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## THE DONNYBROOK PLAN OF REFORM.

BY F. M. HOLLAND.

DONNYBROOK fair has long been famous for free fights among champions whose plan of campaign is simply this: "When you see a head, hit it." A survival of this picturesque old practice may be detected among those very prominent and active reformers, whose motto seems to be "When you happen to think of any institution, go for it." Our Donnybrook reformers are too impartial and zealous to be stopped by such trifling considerations as that some institutions have been preserved during countless generations on account of generally acknowledged necessity for social existence, as is the case with marriage; or again that other institutions, like our reformatories, embody the most advanced thought of the century so fully as to provoke conservatism and corruption to make attacks which it is difficult to resist. No matter how useful an institution may be to the world, nor how urgently it may need to have friends of progress support it long enough to have a chance to show its real value, some would-be reformer is sure to denounce it as an obstacle to his own pet scheme; and this he changes so often as to have what he thinks good reasons for sooner or later attacking everything and everybody.

Take such an agitator for your guide to-day, and you will be pretty sure to be told by him to-morrow that you have gone completely astray, as will probably be the fact. A man who had brought up his children after the plan laid down in Rousseau's "Emile," and ventured to tell the author that he had done so, got nothing but rebuke.

We read in the October *Atlantic* that Tolstoi's wife says he changes his opinions every two years, and that the charge is admitted by him, as well as by one of his enthusiastic admirers, to be substantially true.

Wendell Phillips can scarcely be honored too much for the energy and steadfastness with which he went on, year after year, attacking slavery; but he was obliged to approve of its abolition by men whom he had denounced bitterly, and whose motives were such as he had done his best to make inoperative. Emancipation must be considered his work as well as theirs,

however; but after it was accomplished, we find him advocating one wild plan after another, in a way that reminds me of the story of the first steamer that the Chinese tried to navigate without any European on board. She made her way by a zig-zag course to her destined port; but when she got there, none of the officers knew how to stop her, and so they had to let her go round and round the harbor, until her fires burned out.

Of course, it is a great stimulus to intellectual activity to have an eloquent and zealous man or woman advocate first one view and then another of every difficult problem, and beseech us every time to work for that moment's special dictum, as if it were an infallible revelation. Our conservative and reactionary friends may, however, be relied upon for pointing out all the objections to every improvement; and there is really no need that they should have the assistance of any one who wishes to aid progress. It may be said that those who attack all institutions indiscriminately, do society a service similar to that rendered to the passengers on a train by the men who go about with hammers, tapping every wheel to test its soundness; but we can be sure that every new wheel will be tested thoroughly by the opponents of reform; and the man who does most to carry the train onward, is not he who taps the wheels, but he who makes them go round.

When I see one reformer trying to enlarge and another to restrict the power of government, when again I hear appeals made in the name of progress, now for confirming and now for abolishing private property, here against and there in favor of free trade, sanitary reform, manual training, scientific charity, vaccination, woman suffrage, vivisection, prohibition, employment of prisoners, free coinage, and scores of other issues, I am reminded of what took place, the first night that lamps were lighted in the yard of Harvard College. A zealous sophomore came running into a room, where a number of his class-mates were assembled, to tell them what a great and glorious deed he had done to distress their natural enemies, the professors. He had just taken his life in his hands, blown out a lamp near by, and escaped without capture. Everybody praised such heroic public-spirit; but before the congratula-

tions were half finished, another lad came in, almost breathless, to boast that he had just dared to relight that very lamp, which he supposed some professor had put out. Men and women ought to be wiser than this. The cause of reform is not so strong, that the world can afford to have it played with thus.

Nothing hinders so sadly the growth of that holy cause, as the difficulty of seeing what it really means. A young man or woman might naturally speak, when asked to take an interest in reform, as the Hindoo did, who was invited to become a Christian, and replied, "I have listened to thirteen missionaries, and each one condemns all the others as in dangerous error. It is certain that all are not right; and it is twelve to one that all are in the wrong."

Perhaps I might feel tempted, if told that I ought to help circulate the works of some author, about whom I know only that he is a reformer, to remember the story of a wicked man who added to the good old epitaph,

"When this you see,  
Prepare straightway to follow me,"

the naughty words,

"Before to follow, I consent.  
I'd like to know which way you went."

We should not, of course, forget that reformers, however erratic and inconsistent, are on the average much more disinterested than the advocates of conservatism, who are generally in the pay of vested interests, kept up to benefit the few at the expense of the many. It is also well to remember that our race has never yet been able to develop all its capacities and powers, except perhaps in the case of a few exceptional individuals. There is still need of earnest effort to enable all to climb where some have stood. This is an age of changes and improvements; and that makes it all the more necessary that the whole social fabric be sufficiently expanded and renovated to bear the growing burden of new requirements. We have not too many but too few reformers; and we cannot spare even those who are least endowed with wisdom. This last great gift comes so gradually that we can scarcely be too patient with him whose struggles to reach clear comprehension of humanity's most sacred interests have not yet brought him to the top of the mount of vision. Honor to those who are still toiling through the thick, dark woods at the mountain's base; for they at least do something to keep open the path which must be traversed by all who make the great ascent. All friends of reform are worthy of sympathy and praise; but some deserve more than others; and these latter cannot be overpraised without depriving the world's greatest benefactors of part of the honors justly due.

The highest honor we can pay to any man is to imitate him; and it ought to be plainly understood that the men most worthy of imitation are those who

have devoted all their zeal and thought to urging the race onwards in the straight line of progress, who have never tried to delay the great march, nor even allowed their feet to stray out of the direct path into any byway which has turned out to be no thoroughfare. Thus Voltaire wrote and lived for toleration and philanthropy, keeping to the same plan from first to last as closely as was permitted in that age of oppression, making such temporary concessions as seemed necessary for ultimate victory, often changing his point of attack, but constantly directing his blows against the same great enemy of liberty and progress. Still more consistent and far-sighted was John Stuart Mill, who would not, I think, see aught to change in the main objects of his life, if he were to come back to earth to-day. Time has already completed much of the work which Mill and Voltaire had most at heart; and there is good reason to believe that the future will build on the foundations which they helped to lay. This could not be said so truly of Rousseau, or Carlyle, or Tolstoi; but Mill and Voltaire had the great advantage of knowing how to make the light of experience guide them straight forward. Study of history taught them what institutions had worked for or against human happiness, which among many attempts at change had turned out to be mistakes, and which had shown themselves to be real improvements. Knowledge of what was worst in the past helped them to see what was best in the present and most worthy of fostering care. Their ideal was not floating far away in the clouds, and changing with them, but standing near at hand on solid earth; and it needed only to be enlarged, multiplied, and strengthened, in order to become a universal blessing. This is what Mill, Voltaire, and their friends learned from the philosophy of Bacon and Locke, a system which has had too little influence in America, but is now gaining general approval in the highly advanced form to which it has been developed by Herbert Spencer. The laws of human progress are now plain enough to show which reforms can succeed by obeying them, and which must fail on account of disobedience. The application of this general principle to particular cases must be reserved for another article. My present purpose is merely to show that reformers are under the same necessity as other laborers of conforming to natural laws. Any attempt at reform which is made in opposition to science will be no help, but only a hindrance to progress.

#### RELATIVITY AND CONSCIOUSNESS.

BY JOHN SANDISON.

THE theory of the relativity of knowledge is founded on the old idea of the subjectivity of the ego which Berkeley in his early years enunciated with all the confidence and hopefulness of youth, but which afterwards

received its death-blow from the spirit of the Kantian philosophy which brought back reflexion from "subjective uncertainty to the green pasture of objective reality."

When this theory denies that there is any possibility of knowing reality, the doctrine really refutes its own premises and the basis of its argument, for it founds its reasoning on a supposed reality, the existence of which it admits cannot be proved or recognised by the only means of acquiring knowledge open to it, viz. thought-symbols, for after all these thought-symbols are not credited with furnishing the individual with true and certain knowledge; and accordingly if the reasoning of the relativist is to be carried out to its legitimate conclusion the individual is not even left to the subjective play of illusions for there could be no criterion of certainty by which these illusions could be recognised as such. No wonder that Heine remarked "that the distinction of objects into phenomena and noumena, i. e. into things that for us exist and things that for us do not exist is an Irish bull in philosophy."

It has been pointed out by a recent writer that the theory of the relativity of knowledge receives its plausibility from being confused with another fact of experience, viz. in acquiring knowledge there is always a conviction that man can never know things fully; every investigation of science, even when dealing with the most elementary things, is forced to stop short of the whole truth and that something beyond, that inner essence, is just regarded as the essence of the thing and thus the reality is supposed to lie outside knowledge. It is quite true that man can never arrive at absolute truth. The facts of existence are so numerous that thought can never come to a full and complete knowledge of them, but the principle of evolution is applicable here for man's knowledge is always a development and true so far as it goes and is ever progressing to, but never attaining absolute knowledge.

It is one of the principal results of German idealistic philosophy to show that thought is not merely a state of a subjective individual (not a knowing of thought-symbols and nothing more as Dr. Janes believes, see *The Open Court*, No. 217), for man's whole consciousness of self implies the consciousness of that which is in distinction from it and which grows by means of it, and without it self-consciousness could never come to a knowledge of itself. When this relationship of consciousness or thought with the world in all its variety is reflected upon, man is lifted to a higher standpoint where he sees that his feelings are united with the objective and the universal by means of which a guarantee for its truth can be obtained and in which he can find a field for the boundless activity of his higher consciousness. If looked at in the light of evolution and the laws of development neither

thought nor things can any longer be regarded as absolutely separate and distinct from each other, on the contrary each is necessary for the other, and either taken by itself is a meaningless abstraction. Man is not called upon to prove the existence of the world, but to comprehend it as it exists and to direct the activity of his will in accordance with the highest principles brought to light in self-consciousness.

#### THE ETHICAL SOCIETIES AND THEIR VIEWS OF ETHICS.

HOPING that we could lead the Ethical Societies to the recognition of the truth that ethics must rest upon a basis, and that this basis must be a clear knowledge of the world in which we live, our criticisms were formerly made in a reserved and private way. We avoided public struggle but have found that this way leads to no results. Our attitude it appears was rather considered partly as weakness, partly as an importune and unsolicited censure, and we see that struggle is a necessary factor not only in the world in general but in the field of ethical aspirations also.

While the Ethical Societies avoid struggling where they ought to struggle, they also struggle in a wrong way, they are lacking in the ethics of struggle; and there is no better proof of the truth of this than the answers directly and indirectly given to our criticisms. Our criticisms were never personal, they never contained any offences, they were respectful toward the men who represent the views criticised and were written with the sincere desire to come to a mutual understanding. Mr. Salter was the only one, and we say this in his honor, who replied directly and without circumlocution, but he did so privately, as it were, explaining that the Ethical Societies as such had neither a religious nor a philosophical opinion, they simply tried to do the good.

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We find most of the objections made us privately re-stated by Mr. Horace L. Traubel, editor of *The Conservator*, of Philadelphia, who says with reference to the article "The Ethics of Struggle and the Ethical Societies":

"Mr. Carus thinks 'the ethics of struggle' cannot be sufficiently realised by the Ethical Societies because the lecturers seem to avoid any active participation in controversies over the constitution of their movement and the philosophical question it opens up. Mr. Carus has himself raised questions which he appears to think have not received the attention they deserved. I think that in the active questions of the day the lecturers quite actively participate. Mr. Salter's discussion of labor—its rights and duties—is well known and always fundamental and generous. The only important issue which Mr. Carus has raised—whether the Societies should have a moral creed or philosophy—has often been presented and discussed."

This is a misunderstanding, first of what we have said in a former article, and secondly of the situation as

it is. We have never meant to deny the fact that the Ethical Societies in general and Mr. Salter especially are laboring hard in almost every field, social, political, religious. But labor is not as yet struggle. We concede even that they are in a certain sense struggling, for they cannot help struggling in this world of strife. What we mean is, that they avoid struggling concerning *the main issue which alone can give character to their work*. We fully recognise their good will as well as their busy activity in struggling against what they conceive to be false and wrong. But the point is that they do not give information as to what their conception of false and wrong is. What is the use of all the preaching to do good and avoid evil if a definite statement of what good and evil means is to be avoided. We might justly repeat to the Ethical Societies the word spoken to Martha:

"Thou art careful and troubled about many things, but one thing is needful."

The Ethical Societies do not understand that one thing is needful, and that without it all their work must be vain. Here lies Mr. Traubel's misunderstanding of the situation.

On the battlefields of life as much as on the battlefields of real war it is not only required that one must fight, but also that one must fight on the right spot. There is a certain place where the decision lies. This place has been surrendered by the leaders of the Ethical Societies and they make a principle of it not to take any definite position either pro or con where they should bear the brunt of the battle.

There must be a reason why the fundamental problem of ethics as a matter of principle is not discussed by the Societies for Ethical Culture, why they avoid all struggle about it. And there is a reason. They declare it to be transcendental and say that the ladder of science does not reach so far. This practically makes of the ethical teacher a priest whose sentence is to be taken as authority concerning that which has to be regarded as moral or immoral. The public have simply to accept their preaching and there is no reasoning about it.

We say that the place where the decision lies, has been surrendered by the Ethical Societies. This is true, but we have to add that they have only apparently surrendered it. They cannot surrender it without at the same time destroying the efficacy of their work. All they can do is avoid discussing it and let the decision lie with the lecturers of the Ethical Societies. Thus while they disavow the objective authority of facts verifiable by scientific discussion, they have adopted and had to adopt the subjective authority of their individual opinions.

The Societies for Ethical Culture call themselves ethical, but they do not intend to find out and clearly to state what is meant by ethical. They made it a

rule to adhere in this respect to a "non-committal policy." Their ethics is pure conventionalism and thus all their struggle and work necessarily is lacking in system and certainty of direction. Nor do they seem to care for system and certainty of direction, for Professor Adler in his song of the Golden City compares them to builders of an ideal city who do not know what the plan of building may be. The work of the Ethical Societies must necessarily be a mere hustling about so long as they adhere to their non-committal policy of having no plan.

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The Ethical Societies have adopted a very beautiful name, but they must not think that their name gives them the authority to declare their way of thinking to be ethical. They are not the first and the only ethical movement in the world. We have said before and say it again that every religion is an ethical movement, and every religious idea if true and practically applied, is ethical. *Vice versa* ethical maxims are based upon some conception, be it religious, philosophical, or scientific. To act somehow, one must have an opinion as to how to act, one must have an idea why to act in this and not in another way; and to exclude this opinion, which is the idea on which the course of action is to be based, is to take out the very core of action.

Mr. Traubel says in another editorial note of his:

"*Open Court* remarks: 'Among the adherents of Ethical Culture the word justice is often used, but I have found no definition of the term.' No doubt. Nor is that the only term the friends of Ethical Culture use; nor is it the only term they and others, using, do not too sharply define. Definition may ruin as well as make sense and sobriety."

A wrong definition will ruin and a correct definition will make sense and sobriety. Therefore let us have correct definitions. But to make certain ideas fundamental principles of conduct and leave people in doubt about their exact meaning is in our conception of ethics unethical. Shall everybody think by good and bad, justice and injustice what he pleases? Are the words ethics, goodness, justice, etc. catch-words like the phrases of party platforms, where an exact definition of the meaning, so the party leaders fear, might do more harm than good? The words of a preacher of ethics are his actions and they are comparable to the bills in which a merchant pays his obligations. Let the value of the bills be unmistakable and let the words of the public preacher be clear and definite.

If clearness of our plans and aspirations means creed, if lucidity and intelligibility of our words means philosophy, we certainly consider creed and philosophy as indispensable conditions of ethics.

The words ethics, morality, goodness, welfare, justice, etc., are most emphatic and valuable words, but

the leaders of the Ethical Societies when using them have failed to give them a definite meaning. And without a definite meaning, they are empty phrases, mere counters which, however, to the unknowing appear good money. Says Schiller in one of his Xenions :

" Long you can pay with your counters; they'll be accepted by many.  
But in the end, my dear sirs, you'll have to pay in good cash."

The Ethical Societies have a right to be as they are, for they will have to bear the consequences themselves. But they are a public movement. So is *The Open Court*. This being so, it is our duty to criticise them whenever we hold their teachings to be wrong. Since they proclaim themselves Ethical Societies, we have a right to stay them and to ask : What are you ? What do you mean by ethical ? To ignore such questions indignantly or to resent them is in our opinion not the proper thing.

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As an instance of indirect replies we quote the following passage from Professor Adler's article in the first number of the *International Journal of Ethics*, the organ of the Societies for Ethical Culture. Professor Adler discusses the objections made to the Ethical Societies ; he first speaks of the churches as making "circumvallations of sectarian opinion" and he continues :

" The same objection lies against the adoption of a philosophical formula, or set of formulas, as a basis of moral union. In the first place, there is no philosophical system which commands universal assent. Is any one hair-brained enough to suppose that he can propose one? . . . To adopt a philosophical formula as the basis of union would be to proclaim ourselves a philosophical sect ; and a philosophical sect is the most contemptible of all sects, because the sectarian bias is most repugnant to the spirit of genuine philosophy." *International Journal of Ethics*, Vol. I, No. 1, p. 18.

That which commands universal assent is called "science."

Science does not command universal assent among the ignorant, but science is of such a nature that in its progress it does gradually, but with certainty, command universal assent.

If in ethical action we had to wait for a universal assent, among all people, the foolish as well as the wise, we might just as well cease acting altogether. Such a universal assent in ethics if it were possible at all, would presuppose a universal assent on the fundamental questions of religion as well as philosophy. The essential features of a religion are recognised in its ethics. Two religions are in practical agreement if and in so far as they agree ethically ; all other differences will be found to be mere differences of their method of formulation. Religious views may be expressed in a more or less allegorical language or in an altogether different system of mythology. We may try, and it is natural that we do try, to free ourselves from mythology, but that will not lead to pure ethics, so called, i. e. to

ethics which will hover in the air without any religious or philosophical basis, but to an ethics based upon the consideration of a pure statement of facts. It is the ethics of a religion of science, and that is the aim and ideal of positivism, as we understand it.

Now we do not at all demand the founding of a philosophical sect, whatever that may mean, but we do demand that in all ethical aspirations there should be a criterion of ethics and that this criterion should be enunciated in clear and unmistakable words. Whether we call such an enunciation a philosophical, a scientific, a religious, or an ethical formula, or whatever we call it, is indifferent. Philosophy is nothing but a critical clarification of our thoughts. Is it defensible to make objections, in the way Professor Adler does, against the attempt to deepen our ethical and religious conceptions ? The ethical problem cannot be solved by mystification by declaring that it lies beyond the pale of science, but it can still less be solved by scolding. To speak of "hair-brained enough" and "contemptible" (and it alters little whether these words were aimed at us or at any other person or persons) is to say the very least, in the highest degree unwise, and an ethical society in which such tendencies prevail will contribute little toward the moral progress of mankind.

#### CURRENT TOPICS.

THE Hon. Mr. Pickler, member of congress from South Dakota, will go down the raging stream of history as "The soldier's friend." He is a patriot statesman of the ancient Roman stamp ; and he believes that "the men who saved the country" ought to have it. Mr. Pickler thinks that "the nation owes the soldiers a debt which it can never pay" ; and as a small instalment on account he proposes that by force of an act of congress they shall all be admitted into the World's Fair free of charge. This broad and liberal policy, at the expense of other people, may secure for Mr. Pickler the "soldier vote" next fall. Through inadvertence, he forgot to include free drinks and sandwiches in his bill. He has remedied this oversight in another bill which makes it the duty of the War Department to furnish rations to the members of the Grand Army of the Republic at its next annual encampment. This, of course, is better than nothing, but Mr. Pickler may lose a good many veteran votes because his bill does not provide for transportation as well as food. What do I care for free rations if I have to pay my fare to Washington and back ? And Mr. Pickler ought to have seen to it also that if the veteran is not able to attend the encampment and eat his rations there he shall receive a cash commutation for them at his home. There are politicians of great moral incapacity, in congress, and out of it, who think that the pride of the Grand Army has become a mendicant spirit to which they may safely appeal for votes.

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Perhaps there is no country in Europe where the mean custom of "tipping" the lower classes is more general and more degrading than it is in England ; and there is no country in the world where the meaner custom of "tipping" the higher classes is so prevalent and so demoralising as it is in the United States. Nearly every office holder, is ready to receive a "tip" ; and "can thy spirit wonder" that its power of debasement reaches

the old soldiers provided for in Mr. Pickler's bill. Not even the judges are proof against the seductions of a "tip"; for I have seen the Chief Justice of a great State beg like a tramp for a "tip" from a railroad corporation. Senator Chandler of New Hampshire, is waging indignant war on the practice of "tipping" the judges of that State, but he will very likely be beaten in the fight. Because Francis Bacon, Lord High Chancellor, took "tips" two hundred and seventy years ago, he was punished heavily, and his ignominious fate points a moral for all time. Nevertheless, our judges imitate him without any fear of punishment whatever. Senator Chandler says: "There is much need of fearless comment on many of the past and completed acts of our judges. Some of them ride free on Boston and Maine Railroad passes. I think also some of them ride free on the Concord and Montreal Railway. The judges salaries were raised \$500 each in 1881, with the distinct object of keeping them from riding free." Had they been raised \$50,000 it would not have made any difference. The poison of "tips" is in our official blood, and millionaire dignitaries will beg for "tips" without any sense of shame. I had a very intimate friend who was a cabinet minister in the administration of President Grant; and when he went to Washington he got a "tip" from the Street Railway Company in the shape of a pass. He told me that one day, when riding up to the capitol, he handed his pass to the conductor, who, being a poor reader, began spelling out the name before all the passengers in the car. Mortified and ashamed, my friend snatched the pass from the conductor, paid his five cents, and never offered the pass again. Not until the stupid conductor began spelling out his name in public did the "Honorable Secretary" see how undignified and improper it was for a cabinet minister to take a "tip" from the Street Railway Company.

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A few days ago, a conscientious jury, befogged by counsel, and bewildered by the judge, threw dice for the verdict, whereupon the "twelve good men and true" were called into court and severely reprimanded. They ought to have been complimented, for they ended the dispute in a very sensible way; that is, it would have been sensible if adopted at the beginning of the controversy. In fact, any plan of settling a dispute is better than going to law,—as the law is administered now. For example, throw your eye over this little paragraph which I find in this morning's paper: "In the Appellate Court yesterday opinions were rendered in thirty-six cases, sixteen of which were reversed." When those thirty-six cases get up to the Supreme Court it is the mere flip of a copper how many more of them will stand. Considering their loss of time and money, their months of anxiety and care, and their waste of nerve capital, would it not have been wiser for all the litigants in those cases to have cast lots for it at the very beginning of their difference? Out of thirty-six cases twenty are sustained and sixteen reversed,—and another court to hear from yet. Now, take any blacksmith in Chicago, and let him give judgment in those thirty-six cases after hearing the evidence and the arguments on every side, and it is morally certain that on appeal to the higher courts more than twenty of his decisions will be sustained. By the law of chance alone he will be right half the time, which gives him eighteen cases, and surely we may allow him two more for common sense. The state usurps the right to license men to practise in the courts; and it provides by impossible statute that all applicants for admission to the bar shall know the law. The result of all its fussy interference is that no two lawyers know the law alike. And when they get promoted to the bench they know it less alike than ever. Whether a man is or is not a citizen of the United States appears to be a very easy conundrum, and yet the judges of the Supreme Court of the United States in the case of Governor Boyd could not agree on the answer.

The death of Mr. Spurgeon is not without pathos, for with him dies a God; the God of Calvin. While Spurgeon himself, for the good deeds done in the body, enters Paradise, his Cromwellian theologies, glide with solemn dignity into the Purgatory of dead creeds. The churches are aware of this, for, said the Rev. Mr. Delano in his memorial sermon, "The last and the noblest of the Puritan preachers is gone." This lamentation concedes that Puritanism itself is gone. The Rev. Dr. Lawrence declared that Spurgeon was "England's greatest preacher"; and some other Doctors of Divinity even canonised him. "I have not many saints in my calendar," said the Rev. Dr. Wolfenden, "but Saint Spurgeon is one of them." This kind of idolatry, though slightly pagan in its form and fashion is animated by the spirit of liberty. I rejoice to see a man brave enough to canonise his own saints and deify his own images, without asking the synod, the sanhedrim, or the areopagy to do it for him; and in truth there was a good deal of the Saint Paul about Spurgeon. He was at least equally worthy of beatification, for he did much in his own way to beatify other people, and chiefly the lowly and the poor. I think he was the reincarnation of John Bunyan, and the theology which is passing away with him is this, as I find it in a eulogy on Spurgeon in the *Springfield Republican*, "He not only believing in everlasting punishment, but he insisted on others believing it." Although Spurgeon was a sensational preacher he was not a clerical clown, which is more than can be said for many of his imitators among our American pulpites. He hated the devil, not because he had anything against him, but because he thought God hated him. His capacity for belief was colossal, and to him a truth not biblical was error. The telescope was a seditious heretic, and the almanac a liar. To him the discoveries of modern science were phosphorescent illusions leading men astray. I heard him say so; he believed it; and, to his credit be it said, he bravely spoke his thought out like a man.

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At the risk of writing myself down a snob, I must confess that I am something of a man worshipper; and the praises given to a great man drop like soothing flattery upon me. When I hear an eloquent senator cheer I take to myself a share of the tribute, for he has only done what I could do if I were in the senate; and when the circus clown gets a round of applause for jumping over eight horses and an elephant, I appropriate my share of that, because I could as easily make the jump,—with practice. Our praise of mighty men is a form of self-esteem, for their feats are only proofs of what we ourselves may do. A few years ago I happened to be in London, and while there I called at the "Licensed Victuallers Asylum" to pay my respects to Jim Ward, an old man of eighty years or so, once champion prizefighter of England. I did that, not because I had any special affection for Jim Ward, or the pugilistic profession, but because I have a meek and lowly reverence for any man who was the best man of his day at anything. In that same idolatrous mood I went the following Sunday to hear Mr. Spurgeon preach; for he was then the champion of England in his line; and like Jim Ward, he had very muscular opinions, especially about the neck and shoulders. I was told to go early, and I did so, but already there were hundreds of people crowded about the various doors of the Tabernacle, and so great was the rush when the doors opened that I had to be satisfied with "standing room only." Although I was in a most unfavorable place, the preacher's voice was so clear, sonorous, and well modulated, that I did not miss a word. North of what Mr. Beecher used to call the equator, that is, from the nostrils up, Mr. Spurgeon's head was small, though solid; south of the equator, it was heavy and large. He preached from the text, "He is altogether lovely;" and he handled it in a very familiar and patronising way; with an air of self-confidence that was nearly self-conceit.

"He is altogether lovely," said Mr. Spurgeon, tossing the text about as a conjurer tosses a brass ball. "He is altogether lovely," he repeated over and over again. In fact, he repeated himself too much, as most extemporaneous orators do. With careless indifference to criticism he dealt in quaint and curious phrases; and with uncivil candor he exclaimed, "This is a fool of a world"; which indeed it really is, although it may not be polite to say so right out in meeting, as Mr. Spurgeon did. Further on, he compared himself to "a chick in the egg picking at the shell and trying to get out." Also, he gave his congregation this theology, which may be sound, although I doubt it, "If you love Christ, it is a simple pledge and token that he loves you." A moment before he had said that some of them loved Christ for "what could be got out of him"; a sarcasm that echoed back and forth from soul to soul until the sermon ended. Some of his language patronised the Lord, as when in flattering Christ and describing his beauties he said repeatedly, "This is rare praise"; and he asked the congregation this question, "Did you ever feel inclined to excuse Christ?" Some of his descriptions were cheap, like the puffs of an auctioneer, as for instance this, "The best of the best is to be found in Christ"; and this, "Christ is that ring which is diamond, emerald, ruby, and pearl." Once he threw contempt upon his text by saying, "This is only Old Testament praise after all"; for the "spouse" who gave it, "had never seen the real Christ." What I most admired was the sublime daring of the man when he said, "The recent facts of modern science are only worthy of contempt; they are utterly beneath argument." His discourse was not without poetical imagery although somewhat overstrained, and it contained sentences like this, "When our eyes shall find a heaven in beholding him"; and, "The merriest sight that ever I saw was my sins falling into Christ's sepulchre and he lying there my substitute." Of his philanthropy every fragment will survive; of his theology, nothing.

M. M. TRUMBULL.

## CORRESPONDENCE.

### THE RESURRECTION PROBLEM.

To the Editor of The Open Court:—

"Macrococosm and Micrococosm = Autocosm."

PERMIT me to offer a short argument contravening Mr. Whipple's theory that the resurrection of Jesus from the dead was merely a resuscitation à la Humane Society of the apparently dead. This partial estimate I find, nowadays, to be very prevalent among ordinary septsics. Yet looked at from a medical point of view, it seems quite untenable and really won't hold water at all. From the latter standpoint it is indeed physically certain that his supposed ascension from the dead was, like his subsequent ascension into "Heaven"—a mere phenomenon, or phantom, conjured up by the excited feelings of his credulous and superstitious followers, the fishermen of Galilee, and especially of Mary Magdalene, "out of whom he had driven seven devils," which is the animistic, or spiritualist, equivalent for lunacy. Indeed a popular theological volume by Dr. Hanna, son-in-law of Dr. Chalmers: "Forty Days After our Lord's Passion," distinctly postulates the assertion that her "sin" consisted in being insane and not a "social evil." The probability is that she was both and hence doubly an untrustworthy witness for an event so unprecedented and one so universally conflicting with all human experience and judicial reason. Christ's posthumous apparition, on the sole evidence at our command, supposing it to be a contemporary record and not a later Church myth, is clearly a quite familiar case of *Spookism* or *Ghostism*—the "lawless and uncertain" Hamlet-like creation of the overstrained and unregulated emotions and imaginations of his bereaved *cénacle*, exactly as experienced by the *narcosis*-ridden poet and dreamer Coleridge who, when asked by a lady if

he believed in Ghosts, answered: "No, Madam, I have seen too many of them." Relativism, Monism, Phenomenalism, and Evolutionism have thrown quite a new light on this, and all analogous mysteries, and Mahatmisms—a fact of which, as yet, Clericalism and modern crazed Occultism takes little or no account. How else could Dr. Hanna lay stress on the testimony of a female lunatic, or Arch-Deacon Farrar, in his recent biography of St. Paul, the real Founder, and not Christ, of Gentile Christianity, argue for his being a victim of the falling sickness? Modern alienist Medicine has clearly established the fact that epilepsy deranges and breaks down the mind faster, and more completely, than it does the body. And yet St. Paul is credited, both by the universal early tradition of the Church and by his latest biographer alike, as afflicted with this terrible *Neurosis*—the *Morbus Sacer* of the Ancients. It seems thus certain that Pauline Christianity—like Islam—had its origin in the brain of a would be Reformer, not thoroughly *compos mentis*, as indeed Swedenborg and Emerson in his "Representative Men" allow, being, by the latter, classed with Sir Isaac Newton and Pascal. No doubt St. Paul, on these nosological premises, did not die a martyr by instantaneous decapitation. His death must have been a far harder and more lingering living one, by what is vulgarly—often falsely—termed *Softening of the brain*, as in the case, only to mention three examples—one for each division of the United Kingdom,—Thomas Moore, Walter Scott, and Michael Faraday. Heinrich Heine's wretched death in life arose from lesion, not of the brain, but only of the spinal marrow, leaving his mental faculties practically intact. Thus, fable and vault as we may from our false dominant ideal, Christianity has no superhuman origin any more than other ancient or modern religions. To its founders, as to all others, is applicable Byron's verdict on Rousseau and other originators of sects and systems: "These are the madmen who have made men mad by their contagion." *Self-denial* being the only denial that is quite inadmissible. And, as Godism is only a section of Spiritualism, we must extend the negating principle to divinity itself; Theism having not only no better evidence in its favor than any subordinate form of Superhumism, but being distinctly contraindicated and foreclosed by the substitution of Egoism for Absolutism, or true Causality, for to that point we are forced by the subjectivation of the objective. When we resolve all things into Self we virtually dissolve the former and reach, on the surest *data*, Kant's negation of *Ding an sich*; a postulate from which that Prince of Metaphysicians recoiled in all his writings subsequent to the first edition of the "Critique of Pure Reason"! Nowadays we dare not be content with less and Practical Reason and Life conduct *must* follow suit. No courage, or mental grasp, seems necessary, in our age, to hold fast this obvious conviction. It is quite implicit in the axiom *All Perception is only Apperception*, i. e. Self-Perception; our own sensorial states of Consciousness being, in the last resort, the goal of all research whatsoever, mental, ethical, or empirical. Higher than, or apart from, Self, or aggregate of Selves we can never rationally presume to range. That limit is the end of our tether. Beyond it is to us, not merely Chaos, but Nullity.

R. LEWINS, M. D., Surgeon, Lieut. Colonel (R.)

### BOOK REVIEWS.

EVOLUTIONARY ETHICS. By Clarence H. Seyler. London: W. L. Prewer. 1891.

This pamphlet is the result of earnest study and thought on the most important subject of all times. The following sentences culled from the conclusion will show the spirit in which it is written: "Actuated by a primordial impulse to seek happiness, man has sought, from time immemorial, to form a true theory of the Universe in order that he might derive from it rules of conduct which should secure his permanent happiness. To such systems

the name of 'Religion' has been given. . . . To desire, to act, and to know how to act in order to satisfy desire, is the business of life. These mighty Religions, then, were nothing more than crude and imperfect philosophies. They were the necessary steps towards a better and truer one. They have shaped the history of humanity—in rhythms that have led the race, now upward; now through terrible bloodshed, cruelty, and persecution; at times and for a period, downward into night and degradation—but always leaving the race ultimately a step in advance. . . . Religion has survived, whilst theologies have perished. . . . Philosophy is essentially the religion of progress, of enlightenment, of sympathy, of conscious mastery over nature, human and external—and, therefore, of freedom and organisation, toleration, efficiency, of systematised methods and knowledge, rising from facts to general truths and principles! . . . We know of no finality in the realm of the knowable and have no weapons save those of persevering investigation, culture, and mutual help. To perfect our methods, our skill, our character, our mastery of self and of the forces at our command—in a word, the attainment of *well-balanced efficiency*, physical, intellectual, sympathetic, and automatic—this, the true *Culture of existence*, is our proximate aim for the attainment of our ultimate end."

THE WHIRLWIND SOWN AND REAPED. By *Saladin*. London: W. Stewart & Co.

Saladin, the English freethinker and undaunted enemy of traditional orthodoxy in every form, has published a new book which shows the same tendencies as his former publications, among which "God and his Book" and "Woman: Her Glory, Her Shame, and Her God" are the best known. "The Whirlwind Sown and Reaped" is a novel which considered in itself aside from its tendency is original in composition, well told and interesting. Yet it is to be doubted whether Saladin was fair toward his adversaries, the clergy. It has been customary among the faithful to represent the freethinker as licentious and use the word *libertine* in the exclusive sense of a person lax in morals. In Saladin's story we see the reverse of the medal. The evil spirit of the story is a young clergyman whose licentiousness entangles him into such troubles that he sees but one way out, which is to make people believe that he has died. The coffin is filled with stones and buried while he absconds. Devil as he is, he commits new crimes and when detected ends at last miserably in a ditch. We are not pleased with those pious stories which paint the devil red, but we are not pleased either with the infidel stories which paint the devil black. However when the pious complain about the latter, we shall have to point to the former and ask, Who was the first to set the bad example? We consider infidel novels of this type as a natural reaction and any one who has excuses for the former will have to bear with the latter. Saladin is undoubtedly one of the best authors of his kind and his novel will command the same or more interest than Helen Gardner's story "Is this Your Son my Lord?"

HYGIENE OF THE NURSERY. Including the General Regimen and Feeding of Infants and Children; Massage, and the Domestic Management of the Ordinary Emergencies of Early Life. By *Louis Starr*, M. D. Philadelphia: P. Blakiston, Son, & Co. 1891.

This neat little volume of 286 pages is full of good advice and instruction to mothers and nurses, and many of the difficulties experienced in raising healthy children will be overcome by studying and carefully carrying out the directions here given. The chapter on Food and Dietary are especially valuable, and include the author's method of sterilising milk for the nursery; too much care cannot be taken in preparing the baby's food, and we heartily endorse the author's condemnation of the deadly feeding-bottle tube. In his preface to the first edition the author says: ". . . Little

or no reference has been made to drugs or methods of medical treatment." This is commendable in a work intended for mothers and nurses, and we see many evidences of the author's caution in this direction. It is, therefore, all the more surprising that the danger of directing a nurse to place the delicate bulb of a clinical thermometer in a child's mouth, did not occur to him. We think decided preference should be given to the axilla. This is the third edition of the book. 703.

## NOTES.

*Liberty*, the exponent of Mr. Benjamin R. Tucker's conception of anarchism, says concerning Mr. Horace L. Traubel's criticism:

"Referring to a remark of the editor of *The Open Court*; to the effect that the ethical-culture workers often use the term justice but never take the trouble to define it, the *Conservator* says: 'Nor is it [justice] the only term which the friends of ethical culture, using, do not too sharply define. Definition may ruin as well as make sense and sobriety.' This is a curious confession. Either the teachers use words without attaching to them any clear ideas themselves, or they are unwilling that their listeners shall attach clear ideas to their terms. In either case, nothing will ever come of their efforts. Science without clear definitions is impossible; only theologians and metaphysicians dread the application of scientific methods to their systems. Would Mr. Traubel advise Tyndall to dispense with definitions, on the ground that physical science would be ruined by them? If ethical culture is not scientific, what title has it to our respect?"

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