

MISCELLANEOUS.

THE DARWIN AND LINCOLN CENTENNIAL.

The fact that Lincoln's birthday, February 12th, is also the anniversary of Darwin's birth, has come to receive almost universal recognition at the annual celebration of the national holiday, and in Europe of course the day is associated with the great Evolutionist rather than with the Liberator. This year, however, the date is of especial interest as it marks the centenary of the birth of both great men. It is only fitting that advantage should be taken of this opportunity to commemorate in some worthy and conspicuous manner the great services they have rendered mankind. Great preparations have long been making for the celebration of the Lincoln centennial. These are most prominent among the schools but not limited to them, since throughout Illinois and in the larger cities of many other states a period of from four days to a week is being set aside to do honor to the memory of the martyr hero. Darwin's centennial will be celebrated more quietly but very generally in scientific circles, the largest public demonstration taking place in Cambridge, England, about the middle of June. Efforts will be made to have scientific work in biological and evolutionary lines assume a commemorative aspect in some permanent way. The Open Court Publishing Company will issue an English translation of Hugo de Vries's *Mutationstheorie*, the first volume of which at least will appear by the time of the Cambridge celebration. Nothing could serve more fittingly as a memorial to the immortal scientist than this record of the continuation of his work as it has been carried on by the man who, more than any other naturalist, has succeeded in furthering the end towards which Darwin himself labored.

The portrait here reproduced represents Darwin in the prime of his life, at the time when he was writing his first works and before he became widely known. The original photograph was a gift from Darwin to Mr. Victor J. Carus, the young Leipsic zoologist who was then engaged in translating the English scientist's earlier works into German. We know of no other copy of this photograph now in existence outside of the circle of Darwin's immediate family, and we are sure that the portrait will be of unusual interest to the readers of *The Open Court* since it gives a somewhat unfamiliar phase of a famous personality.



DARWIN IN HIS PRIME.

MR. LEUBUSCHER'S STATEMENT CONCERNING DE MEDICI.*

To the Editor of The Open Court:

I thank you for your friendly letter of the 16th inst. The duplicate of your article on Dr. De Medici came in a later mail.

Every mathematician that sneers at Dr. De Medici as a good draftsman and arithmetician; that declines to unbend his gentlemanly dignity sufficiently to construct the diagrams required by the Doctor's exposition; that shuts his eyes with muscular force to the demonstration by which surds are transformed into solvents so as to make them aliquot divisors; every such mathematician, I say, as well as those that believe that because a problem has been found insoluble by all known methods after thousands of years, it must, perforce, be insoluble forever, that no new method can possibly be found with which to tackle the problem (for all the world as the Ptolemaic astronomers claimed before the advent of Copernicus),—all of such "cathologic" mathematicians will find in your article the verdict of common sense.

But you must admit that the verdict of common sense is often found by science to be just the inverse to the truth. Take the common sense verdict of the relations of the sun and earth. Ignorant of, and therefore ignoring, the possibility of the diurnal motion of the body on which they stand, persons of sturdy common sense declare that "the sun do move." Now, from what I know of Dr. De Medici's system I feel confident that you will awaken at no distant day to find that Dr. De Medici *had* made the discovery of the law for the conversion of surd unit-measures into solvents through such a change of their forms or their magnitudes that they are rendered available as aliquot divisors. It is hardly a fair statement therefore of the facts of the case to say "that he would dispense with incommensurability, thereby squaring the circle in a short cut."

I regret that you condemn the work without a personal examination of at least pages 17-26 of Part 2 of Section B in connection with the page proofs of Section C. Such examination should not take more than a couple of hours of your time. You will there perceive that what you denominate in your article, "arithmetic," is really "*geometry translated and expressed in numbers*"; that "geometry thus translated into numbers becomes the *science of ratios*"; and that "when a sufficient number of exact and finite ratios are obtained and tabulated, these tables and their measures of proportion, become economic instruments in computation which can be applied to conventional mensuration and to all branches of physics."

The admission of the mathematicians that have made a cursory examination of Dr. De Medici's text-books, that they contain "many thoughtful suggestions," is fatal to the assumption that he could not possibly have discovered the much-to-be-desired and long-sought-for key to commensuration, inasmuch as the Doctor claims that *all* of these "thoughtful suggestions" are logically involved in that basic discovery, the discovery, in short, that "different geometric forms have fixed and constant unit-measures fitted to the form, and that all of these natural geometric units are translatable into exact and fitting numbers."

* This communication is in direct reply to the references to Dr. Charles de Medici in the editorial article "The Tragedy of a Lonely Thinker," which appeared in *The Open Court* of December 1908. It reached us too late to be added to Mr. Leubuscher's article in the same number, in compliance with his request.

Any one following out the Doctor's directions will find his exposition luminous, and his style a marvel of simplicity and directness. He claims that "the current method ignores distinction between geometry and mensuration, and thus produces confusion in the mind. The New Geometry distinctly marks the difference. It limits geometry to what is done by compass and ruler *within* the circle, and to such translation of lines, curves and planes into numbers as finitely express the geometric units and proportions of the sines, chords, arcs and angles of the circle."

In a former letter I stated that I regarded Mr. Russell's treatment of Dr. De Medici's system (See "Minos and Niemand Again," in *The Open Court* for November) as inadequate, inappropriate, and inconclusive. It will not be long before you will come to see this yourself.

I would have written the first few pages of my own article somewhat differently had I known that you would omit from the caption all reference to the Doctor as mathematician, inventor, chemist, and all-round genius. For, with the bare name of the man for a caption, I fear that the reader will wonder, for some pages, what I am driving at. I will ask a last favor of you: *publish* the foregoing letter as a footnote to my article. It will give the general reader an idea of the definite mathematical claims of Dr. De Medici, *which he cannot otherwise get* from any of our articles—Mr. Russell's, yours, or mine, as they stand.

If there is time, please make one correction in your own article. I have *not* come into possession of the Doctor's books, etc., but I am willing to act for the widow in the matter, and she expressed a desire that I should so act.

A. L. LEUBUSCHER.

BROOKLYN, N. Y.

BOOK REVIEWS AND NOTES.

GREEK MYTHS AND THEIR ART. By *Charles E. Mann, M.S.* New York: Prang Educational Company, 1907. Pp. 155.

This rendering of the Greek myths is intended as a supplementary reader prepared for use in the fourth, fifth and sixth grades of our schools. The author, recently deceased, was one of the most successful and experienced educators of the Middle West,—successful in the most practical sense in uplifting and ennobling the character of the individual child no less than providing the instruction that tends to intellectual culture. It is true, as is stated in the preface, that no kind of reading matter is so universally popular among children as that pertaining to Greek myths. "The meaning does not go over their heads. They enter into them and freely challenge the right and the wrong of what is done, and they make ready application to present-day affairs of the principles involved in the myth. The beauty and delicacy shown by the myths delight them, and nothing can be offered that will furnish better training for the imagination,—a faculty quite as necessary to the business man as to the poet. The golden age of childhood seems peculiarly the time to gain something like an organized knowledge of this subject. If neglected then, no amount of after effort in the use of the classical dictionary or other reference books will quite make good the loss." And an incalculable loss it would be, for ever since Greece's own Golden Age these tales have been the subject of incident and illustration of the best in literature and art.

The real educator is a born story-teller, and Mr. Mann was peculiarly gifted in this respect so that the stories are easily comprehensible to fourth grade children, while they bear no fewer elements of interest for high school pupils. These legends are grouped in a logical order and contain all the essential narratives. Although modern scholars first came to a knowledge of Greek myths through Latin writers, Mr. Mann has wisely chosen to retain the Greek names in his text and only those, as the incongruity of the more prevalent method is clearly evident. The Glossary, however, (which is at the same time an index) gives the Latin equivalent in every case and also a cross-reference from the Latin name to the main entry under the Greek form. The most conspicuous feature of this collection, and the characteristic which gives it most distinctive value as compared to other works on the same subject, is the unusual and very excellent choice of the illustrations. Besides the very best of the classical statues, such as the Venus of Melos and Apollo of Belvidere, which no study of Greek mythology or art could possibly omit, the best painters of modern art are represented whenever they have treated these beautiful stories in the classical spirit, Titian, Rubens, Albano, Velasquez, Gerard, Poynter and Thorwaldsen, and nothing could be more unexpected in such a book, and yet more beautifully fitting than Burne-Jones's "Eros and Psyche." The reproductions are well made and each is accompanied by interpretive and biographical material. Teachers in the grades can not do better than to sit at the feet of this master of children's hearts and learn of him the spirit in which to make the gods of Olympus live again.

LA PELAGRA. Par le Dr. A. Marie with an introduction by Prof. C. Lombroso. Paris: Giard et Brière, 1908. Pp. 250. Price 4 fr.

A successful experiment in which a social poison is well on the road to extinction as in the case of pellagra, is of paramount sociological interest. It is characteristic of our age that humanity, becoming more conscious of its duties, is possessed of a growing faith in itself. Moreover, we are beginning to perceive dimly the possibility of liberating ourselves from degenerative factors in our social life by preventive measures which are scientific in method and positive in results. Difference of opinion with regard to state intervention or individual initiation will not prevent the inevitable course of evolution. Success in the struggle against factors of degeneration depends largely on the clear demonstration of their fatal consequences. Alcoholism, the opium habit, and many other social poisons still remain to be overcome, but the example of pellagra and the history of its curse as well as the triumphs of science towards its overthrow can be of remarkable assistance in the modern crusade against these plagues. This is the reason that Dr. Marie has undertaken to sum up the history of the ravages of decayed maize in Italy and the successful efforts which have been made to combat them. The sociological work of Lombroso is closely united with this crusade and the medical corps of Italy have devoted a century to the struggle.

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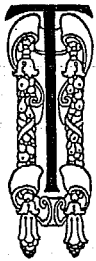
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