

field of politics at all. But it is in this contest for the triumph of the good over the bad, and will stay in, fighting on the right side all the time, to the finish.

### BJORNSON AND RUSSIA.

Bjornstjerne Bjornson, the Norwegian radical agitator, in an article in *Verdens Gang*, endeavors to show that the Scandinavian countries need not fear any aggressive steps on the part of Russia. He looks upon the military preparations in Sweden as dictated by fear of the gigantic neighbor in the east, and says such fear is not warranted by facts.

Bjornson never did excel as a practical statesman or politician, and his article in the paper mentioned is another illustration of his ability as such. As soon as Russia sits on the Balkan peninsula, he says, four great powers will resist her, and if she makes any hostile movements in the north she will not be better off. And then, he thinks, even if she should conquer the Scandinavian peninsula, this would be a dangerous acquisition, leaving the western boundary line far more exposed to internal plots and external attacks than at present. But he forgets that the four great powers he refers to only resist Russia when that country draws dangerously near their own particular interests. They are not known to go out and champion the cause of any small nation merely for the sake of a principle. Europe did not stir when Prussia invaded Denmark and almost cut her in two, nor did the continent interfere when the German arms pierced France to the very heart. There may be reasons for supposing that Europe should go to the enormous expense of preventing the Muscovites from establishing a "protectorate" over Norway, but at the same time the history of this century has shown that it is not safe for the smaller powers to rely on their big allies in cases of emergency. Bjornson knows this too, but it may be that his object only is to encourage his party in the attempt to effect a dissolution of the Scandinavian union by inspiring them with the confidence that there is nothing to fear from Russia. His opponents have before suspected him of being intimate with the advisers of the Czar, and his latest article is not calculated to allay that suspicion.

### AN INFIDEL'S "REASONING."

A recent number of the *New York World* contains an interview by Arthur Brisbane of Col. R. G. Ingersoll, in which so much that is characteristic of the great infidel appears that it justifies the expenditure of a few words of review. He is as plausible and shifting as ever, giving deductions based upon nothing but a most perverse and fantastic will, and to those who are not addicted to profound reasoning and prefer superficial conclusions, the interview would doubtless be looked upon as a casket of polemical gems. He announces that man's chief concern is with himself, which the interviewer pronounces Buddhistic, but it is not;

it is a truism and the most rational statement in the entire article, though the inaccuracy of it is so apparent that the force it would otherwise have is spent beforehand.

Of the immortality of the soul Ingersoll speaks with a slight uncertainty, doubtless due to the inborn and universal longing for life hereafter. He has no serious belief or interest in it, if the interviewer interprets what he said accurately. "Once," he said, "I had no existence. Now I am. In a short time I shall exist no longer. When that time comes, it will be just as extraordinary to reflect that I once did exist as it would be to believe in the possibility of my existing again." Which is a more intellectual version of the negro preacher's statement during camp meeting services: "If dese gemmen what is in de front seats would set down, dem as is in de back seats would set down too, 'cause dey wouldn't have to stand up to see over dem as ain't stan' in' up." It belongs in that class of statements known as salivete and as such is altogether beneath the technologist's plane of controversy. An innocent fact is sometimes more damaging than a ponderous falsehood, because of the lack of argumentative skill which it imparts, and this is even such a case.

The colonel seeks to dispose of the matter at one stroke in the following: "I do not occupy my mind with useless discussion or speculation as to origin or destiny. Between these two horizons there is plenty of work for man's intellect." Exactly so! And within the boundaries of the United States are all the materials needed to keep the mind of man energetically employed—nervously active—from the cradle to the grave. If it is only materials to work on that are desired, why leave a field that furnishes an abundance merely to go to another or to others that could only prove an enlargement of the territory devoted to mental exercises? By remaining within prescribed limits, that which is learned will be more thoroughly learned in all probability; whereas by going further we only burden ourselves unnecessarily and make it more likely that the work will not be so complete. That is about the logic of the situation practically applied. Don't seek to go beyond the visible horizon, for it doesn't pay. You will not then, of course, know that there is a Great Britain teeming with grand cities, magnificent enterprises, wonderful resources and historic races equal to any in all our own field in point of learning, civilization, advancement and culture, and greatly superior in numbers and aggregated wealth; will fail to learn about a nation elevated to the zenith of mundane glory through the prowess and skill of its soldiers and the genius and learning of its men of science—a nation that gave birth to at least two of the infidel's idols of modern times, Voltaire and Renan; will not be informed that a European confederation was formed of sufficient power and valor to overthrow the nation last spoken of and dissipate its theretofore unbroken prestige almost in the twinkling of an eye; the facts that the land we are on is but a small fragment of a great

globe whose path through space is as well defined and unchangeable as any that is laid with iron bands, that the globe is but one of many similarly propelled through space, and these all but so many grains of sand upon the shores of infinity—all this will not be known because it is unnecessary, because it does not come within our horizon, because it is diverting the mind from the things immediately surrounding us and which we can never exhaust as a source of information. Queer reasoning this, even for a materialist and disbeliever; yet it is but a corollary of what he actually does advance—that between birth and death there is enough to keep the mind employed without going back of the one or ahead of the other. In a word we should, according to the Ingersollian creed, deal only with purely temporal and physically tangible things. Even Voltaire would not thus be bound up intellectually, and Columbus revolted at such limitation by mind and movement as well.

Of course the interview would not be satisfying to those readers who admire Col. Ingersoll's secular methods if it contained no allusion to divinity. Purely secular "reasoning" must be seasoned with a dash of blasphemy or the dish is not so palatable. This is not wanting, and the following is a fair sample of many more such: "There may be one God or there may be a million, but if there is a God, I know he is crazy." The means by which such "knowledge" is gained are not given, probably for the reason that an atheist is of necessity an egotist and his opinions or what he gives out as such are all that he thinks the common herd should require; or it may be he thinks there is no need to give reasons, for those who accept implicitly the statements made do not require—would rather not have—any, and the other kind could not be convinced by any that he has the ability to offer.

Ingersoll adds nothing to his credited stock of intelligence by his latest contribution. As he advances in years he seems to grow in impudence. Unfortunately for him, the scoffs and sneers with which he once gave novelty to his diatribes are now too vacant and pointless to excite even passing attention. The Word of God has lived in strength and beauty during the centuries, and is today as full of life and satisfaction as ever; while the dull reasoning of the agnostic rarely survives his own existence, and, in the present instance, almost moulders on his very lips. In this one fact there is a suggestion that would carry convincing force to anyone except a short-sighted egotist or a stubborn knave.

### THE TYPE-SETTING MACHINE.

Type-setting by hand is rapidly going the way of the spinning wheel, the stage coach and the hand press—to the rear. Machines capable of setting three or four times as much matter within a given period as the most skilled compositor is capable of are now in use in nearly all the larger newspaper establishments of the East and are gradually finding their way throughout the West. In this city one