

ness and stupidity. Perhaps there is some fault all around. It is certain, however, that had our diplomats taken the trouble to study the Chinese character, many severe clashes and the spilling of innocent blood as well as the expenditure of enormous sums of money in a warfare that, far from redressing wrong only served to make matters worse, might have been avoided.

China is an interesting country; the landscapes are beautiful; its mountains are rich in coal and ores; its plains are as fertile as the prairies of Illinois, perhaps more so; its national traditions are curious; and it is certain that some time the currents of Chinese nationality and Western civilisation will be intermingled. China will be opened to Western civilisation, and perhaps the Chinese too will slowly but steadily gain a foothold in the territories of the West. It is difficult to predict the result, but one thing is sure, that while Western civilisation is bound to upset and revolutionise China, the Chinese will in their turn affect the habits, opinions, and the entire social and racial constitution of Western culture. There is never an action without its reaction. The Chinese are not war-like, they are not conquerors like the Saxons, but they possess qualities that in the struggle for existence are of greater importance still, viz., endurance, persistence, plodding patience, and industrious habits.

We propose to publish a series of articles, partly original and new, partly reproduced from relatively inaccessible sources, for the purpose of shedding some light on the relation of China to the Western world. The present number contains a brief sketch of the Opium War and a judgment of the Chinese character by Rev. R. Morrison, which will be followed up in the subsequent number by articles on the Tai Ping Rebellion, on Hung Hsin Ch'üan, the leader of the Tai Ping, a description of Gützlöf's influence in China, a translation of the Tai Ping canon, and kindred subjects.

P. C.

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### THE NEW JEWISH ENCYCLOPÆDIA, AND THE PROPOSED UNIVERSITY OF JEWISH THEOLOGY, HISTORY, AND LITERATURE.

On Tuesday, May 21, 1901, the "Judæans," one of the most scholarly of American Jewish organisations, entertained the publishers and editors of *The Jewish Encyclopedia* at a banquet in New York, as an expression of their appreciation of the indefatigable labors of the editors and publishers, and especially of the promotor of the *Encyclopedia* idea, Dr. Isidor Singer, formerly of Vienna and Paris, and now of New York.

The first volume of *The Jewish Encyclopedia* was published this month by the Funk and Wagnalls Co., of New York. The work is a monumental one, and is designed to be a complete history of the Jews and Judaism. All that has gone to the making of the Jewish people, its history and biography, its literature, philosophy, and sociology, is to be presented here authoritatively and completely.

Dr. Isidor Singer, the originator of the undertaking, had labored hard in Austria, Germany, France, and England, for the realisation of his project; but it was not until he reached America and until he pressed his case with the Funk & Wagnalls Co. that he was successful in obtaining the support to enable him to carry out his ideas.

The Board of Consulting Editors engaged by the publishers of the *Encyclopedia* number thirteen, and include the names of B. Felsenthal, Ph. D., Bernard Drachman, Ph. D., Gustav Gottheil, Ph. D., H. Pereira Mendes, M. D., Joseph

Silverman, D. D., Ira Maurice Price, B. D., Ph. D., Emil G. Hirsch, Ph. D., LL. D., Moses Mielziner, Ph. D., D. D., J. Frederic McCurdy, Ph. D., LL. D., Henry Hyvernatt, D. D., George F. Moore, M. A., D. D., David Philipson, D. D., and Jacob Voorsanger, D. D. In addition to the staff of editors, more than four hundred European and American scholars are at work on the task.

In the words of Dr. Leipziger, the president of the Judæans, who presided as toast-master :

"The Jewish Encyclopedia represents not only a valuable book, a compendium of Israel's Science and Sorrow, but also a harmonious movement among Israel's scholars, a movement indefinite perhaps at present, to unite and perpetuate the scattered relics of the past in order to intensify Jewish conviction and Jewish faith. For this reason the honor tendered at this time to the makers of the Jewish Encyclopedia by the Judæans, a body of gentlemen who stand in the community as thinking men in active life, marks an historic event."

This banquet is also memorable for Jewish people from the fact that the first announcement was there made by Dr. Singer of the proposed establishment of a University for Jewish Theology, History, and Literature. The plan of this institution is the outcome of conferences held by Dr. Singer with prominent rabbis, scholarly laymen, and some Wall Street men, recognised leaders of American Judaism. The plan of the University is not that of a sectarian institution, but simply of an educational centre for Jewish lore and culture in general. To quote the words of Dr. Singer :

"It is not at all our intention to create a denominational college, an institution which would rightly meet with the strongest kind of opposition from the majority of progressive American Jews. We Jews in America do not feel that we are of a particular sect with a special *Weltanschauung*; we are not in the position of the Catholic Church, which possesses an inflexible body of dogmas and religious doctrines and which therefore quite naturally intends to have its future priest get his entire higher education in an atmosphere essentially Catholic. The Roman Catholic Church was thus certainly justified in creating its Catholic University in Washington. But there is nowhere, as far as I know, either here or in Europe, a "Protestant" University built on similar lines as the Catholic University, and we American Jews would be guilty of a disastrous blunder were we to establish a Judeo-National University with a more or less definite sectarian purpose. The consequences of this fatal error would reach not only us here, but the Jews the world over. What we want is merely to establish on American soil a University for Jewish Science, international and cosmopolitan, as all seats of true science are or should be. Above the entrance to this university, which shall be opened not only to Jews, but to students of all religious denominations, will be our motto: *כל דבנין ירחי ויכו*"

The further hope and desire is expressed by the founders, "that students of various Christian Theological Seminaries, as well as of the two Universities in our city; nay, that professors of these and other educational institutions and many Catholic and Protestant clergymen will come and sit at the feet of Jewish scholars as Reuchlin and Luther, Pico di Mirandola and J. Chr. Wolf and so many other great Christian scholars did in past centuries. This unique audience, where priests and rabbis of fashionable churches and synagogues will sit side by side with the poor Russian Maskill of East Broadway, will in itself mark an epoch in the intellectual and social evolution of the Jewish race as well as of Christianity. But not only theologians but also historians, jurists, philologists and *litterateurs* will come

to this fountain of genuine Jewish learning to study Jewish history, Talmudic jurisprudence, Hebrew language, and the vast Jewish literature from the Bible down to the works of the New York Ghetto poet."

A provisional programme of the lectures for the first year has already been published, and the officers of the University may be addressed at the Bible House, New York City.

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### SUGGESTIONS TOWARD A THEORY OF GRAVITATION.

*To the Editor of the Open Court :*

A distinguished English physicist has recently brought forward evidence that the atomic theory does not adequately account for the ultimate constitution of matter; a conclusion that has long been advocated by me as essential to a solution of the problem of gravitation.

In view of the evident trend of investigation in that direction it has occurred to me that this might be a favorable time to lay the matter before the public of *The Open Court*. The following is a brief synopsis of my argument :

I. Recent discoveries in physical science tend to show that the atomic theory, in so far as it pronounces upon the ultimate constitution of matter, is unfounded. With due regard for scientific caution, we cannot go beyond the statement that matter acts *as if* it were composed of atoms; but further than this their existence is experimentally unproven, and it seems probable that their distinctive characters will remain forever unknown.

II. With our conception of matter thus qualified, we may say that ether is a rarified kind of matter. This conclusion is widely disputed, but we cannot escape it without doing violence to logic, inasmuch as whatever possesses attributes of matter must be matter. The main objection to it is that matter is composed of ultimate particles and ether is not; but it is equally permissible and somewhat more consistent with the present trend of investigation to regard the atom as a center of concentration of properties inhering in ether, and continuous with it.

III. Given a universe as above constituted and assuming the existence of a tendency to contraction at its periphery, we would then have a condition capable of effecting the phenomenon of gravitation within its mass. All solid bodies located therein would be subjected to an equal pressure on all sides except the side opposite an adjacent body, upon which side each body would be relieved of the pressure to an extent varying with mass and proximity. The result would be the establishment between the two bodies of a line of least resistance along which each body would tend to move.

IV. This is, in substance, the theory of Le Sage; but he provided for his pressure by a system of "transmundane particles" that violated the consistency of nature. If, instead, we postulate a body of matter without discontinuity, we obviate the difficulty that made Le Sage's hypothesis intolerable. If this explanation is accepted, an adequate physical cause of gravitation will have been attained, but the problem of adjusting this conception, and the mechanism it involves, to the preconceived order of nature will raise fresh difficulties in many directions.

NEW YORK CITY.

GEO. S. SEYMOUR.

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### AN AMERICAN EDITION OF LOTI'S BOOK.

*The Story of a Child* by Pierre Loti is a book that has become famous in its original form, which is in French, and needs not our praise to recommend it. The