

lects resign themselves to admitting miracle in antiquity. Tales that would raise a smile if they were related as contemporary, pass muster in virtue of the enchantment lent by distance. It seems to be tacitly admitted that *primitive humanity* lived under natural laws *different from our own.*"

The two periods of the human understanding, that of the surroundings and *milieu* of early Christianity, and the dawn of the twentieth century of our era, differ *longo intervallo*. This is the *most reflective critical* epoch that the world has yet known. Emerson as long ago as 1841 said: "Would we be blind? Do we fear lest we should outsee nature and God, and drink truth dry? Everything *tilts* and *rocks*. Even the *scholar* is searched. Is he living in his memory?"

What the world is athirst for is a new and adequate definition of *Religion* and of the *Supernatural*.

Since the publication of *The Origin of Species* in 1859, and the vast erudition lavished upon the critical exegesis of the Hebrew and Christian Scriptures, the old primitive naïve statements do not satisfy us. The old supernaturalism of miraculous births, resurrections, and ascensions does not harmonise with the rest of our knowledge,—it is all so *incongruous*, so obsolete, so outworn,—in short, belongs to an entirely different and primitive period.

As the great French critic again declares: "In fact, the defect of the critical system of the supernaturalists is to judge all the periods of the human understanding by the same tests."

To whom then should we naturally turn for more light? To the scholars among the clergy. I was much struck recently with the concluding appeal of Bishop Potter in his address to the students of the University of Pennsylvania: 'And never more than now therefore* does the land wait for scholars,—scholars who shall be thinkers and seers, too, eager to find the truth, willing to own and follow it when it is discovered, and then with fearless note to tell it out to all mankind.'

But have the clergy a real passion for truth? Do they come under Emerson's saying, "that he who reads all books can read any book"? The gentle Amiel said of them: "It is all a *parti-pris*, the *unknown* is taken as *known*, and all the rest proved from it." If you have a *supernatural revelation* of the most momentous truths, where is the opportunity for critical and historical research? You surely cannot bandy questions over the word of God!

Bacon said that "the unforced opinions of young men were the best materials for prophecy." Now I should like to put such a book as Mr. John M. Robertson's *Christianity and Mythology* into the hands of a young theological student. Mr. Robertson's thesis is to prove that "the legend of Christianity can be demonstrably shown to be a patchwork of pagan myths and rituals." This is the great and momentous question of the opening century: "Is Christianity a patchwork of pagan myths and rituals?" *Qu'en dit l'Abbé?*

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BOOK REVIEWS AND NOTES.

THE CURIOUS CASE OF GEN. DELANEY SMYTHE. By Lt.-Col. W. H. Gardner, U. S. A., retired. The Abbey Press, publisher, 114 Fifth ave., New York.

Of the many works of fiction recently issued *The Curious Case of General Delaney Smythe* is quite unique. It is a medico-legal detective story. The plot

and interest of the story turn upon the mysterious disappearance of the hero, and the trial and conviction of his servant and friend for his murder. The blood of a pointer causes the incrimination of an innocent man, and it is only by the unexpected revelation of clairvoyance that the situation is cleared and the plot carried to a fortunate issue.

The interest of the story is kept up to the last page. The court scenes are graphically portrayed and the illustrations also are good.

The author, Lt.-Col. Gardner, who has spent thirty-seven years of his life as a surgeon in the army, will be remembered by the readers of *The Open Court*, to which he has been a contributor. Another article entitled "An Evening with the Spiritualists" may soon be expected from his pen.

Devil Tales, by Mrs. Virginia Frazer Boyle,¹ is a collection of Negro stories, which are interesting as a psychological picture of the Negro of the past, and, to a great extent, still of the present. It is time now to reduce these strange fancies of folklore of the American Africans to writing, for they will soon be lost forever. With the progress of civilisation, the Negro forgets his traditions, his devil-fear and the stories of his experiences with ghost and goblin; and the Mammies of to-day grow prosaic as they become ashamed of their old superstitions.

The source of Miss Boyle's *Devil Tales* must have been an old Mammy of the classical type of ancient slave days, a type which exists still, though as an exception only and is now fast dying out. It is evident from their literary finish that our authoress has improved the tales of her old nurse, but in doing so, she has remained faithful to her task and has succeeded in preserving the characteristic traits of Negro psychology. The sentiments and notions portrayed in the *Devil Tales* are genuine, and as such they possess a value quite apart from their literary merits.

The Augustana College, of Rock Island, Ills., has issued an interesting illustrated pamphlet describing *An Old Indian Village*, by Prof. Johan August Udden, who, while engaged as an instructor in Lindsborg, Kas., in 1881, had his attention called to some mounds south of the Smoky Hill River, where various antiquities had been picked up by the settlers. He visited the locality, saw that it gave promise of interesting finds of aboriginal relics, and for seven years afterwards directed the collection of the archæologic remains that were discovered. Professor Udden believes that the mounds and the relics in question are of more than passing interest, and he has therefore briefly and popularly described them in the present pamphlet, using in nearly all cases good photographic reproductions. The relics consist of articles and instruments made from bone and shell, primitive pottery, flint scrapers, knives, arrow-points, spear-heads, awls, drills, leaf-flints, tomahawks, hand hammers, grind-stones, arrow-smootheners, catlinite pipes, etc. The most interesting relic, however, is a piece of chain mail of undoubted European origin, which is of interest as showing an early presence in the interior of some European explorers and which is conjectured to be an old relic from the expedition of Coronado, in 1542.

¹ New York and London: Harper & Brothers. 1900. Pages, xii, 217.