory is therein contained. The reproach is ultimately against the *agent*. The agent gives rise to the act of choice, not the act to the agent; the act flows from, presupposes and is the evidence of, the character of the agent. We reproach ourselves for *being* such agents as to choose the good so feebly, or the bad so readily. We accept the responsibility of what we *are*, as evidenced by what we choose; and in this, our moral responsibility consists. But the theory that the moral validity of this reproach depends solely on the *power* of the agent to choose otherwise than he does choose, and not on the character of the agent choosing,—this, which is the Free-will theory, supposes that the act gives rise to the agent, inasmuch as it supposes that the act gives character to an otherwise characterless agent. For if the act neither determined nor was determined by the character of the agent, it would have no connection with it, and would not be the agent's act at all. On this theory, therefore, there must be a perfectly "free" act, before the agent has any moral character at all, which is a *hysteron-proteron*, contravening the old-established maxim of good-sense,—*Operari sequitur esse*.

Now, once suppose an agent with a character performing the act of choice, and the act is no longer "free," but necessarily determined by the agent's character. In other words, an act perfectly free would be an act flowing from a perfectly characterless agent, which is a non-entity. Therefore, no act is perfectly free. An agent may be free,—namely, from external influence, but not free from his own nature and character. His freest acts are those which are determined solely by himself.

When, therefore, in retrospect, the agent says unconditionally, "I could have done otherwise," he is mentally putting himself back into the moment of actual choice, the position in which he had the *sense* of freedom above described and interpreted. And he is not warranted in converting, in the retrospect, that *sense* of freedom into a supposed *fact* of freedom from the influence of his own character. The whole validity of moral responsibility depends on the necessary connection between the character of the agent and the character of his act.—I am, Sir, &c.,

January 20th.

SHADWORTH H. HODGSON.

[Mr. Hodgson makes "the whole validity of moral responsibility" consist in the necessary connection between the character and the act which proceeds from it,—in other words, he makes a plant validly responsible for the nature of its blossoms and seeds. This is turning language upside down. As we have admitted into our columns a dialogue the tendency of which is to the Free-will conclusion, we think it only fair to admit one reply from a thinker as distinguished as Mr. Shadworth Hodgson; but we must decline to open our columns further, to a controversy on the interminable argument between Necessity and Free-will.—Ed. *Spectator*.]

A CORRECTION.

[TO THE EDITOR OF THE "SPECTATOR."]

SIR,—Will you permit me to correct a slight inaccuracy in the review of "The Garden at Monkholme," which appeared in the *Spectator* of January 11th? It is there implied that Mr. Donaldson was a lawyer, and that a (supposed) legal opinion is hazarded on the discovered will.

Mr. Donaldson was merely trustee and friend of the testator, and explains:—"I missed seeing the only solicitor within a convenient distance, and returned home without having ascertained anything at all." So that the personages acted in an emergency, on their own unqualified judgment of a legal difficulty. With