

MISCELLANEOUS.

THE NOBLER LESSON.

Christ was of virgin born, and, being slain,
The credists say, he rose from death again.
O futile, age-long talk of death and birth!—
His life, that is the one thing wonder-worth:
Not how he came, but how he lived on earth.
For if gods stoop, and with quaint jugglery
Mock their own laws, how shall that profit thee?
The nobler lesson is that mortals can
Grow god-like through this baffled front of man.

DON MARQUIS.

ETHICAL INSTRUCTION.

To the Editor of The Open Court:

I submit to the readers of *The Open Court* a plan for the establishment of religious, or ethical institutions. It was long fervently hoped that the churches would adapt themselves to the needs of the times, but this hope has not been realized and there is no promise that it will be realized. Nearly all the denominations are dominated by the sectarian rather than the religious spirit, and they have so long refrained from a progressive policy that an adequate adjustment at this late day would amount almost to a subversion of their most cherished principles and ideals; hence the idea of an adjustment is even more repugnant to them than the certainty of further decline and ultimate extinction.

The main functions of religious institutions are, the progressive formulation and promulgation of ethical precepts, the employment of practical means to induce men to obey these precepts, and the organization of the moral energy of the people.

The ethical code should comprise all those conditions of character and forms of conduct which experience and observation prove are in accord with the nature and environment of men considered as members of a progressive humanity.

The possession of energy is perhaps the most pronounced characteristic of human nature, and scarcely less pronounced is the desire to exert this energy so that the results may contribute to and be conserved with the achievements of the race. Ethics must treat of the conditions and means of attaining this end.

There are duties that are incumbent on all men; there are duties that