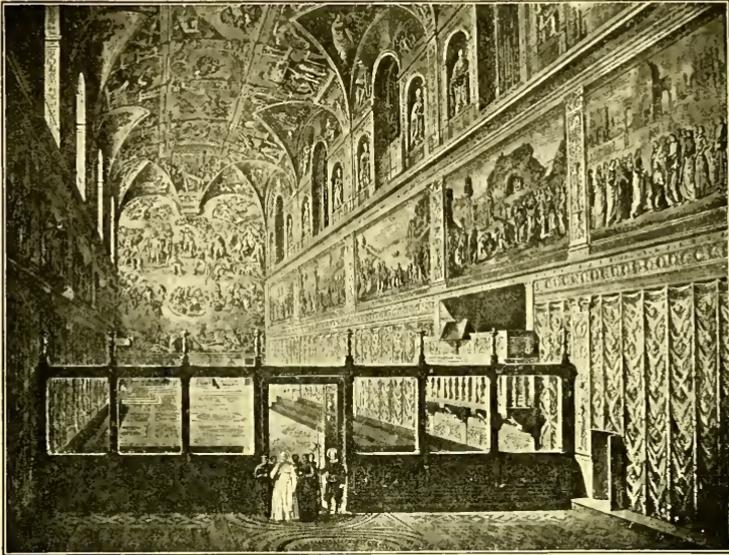


If this were not so, the devotion of so large a part of the school course (the text of the three volumes covers over 1800 pages) to geography pure and simple would seem entirely unwarranted from an economic point of view, especially as mathematical geography is very sparingly treated in the books, and as the publishers have just announced a fourth, supplementary volume by another author on New England.



THE SISTINE CHAPEL IN THE VATICAN.
(From *Tarr and McMurry's Geography.*)

As it is, the work is a model compend of the combined physiographic, political, social, industrial, and general cultural conditions of the world. The statistical maps and tables are unexcelled for variety, and the marvellous cheapness of the books, (considering the vast expense that their preparation must have entailed,) is the culminating feature that renders consideration of them at the hands of the educational public imperative.

T. J. McC.

MR. W. M. SALTER ON THE SOUL.

Old-time readers of *The Open Court* may still remember a controversy which Mr. Salter had with the editor on causation and life; and we are glad to see that in many respects Mr. Salter has accepted some arguments as to the *vis viva* that must be assumed to be inherent even in inorganic matter. The stone that falls is not passively attracted by the earth, but possesses gravity which we take to be a quality of the stone, not a pressure exercised by some power outside, and thus the descent of the stone is an active action of its mass. We regard this quality, inherent in all matters, as being ultimately the same force which is noticed in the autonomous movements of life, for life in the narrow sense of the word is simply

organised life in contradistinction to the unorganised spontaneity of the manifestations of chemical and mechanical movements.

While thus we are glad to state that we can accede to Mr. Salter's views as to the way in which life builds itself up, we disagree with him in his suggestions as to the possible immortality of the form of life that is reached in consciousness. Mr. Salter believes that "there is no inherent necessity" for the cessation of consciousness in death. He does not controvert the position maintained by *The Open Court*, that the essential feature of a man's character is not the material of which it is built, nor the vitality which is indispensable for its manifestation, nor feeling nor consciousness in general; but the concrete and definite form of life, of vitality, and of feeling or consciousness. Form is not a nonentity, but it is the most important and the most real feature of reality. The immortality of man's soul is constituted by a preservation of its form, and we can definitely trace how the form of man's soul is preserved, not only in his own life but also in the development of the race. If consciousness is supposed to be an independently parallel factor, not a feature, an accompaniment of other features (viz., the physiological changes), of man's life, we have the old dualism in a new and only slightly modified conception, which would render the problem more intricate and more mysterious than ever. But our contention is that a very definite and very satisfactory theory of immortality can be established upon a purely monistic basis, with exact scientific arguments.

The main difficulty of the new view consists in the lack of a full comprehension as to the reality of form. Man is by nature so materialistic that he shrinks from the belief that purely spiritual facts are spiritual, viz., formal, and endeavors to attribute to them some kind of a sublimated substance; yet they are real enough without being material, but it takes time to appreciate the truth of it.

COLUMBUS AND TOSCANELLI.

The celebrated Florentine astronomer of the fifteenth century, Paolo Toscanelli, has always been considered as the first person to launch on the world the idea of the discovery of America. Every writer on the subject, without exception, awards him this merit, and for this it was that a monument has been raised to his memory in his native city. This universal opinion is based on the statement made by the early biographers of Columbus—his son Fernand and Las Casas—that the discoverer of America had been in correspondence with Toscanelli concerning the grand conception, that the learned Florentine had approved his project and that, in order to encourage and enlighten him, had sent him a copy of the letter and map said to have been addressed by the latter in 1474 to a monk named Fernam Martins, belonging to the Privy Council of King Afonso of Portugal. The purpose of this pretended letter and map was to show the monarch that the true route to the East Indies was West, across the Atlantic, and not East by doubling the Cape of Good Hope. The map, which no longer exists, traced this route, while the letter, which has been preserved by the Columbus family, expatiates on the advantages offered by the new over the old course, and labors to show how easy of accomplishment it is.

Mr. Henry Vignaud, the scholarly First Secretary of the United States Embassy at Paris, where he has been the invaluable lieutenant of our diplomatic representatives in France for more than thirty years, from the days of Minister Washburne down to those of the present incumbent, General Porter, has just completed, after many years of labor in the quietude of his superb collection of Americana