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THE LATEST PHASE OF HERBERT SPENCER'S PHILOSOPHY.

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It is well known that the Brooklyn Ethical Association has become, by means of its annual "Course of Lectures on Evolution," an important thought exchange. This has proved to be exceptionally true by reason of the discussions which have arisen out of its lecture course of the last winter. The course opened by two lectures which began the trouble—if such *that* may be called, which promises to lead to greater light. The first of these lectures by Prof. Edward D. Cope was on *Alfred R. Wallace*, the co-discoverer with Darwin of "Natural Selection," and the well-known author of "Darwinism." The second lecture by the writer of this article, was on Prof. *Ernst Haeckel*, of Jena, his Life and Work.*

In the latter lecture the well-known "Spiritualism" of Wallace, and the "Unknowable" of Herbert Spencer were classed with the "Prophecies" of Newton and the "Papacy" of Comte as warning examples of that strange fatality by which the greatest triumphs of intellect are often offset by the greatest follies. On the contrary it was boldly re-asserted that under the law of correlation no one had shown how there could be room for a Spook God, Devil, or Soul in the world which Science had proved to be one continuous process of correlation,—cause and effect!—The Daily Press caught up the phrase "No room for God," and made them lively. The Spencerians under the lead of Dr. Lewis G. Janes the President of the Association took up the discussion with the author of the lecture by pen and from the same platforms, throughout the winter, in Brooklyn, New York, and Newark. Meanwhile Mr. S. H. Wilder, a well-known Philosophic and Spiritualistic writer in New York, through pamphlets and also in the *New York Tribune* and otherwise, opened a raking fire on both combatants with abundant extracts from Spencer's works showing that he was the very worst sort of a materialist, or *nothing*; in fact, that he was the very father of that correlation philosophy which had been turned upon him in that Haeckel lecture, and which he was bound to accept or to abandon the foundation of his system

altogether. The crisis came on the last evening of the course (May 31) when the celebrated John Fiske, on "The Doctrine of Evolution; Its Scope and Influence," was expected, as the friend and exponent of Mr. Spencer, to annihilate his discordant adversaries, by proving his philosophic consistency. Instead of this he finally left the matter in what seems the hopeless condition of practical philosophic bankruptcy. For, after explaining in his very able lecture the use and progress, and glorifying the victories, of evolution, he came to its limits. It could not, he argued, explain every thing; consciousness was not a link in the chain or circle of causal sequence, or persistence of force, or correlation of phenomena; it was simply the part *perhaps* of an outer concentric psychic circle; the rest of its circumference we could never know: it vanished into the *Unknowable Reality* behind all *phenomena*, etc., etc. All of which we had heard over and over many times in varying phrases. Then, to clinch the matter, we had the following letter read from Mr. Spencer himself, which only made the confusion worse by an explanation which abuses but does not explain:

"I have had to rebut the charge of materialism times too numerous to remember and I have now given the matter up. It is impossible to give more emphatic denial or assign more conclusive proof than that I have repeatedly done, as you know. My antagonists must continue to vilify me as they please; I cannot prevent them. Practically they say: 'It is convenient to us to call you a materialist and you shall be a materialist whether you like it or not.' In my earlier days I constantly made the foolish supposition that conclusive proof would change beliefs. But experience has long since dissipated my faith in men's rationality."

This letter was a great disappointment, for the great Philosopher instead of showing his critics the way out of their honest difficulty showed that he had lost his temper, and thus deepened the belief that there was no way out.

Then President Janes *ex cathedra*, that is from the pulpit, undertook to extricate the Spencerian Philosophy from its "textual ambiguities," while we all listened with breathless interest. By an unfortunate accident no stenographer took notes of the addresses on that occasion, but fortunately the President has given the burden of his address in the *New York Independent* of July 2 as an Article "Herbert Spencer and Materialism." Therein he says, and we italicise:

* Both of these lectures can be had from the office of *The Open Court*. Ten cents each.

"Deeper than all alleged textual ambiguities, fundamental to the entire philosophy of Mr. Spencer, clearly expressed in the opening chapters of 'First Principles,' re-affirmed in 'The Principles of Psychology,' and elsewhere, is the doctrine of the *relativity of knowledge*. On this rather than on the doctrine of the 'Correlation of Forces,' however interpreted, the Philosophy of Mr. Spencer is ultimately based. According to this conception, our knowledge of 'Matter'—i. e. matter *itself*—is wholly phenomenal: the *Material Universe has no existence apart from the existence of mind*: our knowledge of the world is conditioned by our psychical nature and its limitations.

"Matter and mind are both known to us, not as well-defined independent-substances, but as *mutually related phenomena of our underlying Reality*. What this Reality is in its essential nature cannot be known to us because of the finite limitations of our faculties. Our knowledge of it as existing, as the *Unconditioned Being* on which all modes of physical and psychical activity are conditioned is, however, fundamental to all other kinds of knowledge. It is implied alike in every observation of the phenomena of material world, and in every movement of our thought.

"Because of our incapacity, as finite beings, to penetrate the depths of this ultimate *mystery* of thought Mr. Spencer calls this Reality 'the Unknowable.' Reason, however, as he asserts, *declares it to be the super-personal rather than impersonal, extra-conscious rather than unconscious, quasi-psychic rather than materialistic in its nature*. Call this Reality what you will—SPIRIT LIFE, GOD—the philosophic mind must still recognise reverently that all names are *expressions of our ignorance* rather than of our knowledge: they are vague and imperfect symbols for a Power, a Reality, on which we and the Universe depend, the conception of which transcends the finite nature of our thought.

"The perception of this truth seems to be in substantial *harmony* with the loftiest religious conceptions of all ages. *Is it not wiser, therefore, for the advocates of anti-materialistic doctrines to recognise the greatest philosophical thinker of the English speaking race as the 'friend and aider of those who would live in the spirit', rather than to vainly endeavor to discredit his system and influence by unjustly denouncing, the Synthetic Philosophy as Materialistic?*"

Dr. Janes deserves much credit for this condensed statement of the *new* Spencerism. Notice!—the law of correlation or "persistence of force" which was originally said to be the base of Mr. Spencer's Philosophy is coolly *retired*. In its place we find the "relativity of knowledge," which means nothing, unless the nature of the relation and the *termini* between which it exists are determined. It has accordingly been held by every philosopher from Aristotle down, as Mr. Spencer has well pointed out, but by each in a different way and sense. As the foundation of a philosophy it is of no value, for what it means is always to be determined by the philosophy itself;—and here the *termini* are "unknowable"!

At the close of the discussion, in which others took part, and in which a very important letter from Prof. Ernst Haeckel was read, Mr. S. H. Wilder put forward those fatal quotations, and wanted to know decisively from Lecturer Fiske whether the Spencerian philosophy had changed its base with Mr. Spencer's approval. He pointed out that this philosophy, started out in "First Principles," and had for twenty years

and upwards, been based upon the "persistence of force" or correlation. He insists that this attempt to substitute the "relativity of knowledge," whatever that may mean, "*rather than correlation*," as the foundation of that philosophy was beyond the power of "textual ambiguity," and was nothing less than a spiritism or an absurd stultification. He referred to such passages of "First Principles" as these:

"The sole truth which transcends experience by underlying it is thus the persistence of force. This being the basis of experience, must be the basis of any scientific organisation of experience, [i. e. philosophy]. To this an ultimate analysis brings us down, and on this a rational synthesis must be built up, etc." pp. 192, 193, 202, etc.

Again: "Any hesitation to admit that between the physical forces and the sensations, there exists a correlation like that between the physical forces themselves, must disappear on remembering, that the one correlation like the other, is not qualitative only, but quantitative." p. 212.

Again, Mr. Spencer sums up thus:

"Various classes of facts thus unite to prove that the law of metamorphosis which holds among the physical forces, holds equally between them and the mental forces. Those modes of the unknowable which we call heat, light, chemical affinity, etc., are alike transformable into each other, and into those modes of the unknowable which we distinguish as sensation, emotion, thought; these in their turns being directly or indirectly retransformable into the original shapes. That no idea or feeling arises, save as the result of some physical force expended in producing it, is fast becoming a commonplace of science: and whoever duly weighs the evidence will see, that nothing but an overwhelming bias in favor of a preconceived theory, can explain its non-acceptance. How this metamorphosis takes place—how a force existing as motion, heat, or light, can become a mode of consciousness—or how it is possible for aerial vibrations to generate the sensation we call sound, or for the forces liberated by chemical changes in the train to give rise to emotion—these are mysteries which it is impossible to fathom. But they are not profounder mysteries than the transformations of the physical forces into each other." p. 217.

Many other passages were referred to of the same import, and two thirds of the book is one long sustained argument leading to this same conclusion. But while this has been the voice of Spencer, the voice of Fiske, e. g. in his "Cosmic Philosophy," has been exactly to the contrary, thus:

"Have we made the first step towards the resolution of psychical phenomena into modes of motion? Obviously we have not. The closed circuit of motion remains just what it was before. No conceivable advance in physical discovery can ever get us out of this closed circuit, and into this circuit psychical phenomena do not enter. Psychical phenomena stand outside this circuit parallel with that brief segment of it which is made up of molecular motions in nerve tissue. . . . The task of transcending or abolishing the radical antithesis between the phenomena of mind, and the phenomena of motions of matter, must *always* remain an impracticable task. . . . We may here at once mark *the bounds* beyond which, in another direction, scientific inquiry cannot advance." *Cosm. Phil.* p. 442-443. Vol. 2.

Again: "In no scientific sense is the thought the product of the molecular movement." *The Unseen World*, p. 41.

The comparison of these passages, and similar ones with those above quoted from Mr. Spencer, show a

difficulty and an issue beyond "textual ambiguities" to resolve?

Prof. Fiske in concluding the discussion did not at first meet this issue, but upon further questioning stated frankly in substance: That Mr. Spencer had started into the construction of his system with the views expressed in the quotation from him referred to, but that he had not then thought them out to their consequences; that afterwards his views had changed. He mentioned one instance when Mr. Spencer came to his, Professor Fiske's, room in London in 1874, and after a long conversation acquiesced in the construction that the latter had given to the philosophy they held in common. The phrase "nervous shock" was changed to "psychic shock"; and generally the materialistic construction to which the passages referred to had given rise was repudiated: especially the idea that mind or consciousness was included in, or explainable by, correlation. "The passages referred to," said Professor Fiske, "if taken in their literal significance, teach what is not true, and is, in fact nonsense."

This statement of Professor Fiske together with Dr. Janes's exposition and Mr. Spencer's letter was a surprise to many who heard it and will be to many more. The utter irreconcilability of Mr. Spencer's earlier and later views have doubtless been much more manifest to others than to himself, to whom they have gradually, and perhaps unconsciously passed from one to the other, with the grateful concurrence and applause of his more conservative friends. But it is an entire change of base, and the truth is by this discussion made public. It was editorially duly noted as "an extraordinary statement" in the great religious journal, the *New York Independent*, in its issue of June 18. Dr. Janes replied in the issue of July 2, and Mr. Wilder gave a clincher in that of July 16.

This change of base from scientific correlation to *nothing*—nothing at least, *verifiable*, seems, as a friend remarked on the occasion, a public confession of philosophic bankruptcy. For, a system of philosophy which cannot account for the mind of man, its origin, faculties, action, relations, and consequences, on at least a tentative and *working* scientific hypothesis, if not *law*, has cut off its head from its body, and is nothing but a chaos, or a disguised theology. Must science relinquish the mind, or soul, of man—its lot and fate, to pretended revelators of "The Unseen World," or to ignorance? That is the practical question; and it is one involving the greatest philosophic and religious consequences. In the last words above quoted from him Dr. Janes makes a bee-line, as if for honey, for the theologic camp! Are we compelled to follow? Not a few of those who (as did this writer) aided Prof. E. L. Youmans to introduce Mr. Spencer's philosophy

in this country will hesitate to follow him in his recent conclusions. Of course we will be disowned by those who worship "The Unknowable in the Spirit"; much as Auguste Comte disowned those friends who could not acquiesce in the Papistic assumptions of his later years,—but all *that*, however unpleasant, is of little moment. The real and serious question is whether Messrs. Spencer, Fiske, and Janes are correct and right in the views they have taken. If not, can we find in Monistic Positivism, another, a scientific, a higher and a truer view, neither materialistic nor spiritualistic in the usual and proper sense of those words, but which contains what is good and true in both, and which will enable us to use the Spencerian Philosophy as we do the Positive Philosophy of Comte for all it is worth, in spite of the latter day tergiversations of their authors? This we will consider—at another time.

FEELING, THE MONISTIC DEFINITION OF THE TERM.

ACCORDING to the report of the discussions which have lately taken place in the Brooklyn Ethical Association, concerning the philosophy of evolution, Mr. Herbert Spencer has changed his views of feeling and the origin of feeling. In a previous summary of his philosophy he had stated:

"That no idea or feeling arises, save as the result of some physical force expended in producing it, is fast becoming a commonplace of science."

But now Mr. Wakeman on the authority of Mr. Fiske himself informs us that Mr. Spencer has acquiesced in Professor Fiske's conception, that

"Psychical phenomena stand outside this circuit parallel with that brief segment of it [viz. of motion] which is made up of molecular motions in nerve tissue."

Accordingly the phrase "nervous shock" in Spencer's psychology should be changed to "psychic shock," and Mr. Wakeman states:

"'The passages referred to,' said Professor Fiske, 'if taken in their literal significance teach what is not true, and is, in fact nonsense.'"

The word "nonsense" is a harsh expression, but it must not be taken here in its offensive meaning. Prof. W. K. Clifford used the very same word in the very same connection. He does not accept the idea that mind or soul (together with feeling, consciousness, etc.) is to be explained as converted force. And, to consider the soul as something unexplainable that steps in as a force imparting impulses to muscles, he says, "is not to say what is untrue, but to talk nonsense." Clifford adds:

"But the question, Do the changes in a man's consciousness run parallel with the changes of motion and therefore with the forces of his brain? is a real question and not *prima facie* nonsense."

It is probable that Mr. Fiske thought of this pas-

sage of Clifford's when speaking of Mr. Spencer's idea that psychical phenomena arise as "the result of some physical force." Mr. Wakeman interprets Professor Fiske's proposition as spiritism which would mean that psychical phenomena form a world by themselves which sometimes comes in contact with the material world. Spirit in that case would be an unknowable mystery coming into the world from without, having its own laws, yet when making its appearance, it would run parallel in brief segments of the world of motion with a special action of nerve tissue. And indeed Professor Fiske's phrase that "psychical phenomena stand outside of the circuit" together with some other expressions suggest a spiritualistic interpretation. Nevertheless, Professor Fiske may after all stand on the monistic position, considering, as we do, feeling as the subjective state of awareness which runs parallel with certain objective physical phenomena taking place in nervous tissue. He may after all, and I almost believe that he will do so, if he considers the matter, regard both, feeling and motion, as two sides of one and the same process in the same or at least in a similar sense, as Professor Clifford, George Henry Lewes, Wilhelm Wundt, Th. Ribot, and most authorities among our modern psychologists accept it.

The source of misunderstandings is here as in many other cases a lack of agreement as to the usage of terms. Vagueness in terminology will always produce a confusion of thought. The trouble in the present instance rises from the word "feeling." What have we to understand by feeling? That there is no feeling taking place by itself, or in other words, that there are no psychical phenomena without a physical basis is, indeed, as Mr. Spencer says (we take this to be the meaning of the passage in question), "fast becoming a commonplace of science." Professor Fiske, it appears, has stated the position correctly that Mr. Spencer had not thought out the idea that "feeling" is the result of physical force (i. e. motion) in all its consequences," so he used the term "feeling" where those who stand upon the standpoint of modern psychology might have said "nerve action accompanied with feeling."

We understand by feeling always the state of awareness only which accompanies certain physiological activities and not these activities themselves. The actions which take place among the molecules of the nervous tissue are motions, they are physical phenomena, observable, measurable and can under favorable conditions be made visible also. They are facts of objective nature. When some forces of nature stored up in food are changed into the vital energy of nervous tissue and utilised in nervous action, there is not one molecule of matter and not the least particle of energy changed into the subjective state of feeling.

All the forces of objective nature remain objective. The law of the conservation of matter and energy holds good in the empire of matter and energy. But under certain conditions phenomena of feeling appear which we call spiritual, or mental, or psychical. And these phenomena are subjective states unobservable and invisible, but going along with objective processes of visible motion. They are not motions, not forces, not energies, but states of awareness.

Whence do they come?

Those who maintain that feeling is a product of matter in motion are as a rule called materialists, and Mr. Spencer has often been called a materialist because he has pronounced this view. Mr. Spencer repudiates the name materialist, and I believe justly, because the agnostic feature of his philosophy is much more prominent. The underlying reality being unknowable he is at most a materialistic agnostic.

If by materialism must be understood that all concrete object-things are material, that there cannot exist feelings by themselves, that pains and pleasures, sensations, commotions, or ideas cannot hover about anywhere in empty space, in one word that there are no ghosts, then all science is materialism. But our scientists and philosophers do not understand that by materialism, and, therefore, we cannot say that modern psychology properly understood is materialistic. We would also, like Mr. Spencer, repudiate the term materialism as applied to our own views, and those who use the term with reference to the editorial views of *The Open Court* either use the term materialism in a peculiar way, or are not familiar with our tenets.

But, the conservation of matter and energy holding good, whence do the psychical phenomena come if they cannot be explained as transformed matter or energy? From the monistic standpoint we claim that the conditions of feeling are an unalienable and intrinsic feature of reality. Wherever there is physical action taking place it contains the potentiality of psychic existence. Objective nature is, as it were, the outside of nature only, its internality is potential subjectivity which, with the rise of organised life, can and will develop into the actual subjectivity of feelings.

This view of the question which is a monistic and not a dualistic explanation of the spiritual world has been recently defended with great vigor by Prof. Lloyd Morgan, who called that element of reality which is no motion, but accompanies motion and which is developing in the course of evolution as feeling, *metakinesis*. All objective phenomena are "kinesis" i. e. potential or kinetic energy and all kinesis is in possession of i. e. it is accompanied with, metakinesis. Feeling accordingly is a mode of metakinesis as much

as the motions of living bodies and especially nervous action is a mode of kinesis.

We consider Prof. Lloyd Morgan's term as an excellent invention and we hope that it will contribute to dispel the general confusion that prevails about the meaning of the words feeling and consciousness.

The origin of mind is really the main problem of philosophy and the method in which this problem is attacked may be considered as the touchstone of the different philosophies. Mr. Spencer has given much attention to this question and he has made many valuable observations in the empire of psychology, but in his endeavor to explain everything from matter and motion he became entangled in insolvable contradictions and ended in agnosticism. He gave the problem up as insolvable. Professor Fiske has understood the impossibility of deriving mind out of matter and motion, but he is so much addicted to the idea of agnosticism that he still considers the world as well as the soul as something inscrutable and still speaks about "the unknowable reality behind all phenomena," thus disclaiming and rejecting the advantages which he might derive from the monistic view of psychological facts. Professor Fiske in our opinion is right that evolution cannot explain everything, for the law of evolution itself demands an explanation. We trust that evolution will find its explanation, but we do not expect it with Professor Fiske as "simply the part *perhaps* of an outer concentric psychic circle, the rest of its circumference we would never know." For this explanation leads in its consequences to dualism, if it is not actual dualism, and we should be obliged to believe in a psychic existence by itself, which in our conception would be subjectivity without objective existence, feeling without motion, psychic processes which have no physiological basis, soul without body and a God outside of the universe.

The main advantage of the modern view that feeling accompanies motion will be found in this, that it makes a monistic conception possible. We cannot look upon reality as being endowed throughout with the potentiality of psychic phenomena. The world is as much a spirit as it is a material reality. The term matter is a thought-symbol only describing one feature of it, while metakinesis, subjectivity, or elements of feeling are another, and both are so far as we can see everywhere. Natural science teaches us to consider the development of the human soul as a gradual growth traceable in its objective and therefore scientifically observable forms. The soul is one of the products of this world of ours and the psychic nature of the soul proves that the world essence is not mere matter in motion, but it certainly does not disprove monism. The idea of "outer concentric psychic circles," i. e. of metakinesis without kinesis has no meaning to us

whose ideal is a monistic world-conception. Says Goethe :

"What were a God who from the outside stirred
So that the world around his finger whirred?
He from within the Universe must move,
Nature in him and him in nature prove,
Thus all that in him lives and moves and is
Will ne'er his power and his spirit miss."

P. C.

CAN SUICIDE BE JUSTIFIED?

We read in the *Chicago Tribune*: "Wednesday evening Prof. Felix Adler spoke before the Plymouth School of Ethics choosing as a subject for his discourse, 'Suicide.' He expressed some radical ideas, the most astonishing of which was that in certain cases of incurable sickness suicide was justifiable. He believed that it was no more than right and said that if such a plan of action should become general there should be some precaution taken. For instance, the formation of an official body designated by the State, and composed of three Judges of the Supreme Court and of three eminent physicians. This body should in every case be summoned to the bedside of the sufferer, and if the council be unanimously of the opinion that there is no reasonable hope of recovery the patient should then be allowed to receive a draught from the hands of the attendant physician that would give him eternal relief from his sufferings."

The *Chicago Tribune* publishes a symposium of opinions on the subject as follows:

"Dr. J. H. Etheridge said: I take no stock in Professor Adler's idea of killing the incurably sick. Our calling as physicians is to save, not destroy, human life. All the laws of the age tend in the same way. A few years ago an interne at the County Hospital told me confidentially of the case of a man crushed in a railway accident and brought to the hospital. There was no hope of his recovery and the interne gave him morphine, which took his life. The interne told me of this, and I said: That is an indictable offense. As long as the man lives there is ground for hope. You had no right to do that. While there are cases of injury or disease where it is impossible for the person to recover, all the instincts of humanity, all the teaching of the remedial professions of medicine and surgery, all the spirit of civilized countries are opposed to the plan of killing the patient proposed by Professor Adler. The idea is repugnant to the spirit of the age.

"Dr. Lee, resident physician of the Palmer House, said: I believe that the chronic invalid should hold out as long as there is the slightest chance of recovery—as long as the pain is not so intense and so continuous as to occupy the entire attention of the sufferer. But after this why should not the sufferer be unbound, and the agonies ended? I believe that it would be right and just.

"Dr. Purdy did not believe that Adler was correct in this or any other instance. Suicide, said Dr. Purdy, is suicide under any and all conditions. Circumstances may lessen but never eradicate the unnatural crime of such an act. With the recent advances in the medical profession a patient is never dead until the last spark has fled, and hope should not depart till then. In life there is hope, and this is an inspiration for all would-be suicides.

"Rabbi Hirsch said: If the people saw fit to sanction the passage of such a law, which is exceedingly doubtful, it would throw open the doors to a thousand abuses. Such a disposition of life should be left entirely in the hands of the sufferer. If, then, the patient is willing to take his own life I can excuse the deed, looking at it from a philanthropic standpoint. I think the laws should be drawn so that a person is not necessarily a criminal because he takes his own life, but I do not believe in appointing a committee to wait upon the patient as that would oftentimes prolong a person's sufferings. I have buried both men and women who have either taken poison to hasten death and relieve their sufferings or

have ordered operations to be performed that they knew could only end fatally. Professor Adler has advanced some strange theories and I consider this one of them.

"Prof. George B. Charles, President of the Christian Metaphysical Society, said: I consider it a rather dangerous scheme. It is an assumption based either on the belief in a future painless existence or the utter disbelief in a future existence, neither of which is proved. It is, therefore, objectionable from a moral standpoint. Furthermore, as an act of philanthropy, it is non-philosophical, owing to the fact of the ignorance of the future existence. In taking one's life it simply robs the body of animation according to the accepted Christian belief. Therefore, as death is an assumption based only upon a supposition, it would not, in my opinion, make any material difference whether the body is robbed of its animation or left until death takes place naturally. From a humanitarian's standpoint legal murder might be charitable, but not from any other."

"Dr. S. V. Cleverger said: The celebrated German philosopher, Schopenhauer, has declared suicide cowardly and murder brutal in every case, and I reiterate his opinion and coincide with him. Another thing, I think it very doubtful whether a person would agree to welcome death. In every human being, no matter what the condition might be, the feeling that while there's life there's hope is most pronouncedly manifested when death is near. As for appointing a committee to decide upon a sufferer's condition that is absurd. If that was the case the committee would be composed of quacks or ignoramuses appointed through political machinations. The entire idea is impracticable, and a law legalising such murders would have a demoralising effect upon every community. The people will not countenance it, no matter how much Prof. Adler lectures for it.

"The Rev. Dr. H. W. Bolton of the Century M. E. Church said: The sixth commandment says plainly, "Thou shalt not kill." This, of course, includes self-destruction, and therefore I do not agree with Professor Adler because I am a Christian. There are also passages in the New Testament that condemn suicide. The heroic sacrifice of one's self for another's good cannot be called suicide, and Mr. Adler does not touch on that feature of the question. His remarks apply to suicide pure and simple. He suggests that suicide is permissible in the case of a chronic invalid when sanctioned by three judges or three physicians. In such event any man might induce the judges or the physicians to give the sanction whenever he felt that he could not face certain issues, and then where would society be? The reason that Professor Adler's system permits "justifiable" suicide is that it does not go beyond this world. The idea is purely barbaric and anything but Christian. What God has given no man has the right to take away, and there is no combination of conditions in which the Christian mind can see a justification of self-murder. The Spartan idea of forcing useless invalids to kill themselves or to be killed by some one else because they were a burden to the State is not one of this humane age. You will find this view of the matter common to all Christian men and we must hold it."

It appears that Rabbi Hirsch's opinion is not only humane but also sensible; and the most humane will in the end be found to be the most religious also. Professor Adler's proposition of summoning a body of three judges and three physicians to the bedside of a sufferer from an intensely painful and incurable sickness is not practical and would be rightly felt as an intolerable intrusion, let alone that no body of men be they ever so learned and be their opinions ever so perfect in legal matters can be of assistance to a man in such a grave question which he must settle alone within himself. A man who under so extraordinary circumstances takes his life has, undoubtedly, before he takes this most serious and irrevocable step, to consider and so far as it is in his power to attend to all his duties which extend beyond the grave. And our opin-

ion of a man will have to be weighed, and indeed it is weighed in each particular case accordingly. There is a great difference between the coward who flies from life because he shirks responsibilities or shrinks from the consequences of former ill deeds and the self-possessed sufferer who seeing that his life is a burden to himself and to others calmly makes his dispositions and departs from his family leaving his thoughts, his care, the very spirit of his soul and his love behind as an imperishable memory of a useful life.

The objections made by the Rev. Dr. Bolton may express church views, but they are neither Christian nor biblical. The commandment "Thou shalt not kill" was apparently not intended to include suicide. We might as well construe it in the sense of Brahmanists and turn vegetarians. Anyone who drinks a cup of bouillon or who eats of the meat of a lamb has no right to read his special opinion of what he calls murder into this or any other passage. I cannot find any biblical sentence which right out and unequivocally condemns suicide generally.

The Monday *Tribune* contains another contribution on the suicide problem. Rev. H. Digby Johnson says:

"The learned professor whose ill-considered utterances have led to this discussion seems to have lost sight altogether not only of the religious but also of the moral aspects of the question. How far his ethics are below those of the pagan Socrates, or the entire body of the pagan philosophers of Greece! To the Christian there can be no possible question. He regards life as God-given, and given for the highest purposes, inseparably related to the eternal life."

If Professor Adler's suggestion is impractical, his utterances should not be denounced as "ill-considered." On the contrary, his courage to discuss an unpopular problem is to be recommended, and those who disagree from him may state their objections so that we can weigh their arguments. The Rev. Johnson's letter to the *Tribune* denounces suicide including any and every case without considering the circumstances on the sole reason that "life is God-given." What strange experiences must this reverend gentleman have collected. He says:

"More than once I have seen the bodies of suicides borne to burial at the solemn midnight hour and cast into a dishonored felon's grave, without rite or ceremony of any kind, and unattended by any relatives or other persons than the officers of the county charged with the ghastly duty."

A country in which suicides are disposed of as described by the reverend gentleman does not deserve to be called a Christian country. If the clergy approve of such brutal customs and if they can witness them without becoming indignant and full of holy wrath at the hardness of men's hearts they should learn from the infidel. When a destitute woman whose lot of life had been harder than she could bear had shuffled off this mortal coil of hers, Thomas Hood sang the following touching lines:

"One more unfortunate,
Weary of breath,
Rashly importunate,
Gone to her death.
Take her up tenderly,
Lift her with care,
Fashioned so slenderly,
Young and so fair.
Make no deep scrutiny
Into her mutiny,
Rash and undutiful;
Past all dishonor,
Death has left on her
Only the beautiful."

Is not this sentiment more Christian than that of the Rev. Johnson who dooms the suicide without discrimination to a "ghastly" burial "at the solemn midnight hour" to be "cast into a dishonored felon's grave"?

And why this atrocity of a barbarous custom? Because "life is God-given." But is that not rather Mohammedanism than Christianity? Mohammedans believe in fatalism, not Christians. the Moslem says: "God suffered that I broke my leg, if it pleases him it will heal without a physician's assistance." And can we not of every moment of life and of our conscious existence say the same that God gave it. Accordingly it would be blasphemous for a physician to use anesthetics if a patient has to undergo a dangerous and painful operation. Every single moment of consciousness is as much God-given as the whole of them.

The argument that "life is God-given" and that therefore we are not allowed to take it, is meaningless, for everything is God-given and we should not be allowed at all to tamper with nature as it is. Culture and civilisation would become blasphemous interferences with God's will.

We sum up that suicide is a sad and a grave thing and it is hard on those who leave life through its portal. We have, however, no right to place ourselves on the high seat of justice and condemn the man who finds himself constrained to pass through it. Suicide should certainly not be encouraged, but the argument of these severe judges is neither humane, nor Christian, nor religious, nor biblical—it is based upon a heathenish conception of God, which is the fatalistic idea of let things go as it pleases God.

When will the time come that our Christian ministers will shake off the bonds of paganism?

CURRENT TOPICS.

THERE was loud laughter heard last year at the mad freak of the Kansas farmers in electing rustics to congress because they wore no socks, and to the judicial bench because they knew no law. I had lived in Kansas in its Territorial era, and I knew that its mad freak had method in it. I knew that in the grim humor of the Kansas people they meant to elect judges who would not enforce the law, but who could be relied on to make judicial resistance to it. This paradox is no new thing in Kansas; indeed the spirit of it has always had its influence in state courts, and sometimes it has dominated the supreme bench of all, the National court at Washington. A great book might be written on the subject of Judicial anarchy in the United States, with hundreds of examples. When the voters of Kansas elected the Alliance farmer to the bench because he knew no law, and then sent him to the Law School at Ann Arbor to learn some, I pointed out the inconsistency of their action; and when they crammed him with a six weeks course of Coke and Blackstone, as geese are crammed with meal at Strasbourg, I predicted in *The Open Court* that he would know all the law that ever was, and more; that he would break down the fences of precedent, and trample on the decisions, as his own unruly steer when in his neighbor's cornfield tramples on the corn. It has resulted as I feared it would; and Judge McKay is very busy at this moment reversing the Supreme Court and spurning its decrees. Like Judge Portia he is a very "Daniel come to judgment," and whenever a creditor comes into his court seeking the foreclosure of a mortgage, Judge McKay follows the law laid down by that famous Master of Laws in the celebrated case of Shylock against Antonio. The hard-hearted creditor is turned out of court, and all his lands and goods "are confiscated unto the State of Venice."

* * *

The character of a state, like that of a man depends very much upon the start it makes in life. Kansas was "born unto trouble as the sparks fly upward." In its very childhood it was compelled to resist the law, or forfeit freedom; and that combative spirit has grown with its growth, and strengthened with its strength. In its rebellious passion it cares nothing for the law,

and especially nothing for the law that enforces the payment of debts by the foreclosure of a mortgage. They threaten to impeach Judge McKay because he will not foreclose mortgages, but the impeachers and their constituents are the mortgagors, and instead of impeaching him they will promote him to the Supreme bench. I was vaccinated one night by the Kansas virus, in the back room of a house in Atchison; and the way of it was this: Mr. Buchanan was President at the time, and he had ordered the Kansas lands into market, to punish the Free-State settlers who would not bow down to the slavery image which Nebuchadnezzar the king had set up. The settlers had no titles, only "claims," to the lands they tilled, and few of them had money to pay for them if suddenly brought into market. Speculators were crowding into Kansas to buy the lands, and a secret conspiracy to baffle the sale was organised in the back room aforesaid, to which conspiracy I had the honor of an invitation. Many plans to stave off the sales were proposed; petitions to the President, delegations to Washington, and so on; but at last a sly man arose and said: "I move that we adjourn the land sales—ourselves." It was a short speech but it made a great impression, as I could see by the significant glances exchanged all around the room; and I whispered to the conspirator on my right, a United States senator afterwards, "Who is that?" And he whispered back, "Montgomery!" His motion was adopted; and, it is too long a story to tell now how it was done, the land sales were adjourned. Montgomery had also a playful habit of adjourning the courts in the way that he adjourned the land sales. The memory of him is an influence in Kansas yet, and there is a good deal of rusty rebellion lying around in that state among the old Sharpe's rifles of the Territorial age.

* * *

Another Union battle flag has been restored by the Confederate officer who captured it; and it has been restored in the usual ostentatious and patronising way. Of course a regiment may lose its flag without dishonor, but the restoration of it must awaken painful recollections, and true chivalry requires that such restoration shall be made without publicity; in a delicate, quiet way, and not so as to blazon to the world the prowess of its captors, as the present vain-glorious custom is. I have just been reading a curious correspondence between General Walker of the Union Army, and General Anderson of the Confederate army, from which it appears that Walker having been taken prisoner, his sword became the trophy of Anderson, who returns it in a rather uncomfortable way. He informs General Walker that at a certain battle "you were made prisoner and deprived of your arms," and this unpleasant reminder he follows up by stamping figuratively on Walker's corns; thus, "Your sword came into my possession and I wore it from that time until Appomattox." This is rubbed in with a little delicate sarcasm about the brightness of that sword: "I have endeavored to keep its blade as bright as when it came into my possession," says Gen. Anderson; whose conduct in keeping the sword bright was in such pleasing contrast to that of Captain Sir John Falstaff, who hacked his sword to give it the appearance of having been in fight. Gen. Anderson, no doubt, believes himself to be as polished as that sword, but a very high-toned and courteous knight would have battered the sword before returning it, and would have pretended with gentle flattery that he found it so. He would never have praised its brightness nor boast that he had worn it. More amazing than the pride of the victor is the humility of the vanquished, who in a letter of thanks promises that hereafter he "shall prize the weapon all the more because of its history since the war." The "weapon" that has been the occasion of this remarkable correspondence is blameless. It has never been stripped in battle, and therefore as a memento can be of no more value to a soldier than a worn out umbrella. General Anderson testifies that it was bright when he

got it and bright when he returned it. No doubt, General Walker would rather have had a return of the measles than a return of this innocent blade.

* * *

The retirement of Judge Altgeld from the bench may fairly be regarded as a public loss, although no doubt it will prove a personal gain to him. While as a judge he knew much of the law as a collection of artificial forms, he was not ignorant of it as a scheme of justice. Like many other judges he knew the Art of law, but unlike some of them he knew the Science of it also. He understood the humane reason and spirit of the law; and he was not afraid to show in a book how the law in Illinois was habitually perverted to the punishment of the innocent and the oppression of the poor. The revelations in his book "Live Questions" ought to raise a blister on the conscience of the State, if a sovereign State can have any conscience, which is doubtful. These considerations give importance to his criticism of the Chicago judiciary and his condemnation of the self-service rendered by our law-makers for public pay. It is the opinion of Judge Altgeld that all progress in this country is due to the private citizen, the individual man, and not any of it to the official classes. In answer to the inevitable interviewer, he said: "We have in this country more than forty governors, and it would be difficult for any man to point out wherein the whole forty had for ten years done anything of an enduring character for their country or for the progress of civilisation. We have several hundred congressmen, we have legislators without number; we count even our judges by the hundred, and taking the whole office holding class together it is difficult to point out wherein it does anything that can be regarded as raising the standard of public morals, creating a healthy public sentiment, or solving in a proper manner any of the great questions, both economic and social, that are calling for solution. On the contrary, the whole office-holding community simply follows the public band wagon. The really influential men in America are the successful private individuals."

* * *

Considering "band wagon" in the foregoing paragraph as a misprint for "bread wagon," there is much truth in Judge Altgeld's criticism. I have known brass-mounted statesmen to spend years and years in office by trading public patronage for private service, by begging like mendicants, by bribing, cajoling, and corrupting, by hussling and hustling, and by wealth ill-gotten, and I have heard them claim at the end of a sinister career, honor, pensions, and respect, because of "a lifetime spent in the public service." As well might a potato bug claim reward and glory because he had spent a lifetime working on a farm. Asked for his opinion of the proposition to raise the salaries of Chicago judges, Judge Altgeld intimated that they were already too high for judges of such quality as our mob masters give us; and his views on this point are entitled to be regarded as the testimony of an expert. He said: "There are very many able lawyers at our bar who would be glad to serve the public on the bench for even a much lower salary than is now paid, provided they could get the positions without a political scramble." He exposed the common delusion that great cities must necessarily have great judges, and he showed that the country judges are abler men than the city judges, and that they do more work and better work for half the salary. He said: "It is claimed by lawyers who practice throughout the state as well as in Chicago that the bench in the country is much abler than in Chicago. Being still on the bench myself I can talk with a little more freedom on this subject than I otherwise could." That interview is a valuable addition to our political knowledge, and it will go far in dispelling the superstitious illusion that prevails concerning the judges in great cities. By the laws of good luck we sometimes get a learned, humane, and able judge, even

out of that "political scramble," but not often. Judge Altgeld knows very well, although he did not say it, that there are judges who morally do not know the difference between the writ of *Habeas Corpus* and a pair of handcuffs.

M. M. TRUMBULL.

NOTES.

We learn from a circular letter of Mr. George Anderson, 35 A Great George Street, Westminster, S. W., that Mr. Bradlaugh left a debt of 6000 pounds which was not incurred for selfish ends but mainly in his litigations for freedom, forced upon him especially during the Parliamentary struggle. His only surviving daughter, Mrs. Bonner, had sacrificed at a time of great pecuniary embarrassment the life policy he had assigned to her and she is now left in a most difficult condition. Mrs. Bonner nevertheless, the strong daughter of a strong father, struggles with all her power to meet her father's unsettled liabilities. Some of the creditors have reduced their claims so that if a sum of 3000 pounds can be raised, the debts could be paid. Since Mr. Bradlaugh's debts were necessarily incurred to uphold the rights of thought and speech, it is a matter of justice that the public and most so those who like him are struggling for liberty, should help to pay his liabilities, which as Miss Edna Lyall states "had he lived a few years longer he would have been able to meet." When Mr. Holyoake, the veteran leader in the struggle for equal rights and freedom addressed Miss Edna Lyall, herself being a prominent author in England, she gave to the fund of Mrs. Bonner 50 pounds in order to set a good example for others.—Go thou and do likewise!

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