

It was in just those years of police dullness that liberty was born in the mind of the German public; while history was still, the people had time to think, and the revolution of 1848 followed naturally in the wake of a government which thought that benevolent despotism would reconcile a cultivated people for the loss of civil rights.

The history of Europe in the first half of the nineteenth century is one of the most suggestive studies we know of,—principally because questions of administration are so constantly discussed,—because the public mind of Europe is constantly debating the relative merits of republican and monarchical methods. Monarchy had triumphed in appearance,—but in reality its triumph had been purchased at the price of a substantial concession to the spirit of civil liberty.

Europe and America had little to say to each other in those days. In 1818 Spain sought to secure the aid of the Holy Alliance for the purpose of bringing pressure upon the Government of the United States, to prevent us from recognising the independence of the Spanish American republics, but in general Europe little dreamed that across the Atlantic was growing up a vast republican empire which was to serve not merely as a refuge to millions of oppressed subjects but to become in time a force with which every European power would have to reckon sooner or later, whether it wished to or not.

There is no romance like history, if you learn to read between the lines,—and therefore we render this tribute to Alfred Stern.

POULTNEY BIGELOW.

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### SOME RECENT FRENCH BOOKS ON PHILOSOPHY.

We have recently received from the large publishing house of Félix Alcan, of Paris, several books on philosophy which may contain materials of interest to our readers. The first is by M. Albert Leclère, professor of philosophy in the College of Blois, and is entitled: *Essai critique sur le droit d'affirmer*.<sup>1</sup> The book, which is of course not one intended for unlearned philosophical readers, is an attempt to establish a critical but dogmatic system of metaphysics on the basis of logic alone, by the use of the principle of identity. The author has modernised the doctrine of Parmenides and enumerated all the contradictions inherent in the idea of phenomena and in science considered as a knowledge of objective reality. He has drawn up in this manner a sketch of a system of metaphysics absolutely distinct from science,—a spiritualistic metaphysics which he contends yields directly a system of formal ethics and reconciles all the disagreements of philosophy, science, and religion.

The second work is by the well-known author, M. Félix Le Dantec, lecturer on embryology in the Sorbonne, Paris, and is entitled: *L'unité dans l'être vivant: Essai d'une biologie chimique*.<sup>2</sup> M. Le Dantec has made a considerable name for himself by his researches in chemical biology, which he has endeavored to raise to the rank of an exact science, eschewing all such theories as those of Weismann, which he claims are now discredited, and developing biological laws from the known facts of physics and chemistry. He remarks that if we were called upon to choose between two astronomies, one assuming the single but comprehensive principle of Newton and the other attributing to each planet the specific property of

<sup>1</sup> Pages, 263. Price, 5 francs.

<sup>2</sup> Pages, 412. Price, 7 francs 50.

performing the precise movements that it does perform, we should not hesitate to accept the first system of astronomy as the only one laying claim to the title of genuineness. Yet the world has accorded many favors to theories of the type of Weismannism, which, with its specific properties inherent in every single biological element, stands on the same plane with the above fictitious theory of astronomy. M. Le Dantec has certainly set himself a high scientific ideal in his labors, and if he can substantiate such contentions as that in which he declares that there actually exists a relation between chemical composition and specific form, his labors will have advanced the theory of biological explanation greatly.

Dr. Ermanno Giglio-Tos, of the University of Turin, in his *Les problèmes de la vie*,<sup>1</sup> a work written in French, has set himself a similar problem to that of M. Le Dantec, namely: the resolution of the problems of life from the point of view of the natural sciences. He claims that speculative biology has been tending fatally and exclusively toward teleology, and he is desirous of diverting it again into the paths of genuine positive science. He believes that the solution of the subtlest biological problems is in need of no hypothesis of special forces, but that the application of the general principles of the phenomena of inanimate matter are sufficient to explain the fundamental manifestations of life; he will have nothing to do with special biological hypotheses or with mysterious forces. The marvellous phenomena of life are, in his doctrine, the natural consequences only of chemical, physical, and mechanical phenomena, and their nature is far simpler than we imagine. Simple causes can produce phenomena of extraordinary complexity, and so it is with the phenomena of life. The developments of Dr. Giglio-Tos have taken a mathematical and physical form which will make a strange impression upon the majority of biologists. The present volume is but the first part of a general work of which the second will be devoted to ontogenesis and its problems.

The third volume from the press of M. Alcan, above referred to, is *Le problème de la vie*,<sup>2</sup> by M. Louis Bourdeau. The author has attempted to answer in this work questions concerning the nature of life, our whence and whither, the reasons for existence, etc., etc. He not long since published a work on the *Problem of Death*. His present effort is designed to be complementary to the discussions pursued in the former work. He believes that the import of these questions has been greatly slurred and obscured by metaphysics and religion, and that in the present age of critical reflection science alone should approach these problems. True religion, without any other revelation than the progress of positive knowledge, and any other miracle than the absence of miracle, is in duty bound to be scientific, just as true science is in duty bound to be genuinely religious.

Alcan has also issued a work by M. Renouvier, treating of the first principles of philosophy and entitled *The Dilemmas of Pure Metaphysics*. This book contains the gist of M. Renouvier's thought, which is the most important contribution that France has latterly made to pure metaphysics; but we shall forego entering into details here, as M. Arréat has exhaustively considered M. Renouvier's system in the present number of *The Monist*. (Paris: F. Alcan. Pp. 288. Price, 5 francs.)

Dr. M. V. Bernies is a Catholic scholar of learning and ability, and in his book, *Spiritualité et immortalité*,<sup>3</sup> he has treated the problems of death and immortality with much fervor and elegance of literary form. He has also given his

<sup>1</sup> Turin: Chez l'Auteur-Palais Carignano. Pages, viii, 286. Price, 10 francs.

<sup>2</sup> Pages, xi, 372. Price, 7 francs 50.

<sup>3</sup> Paris: Librairie B. Bloud. 1901. Pages, vii, 489. Price, 5 francs.

labors a scientific coloring, and has consulted and critically discussed the psychological and metaphysical literature of our day bearing on his topic. He is especially concerned with the metaphysical proof of immortality from spirituality, and believes that in the belief in life eternal we have not an affair of sentiment, but one that admits of sound metaphysical demonstration. He has accordingly proceeded psychologically and philosophically to establish that proof. The manifestations of our intellectual and voluntary activity are spiritual; therefore, the ultimate source of these operations is likewise spiritual; these are the phenomena, and consequently they presuppose a substance; whence follows the reality of a spiritual substance, of an indestructible and necessarily immortal self. His argument is founded upon the psychological study of the nature of human thought and the ego. Teleology is invoked only as the complement of the metaphysical proof. *μ.*

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### THE DESTRUCTION OF ANCIENT ROME.

At the southern extremity of the famed Palatine hill in Rome may still be seen the remains of the magnificent palace of the Emperor Septimius Severus towering in reminiscence of its ancient grandeur some 160 feet above the level of the modern streets. By measurements made to-day and compared with the descriptions and drawings of those who saw the Palatine in a better state of preservation, it has been estimated by archæologists that the original palace was 490 feet long, 390 feet wide, and 160 feet high. To-day it has almost completely disappeared, and only a few pieces of crumbling wall are left here and there against the cliff to tell the tale. "Who broke up and removed, bit by bit, that mountain of masonry? Who overthrew the giant? Was it age, the elements, the hand of barbarians, or some other irresistible force the action of which has escaped observation?" Who were, in fact, the destroyers of Ancient Rome?

Such is the fascinating question that Dr. Rodolfo Lanciani has asked in his work *The Destruction of Ancient Rome*,<sup>1</sup> and it is a question that he has answered in so interesting a manner that few who take up his book will lay it down without thorough perusal.

Let us endeavor to grasp the meaning of what the destruction and disappearance of the monuments of ancient Rome meant. The Circus Maximus was so large that it is said to have been capable of accommodating 485,000 spectators, and when Trajan gave up to the people his own imperial balcony its space was increased by 5,000 seats. Even the lowest and chariest limit assigned by archæologists to the seating capacity of the Circus is 150,000 spectators, and taking this lowest limit as our standard and allowing to each spectator an average space of only 20 inches, there must have been in the Circus Maximus more than 250,000 running feet of stone and marble benches. Yet, "not a fragment has come down to us, and we are left in complete ignorance as to the way in which so great a mass of solid masonry has disappeared."

Near the Pantheon of Agrippa in ancient Rome, there was once a famous colonnade; it disappeared; its site was unknown until 1891, when a marble capital of so great mass was discovered that the excavators were obliged to abandon it where it lay, on account of the danger of undermining the neighboring houses. Four of these capitals were discovered belonging to a colonnade shown to be more than 300

<sup>1</sup> *The Destruction of Ancient Rome.* By Dr. Rodolfo Lanciani, Professor of Ancient Topography in the University of Rome. New York: The Macmillan Co. Pages, xv, 279. Price, \$1.50.