

THE OPEN COURT.

A WEEKLY JOURNAL

DEVOTED TO THE RELIGION OF SCIENCE.

No. 327. (VOL. VII.—48.) CHICAGO, NOVEMBER 30, 1893.

Two Dollars per Year.
Single Copies, 5 Cents.

COPYRIGHT BY THE OPEN COURT PUBLISHING Co.—Reprints are permitted only on condition of giving full credit to Author and Publisher.

LIBERTY.

I. A HISTORICAL STUDY.

BY MONCURE D. CONWAY.

PROBABLY the most effective political work ever written in Europe was Thomas Paine's "Rights of Man." Most of it was written at "The Angel," Islington,—at that time (1791) a grand hostelry, where the mail stages stopped, as may be now seen in the tile-decorations of the present "public house" which stands on the spot, and still bears the angelic name. I recently visited the place, and was told by the polite publican that within this century the inn had been twice rebuilt. Of the old edifice not a stone was left, nor even a bit of furniture; and evidently no tradition of the fact that Paine had there written the "Rights of Man." Yet there is one relic preserved from Paine's time more interesting than the building or the furniture: a painted figure, Parian I believe, about one foot high, classically draped. This was in the Angel Inn a hundred years ago, and it appears to me a figure of Liberty. It is probably of French manufacture, and, although there is no word or date on this goddess, it impresses me as a symbolical figure from the early and dignified days of the Revolution. In 1790-1792 Paine often passed between Paris and London. In the autumn of 1790, the year in which he sent Washington the key of the Bastille, Paine came from Paris and put up at the Angel, where he began (November) "The Rights of Man." Having no real evidence, I please my imagination with the conjecture that he brought this goddess with him, to show his radical circle in London, and beside it began his famous book.

If the figure be indeed Liberty her dingy condition, in the Angel's Bar Room, is too true a symbol of the modern regard for Liberty as compared with the passion she inspired in the breasts of Paine and his comrades. While Great Britain was trying to crush American Independence, fifteen years before Paine promulgated the Republic of the World from the Angel Inn, an enthusiastic club of republicans was formed in London. Their intellectual leader was the Rev. Richard Price, D.D., a Unitarian minister, who published such a powerful defence of the American Revolution that Congress invited him to make Philadelphia his home.

But Dr. Price remained at his post in London. He corresponded with great men in Europe, notably with the philosopher and statesman Turgot. In a letter to Turgot he wrote: "I look indeed to the new world with satisfaction and triumph; and the time will probably come when a great part of Europe will be flocking to a country where, unmolested by civil and spiritual tyranny, they will be able to enjoy in safety the exercise of reason and the rights of men." But Turgot was not sanguine, and replies: "Je ne vous parle plus des Américains: car, quelque soit le denouement de cette guerre, j'ai un peu perdu l'esperance de voir sur la terre une nation vraiment libre, et vivant sans guerre. Ce spectacle est reservé à des siècles bien éloignés." * A few years later America was free, and there was every prospect that from the new world republican liberty would spread through Europe. The Bastille fell, and over its ruins arose a beautiful vision for mankind—the Federation of the World. At a dinner of republicans in London, at which the now aged Dr. Price was probably present, a toast was offered to the "Memory of Joshua," who executed so many kings. Paine observed that he would not treat kings like Joshua, adding: "I'm of the Scotch parson's opinion when he prayed against Louis XIV,—'Lord, shake him over the mouth of hell, but don't let him drop!'" Paine then gave his toast, "The Republic of the World." This incident, recorded by the poet Rogers, who was present, I have just come upon, and it appears to me remarkably characteristic of the time. The old leader, Dr. Price, preaching before the Revolution Society, November 4, 1789, broke out with prophetic rapture at events in France.

"What an eventful period is this. I am thankful that I have lived to see it. I could almost say, Lord now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, for mine eyes have seen thy salvation. I have lived to see a diffusion of knowledge, which hath undermined superstition and error; I have lived to see the rights of men better understood than ever, and nations panting for liberty which seemed to have lost the idea of it; I have lived to see thirty millions of people, indignant and resolute, spurning at slavery, and demanding liberty with an irresistible voice,—their king led in triumph, and an arbitrary monarch surrendering himself to his subjects."

With this happy vision on them, the eyes of the

* "I say no more to you of the Americans; for whatever be the outcome of this war, I have rather lost hope of seeing on the earth a nation truly free, and living without war. This spectacle is reserved for very distant centuries."

venerable Dr. Price closed in death. Happily he never lived to witness the conspiracy of thrones against France, fomented by Burke, planned by Pitt, which caused the French Revolution to end in madness. For a century that Revolution has borne the brand due to the brow of Royalism. Liberty was involved in that disgrace and has never recovered from it. The aureola which America had woven around her brow was extinguished by the sentence of Madame Roland, when from her scaffold she apostrophised the statue—"O Liberty, what crimes have been committed in thy name!"

So went down in blood a great day of human hope, whose rising had a grand rose of dawn. The foes of Liberty had by terrorism evoked terrorism, and managed to deliver up the Revolution to demagogues, who fulfilled all the hopes of Tyranny. Nearly every noblest friend of Liberty was guillotined; and even Paine, who alone escaped his death-sentence, was compelled in the end to modify his old faith in the universal passion of the people for Liberty. In the year 1804, when the people of Louisiana petitioned Congress for self-government and freedom to continue the slave-trade, Paine wrote them a public letter, in which he says:

"In proportion as you become initiated into the principles and practice of the representative system of government, of which you have yet had no experience, you will participate more, and finally be participators of the whole. You see what mischief ensued in France by the possession of power before they understood principles. They earned liberty in words, but not in fact. The writer of this was in France through the whole of the Revolution, and knows the truth of what he speaks; for after endeavoring to give it principle, he had nearly fallen a victim to its rage."

This allusion was especially appropriate for Louisianians, mainly French, but Paine's words are pregnant, and bear on the issues of our later time. When that great apostle of Liberty, after fuller experiences of revolutionary struggles than any man who ever lived, confessed that the people could not be trusted with power before they understood principles; that the liberty they might so earn must be a mere word, not a fact; we may conclude *a fortiori* that the rest of the world had reached that conclusion. Liberty ceased to be a watchword either in Europe or America (where slavery steadily gained sovereignty through the "self-government" of states). Although during the century which has intervened since the French Revolution, the Africans in America have been freed, and the serfs of Russia; in neither case was emancipation the result of any popular love of Liberty. Slavery in America committed suicide, and Serfdom in Russia ended by the moral sentiment of a Czar. During that time there have been only two small books published actually defending the principles of Liberty,—Wilhelm Von Humboldt's "Sphere and Duties of Government," and John Stuart Mill's essay on "Liberty." Both of these books

were answered with almost a chorus of denials by eminent men,—among others by the English Judge, Sir James Stephen,—and those principles are to-day regarded in England as the "fad" of Herbert Spencer, Auberon Herbert, and the small Society formed for the defence of personal liberty from the constant encroachments upon it.

Such is the confirmation of Napoleon Bonaparte's discovery, uttered to one of his instruments, in these words: "The people do not care about Liberty; what they want is equality. Those who care for Liberty are a few peculiar persons." In those words lay the secret of Napoleon's power. He was the one man able to read the revolutionary rune,—“Liberty, Equality, Fraternity.” He knew that Liberty could not coexist with social equality. That it was social,—not merely legal,—equality the revolutionists aimed at, was proved by its association with Fraternity. If people have liberty they may accord liberty to all others, but socially they will distinguish between equals and inferiors, and fraternise with those who can exchange advantages. This is true among all sorts and conditions of men, high and low. Social equality in a free community is visionary.

But there is a community that is not free,—an army in the field. The equality and fraternity impossible in peaceful and industrial society may be approximated where men are reduced to one and the same function, where they become uniforms and rifles, have one purpose, and are made comrades by common conditions, regulations, and dangers. The revolutionists' dream of Equality and Fraternity led them inevitably under a military despotism. Napoleon took away all personal liberty, but he gave the French more equality and fraternity than they ever had, before or since. He organised them into a militant mass, a unit formed of equal atoms, an engine obedient to his hand. He ruled the nation absolutely; his ghost ruled it after he was dead,—and is not laid yet.

THE VIEW FROM MY LEDGE.

II. GOD AND IMMORTALITY.

BY ALICE BODINGTON.

A RAY of light comes to my ledge. I see as a student of evolution that no instinct has been, or, indeed, could be evolved in vain. Is it possible, then, that the instinct which prompts man,—as soon as he rises above the lowest savage state,—to yearn after something unseen, to be dissatisfied with earthly joys and ambitions, to crave for a love of which all other love is but a type, is a vain instinct? Why do we feel that we "have here no continuing city, but we seek one to come"? Why, centuries before the Christian era, did the Aryan mind evolve the most sublime theories as

to the Supreme Energy? Why, millenniums earlier did the Chaldeans imagine a Deity who was the personification of beneficent power? It may be said, it is said, that dreams and fears of the personified powers of Nature account for the religious instinct. But, allowing that like other imperfect earthly things, the religious instinct originated in false fears, why is it still an imperious instinct, now that we no longer fear phenomena whose secondary laws we understand? Besides, the religion of the highest intellects has never been one of fear; it is completely disassociated from fear in our minds, and is a craving after a felt, but unknown, essence of Love and Goodness.

But the Agnostic is here met by a new difficulty. The more we know of the phenomena of nature, the more we feel we are in the presence of forces utterly mechanical and irrational, acting without the slightest regard for the "moral *ought*," which has silently and slowly taken its place as the great factor in raising human beings above the brutes.* Nature is neither moral nor immoral; she is simply *amoral*. Says J. S. Mill:

"Next to the greatness of these cosmic forces, the quality which most forcibly strikes every one who does not avert his eyes from the fact, is their perfect and absolute recklessness."

All that has been learned in biology since Mill wrote has added confirmation a thousandfold to his indictment against Nature. The lowest organisms, the most ignoble parasitic fungi and protozoa, prey upon the highest creatures and bring death in swift delirium or protracted hopeless torture in their train. All organic life exists by the destruction of other organic life, and the devices adopted by both animals and plants in their life-long, mutual struggle would presuppose a prompting intelligence,† were it not for the hideous cruelty involved. The various species of solitary wasps have each their special victims or mass of victims, stung to paralysis, but not to death, to be a living, helpless prey for the wasp-grub. The lovely *Araujia albens* of California employs the gynæcium of its tempting white blossoms as a moth-trap, where the wretched insects are caught and hang helpless till they starve to death. The various species of ichneumonous flies lay their eggs in the bodies of living caterpillars.

Often the devices for self-protection are as beautiful and harmless as they are marvellous; as in the numerous cases of symbiosis, where plants and animals mutually assist one another; or where "protective mimicry" aids an animal to elude its foes. Here again, we must take the bad with the good, and ac-

knowledge the utter impartiality of nature as to suffering, or the reverse.

Were my judgment not biassed against the hypothesis, I should feel myself compelled to postulate an Intelligence prompting and directing the extraordinary phenomena we see in the efforts for self-preservation of organic beings. How should the Sphex, the solitary wasp which never sees her young, know exactly how many victims to provide for their sustenance; how can the queen bee, by the extraordinary mechanism with which she is provided, be able to produce drone eggs and know when these are needed; how have intestinal parasites found the widely differing hosts in which they spend their life-cycle; how did the animals and vegetables which spend their existence in mutual dependence first find one another? A thousand more such questions might be asked. Natural Selection is simply a convenient expression for a mass of marvels about which we comprehend nothing except that they exist. It shows what advantages animals may derive from changes in form and habits, but *it does not account for the very smallest of these changes*.

But, supposing I allowed myself to imagine a directing Intelligence; it would be as reckless of suffering, as blind as to beneficial results, as Nature herself. We have not here the Power which could have aroused in human breasts the "moral ought,"—the sense of duty, of altruism, of virtue.

Is there not another hypothesis we may allow ourselves to entertain,—one shadowed forth by J. S. Mill in his noble "Essays on Religion"? Is it not a rational hypothesis that matter and energy are eternal and indestructible, indued from and to all eternity with the qualities our researches are beginning to recognise; that Nature, as we know it, is the inevitable result of these qualities, and that "good" and "evil" are not terms to be used of necessarily amoral forces? Is it not also a rational hypothesis that something, which in our ignorance of its nature we may call God, represents in the universe the principle of moral good; that this something has slowly, uncertainly, with difficulty, communicated some of the distinguishing quality of moral goodness to the human race, and that the yearning for we know not what beyond visible nature is the yearning of the human heart for closer union with this Unseen Power, which draws us ever away from earth? Never, in this life, can I know whether this hypothesis is true, but if this earthly life is all, I shall at least never awake to the despair of finding it to be false.

In either theological or philosophical speculations, I can never see the advantage to be gained from altering the plain, everyday meaning of words. In theology it always signifies the last rally round a lost cause.

* This view has been put with incomparable force by J. S. Mill, in his *Three Essays on Religion*, in the first essay on "Nature," page 28, etc.

† See on this subject the chapter on the "Instincts of Solitary Wasps," "The Senses of Animals," Chapter xii, and the articles on "Insectivorous Plants" and on "Parasites" in the *Encyclopædia Britannica*.

To take one example only. The six days in which God made the world, (and, as a task of inferior importance, "the stars also,") were always six literal days of twenty-four hours, till geology proved up to the hilt that the world had taken millenniums in becoming what we now see it. Theology fought tooth and nail for its six days, and in Sunday-school teaching the world was still made in six days. But the leaders of enlightened religious thought could not completely stop their ears to reason, and the six literal days became periods which Moses saw as in a vision,—periods which of course might be extended as one could wish.

But philosophical thinkers also wrest words from their ordinary significance, and prove elaborately that black is dark gray, melting into light grey, and in reality has been white all the time.

For the "palpitating deathlessness" of the immortality promised by religion, they bid us be satisfied with the excellent effect our good words and actions are likely to have on future generations. That in itself is a good thing; it is satisfactory if one can feel that when we are dead other people are likely to be the better for what we have said and done.

To me this is not immortality, nor anything remotely like immortality. I want to know that my individual self-consciousness will survive the grave. If you can prove to me that this hope is absurd and impossible of fulfilment, I will accept the terrible position, and recognise that this poor, short, unsatisfactory life is all; but I cannot be juggled into calling posthumous influence over others a substitute for the immortality religion promised me.

I can believe that Jesus Christ was merely a man; the best of men perhaps, but only a man. But when I lost the belief in Christ as at once divine and human, I lost the most heart-satisfying belief that suffering mortals can entertain; nothing that science, nothing that the whole world can offer, can console me for the loss. In the possession of Divine Power was a Being, not only the personification of love and goodness, but One who had Himself tasted the bitterest human sorrows, therefore one on whose fullest sympathy I could rely. One, who though all-pure, had boundless love and forgiveness for the erring; one who in agony and bloody sweat had struggled with temptation.

I have lost little children. Christianity showed me my children safe in the arms of Him who loved little children; told me that of such is the Kingdom of Heaven, and that their guardian angels are privileged ever to see the Father's face; promised me that when this mortal life was over I should forever be with my Saviour and my children. This belief is gone; is it not a farce to ask me to do anything but set my teeth and bear a loss which nothing can replace?

Happy, thrice happy, was our glorious poet, who, when the call came for him at sunset could trust that he was about to meet his Pilot "face to face." What wonder that these words went to the heart of all English-speaking people!

To what purpose is it to endeavor to change the plain meaning of words, such as "duty" and "unselfishness," and say that after all every one does only what it is most pleasant for him to do? We were ordered to give up the use of the term "unselfishness," for we were shown it only meant that with some people the highest form of pleasure was to please others. But we had at once to take up another word to express the same thought, and we now say "altruism." What is gained in clearness of thought?

Suppose we say there is no such thing as "duty," (what I have called the "moral ought,") supposing we say the martyrs for truth enjoyed themselves better in the flames than they would anywhere else; that Winkelried found keen pleasure in pressing the clump of spears to his own breast that his countrymen might pass on to victory; that the women who have given up fair hopes of married happiness that they might devote their lives to aged parents or to the sick and suffering, do only what they like best to do. We should still want a word to express this "pleasure" in doing everything that ordinary human nature most shrinks from; we should still want to know why, alone amongst living beings, men and women should be given to this form of "pleasure."

Professor Huxley speaks of the ethical tendency in man as a slender rill which has to contend against the strong current of animal impulses. In this sense we may indeed speak of a "stream of tendency," but how this metaphor can represent or replace a self-conscious Deity I fail to see. But one can imagine that this "stream of tendency" emanates from a Supreme Goodness, which slowly and with difficulty is infiltrating our moral nature. As Mill has pointed out with merciless logic, it is impossible consistently with the commonest rules of reasoning to hold that the Supreme Being (if there be one) can be at the same time all-powerful and all-good.

The millennium, the golden age on earth, was still a possibility for scientific thinkers half a century ago, and George Eliot was able to persuade herself that this millennium on earth could satisfactorily replace the heaven promised by religion. But science steps in to bar the door of this earthly paradise.

Paleontology shows that the life of the mammalia has existed for only a brief geological space in the past; that the palmy days of warm-blooded animals had passed away before the Glacial Period, and that those peopling the world at present are but scattered remnants of once widely extended families. The an-

thropomorphic apes are but a shrunken remnant, and they are branches of the stock from which we ourselves are descended.* The paleontologist, reasoning from analogy, would say that man cannot hope to escape the fate which has befallen other animal species; historically his career may still be long, for all human history represents a few seconds in geology; but he is inevitably doomed to extinction.

Astronomy shows a cooling sun, and an earth which will revolve ever more slowly around it, a dead cinder like the moon.

Evolution shows that the struggle for existence, resulting in the survival of the fittest, (with all the resulting horrible sufferings of the weak,) is an absolute necessity for the maintenance of any species at its highest level of efficiency. If we could by any possibility do away with the struggle for existence going on now amongst human beings, we should simply produce an inevitable degeneration.

Comparative pathology shows us an immense number of rudiments inherited from a long line of invertebrate hermaphrodite ancestors,† which are the fertile sources of disease and death; which no conceivable improvement in medical knowledge could enable us to guard against. Death and disease must continue to result from obstructions of the *appendix vermiformis*, from blocking up of the Fallopian tubes, from tumors arising from the vestigial remnants of a hermaphrodite condition; from want of valves in veins, where an animal going on all-fours required no valves; the list would take a volume. A serious drawback to the comforts of an earthly millennium, even though all diseases arising from microscopic parasites could be exterminated.

Earthquakes, cyclones, and other gentle manifestations of the great cosmic forces must, of course, continue to have their hecatombs of victims, but they may be considered "*une quantité négligeable*." Their fitful nature makes them less mischievous in practice than the silent forces which *never* relax their pressure.

There are ominous signs, too, that the animal nature of man shows symptoms of giving way under the pressure our modern civilisation puts upon it. Amongst these I have only time to allude to the alarming increase of insanity.‡ Cancer has made giant strides, too, with the increase of material comfort § in the last half century, but, as a disease of parasitic origin, it is reasonable to hope for its disappearance in course of time. But the increase of insanity offers us no such hope; it attacks us in the very instrument of progress and lays its victims lower than the brutes.

I have little hope that I shall convert any one to

* *Studies in Evolution and Biology*.—Eliot Stock.

† *Introduction to Lectures on Pathology*.—Bland Sutton.

‡ See *British Medical Journal*, February 4, 1893.

§ *Ibid.*

the belief in agnosticism as a reasonable mental position. According to our individual idiosyncrasy we assimilate the facts that science reveals. But I hope, too, that I may have done something to show that the agnostic holds a position not very easy to take by storm.

We understand the secondary causes of an immense number of phenomena, and *if this life is all* we know almost as much as it is necessary to know for all practical purposes. For all practical purposes, indeed, man got on very fairly until yesterday with knowledge that was purely empirical. One could set a hen on eggs with the result of getting a brood of chickens, without knowing anything at all about karyokinesis or polar globules or any other fact in embryology. Farmers planted clover to renovate an exhausted piece of arable land, without knowing anything about the bacteria which assimilate nitrogen for the benefit of leguminous plants. But of primary causes, or a Primary Cause, we still know as little as ever.

The "greater the circle of light, the deeper is the darkness" which still enshrouds the veiled Isis.

Astronomers understand the laws of gravitation and can find hitherto unseen suns and planets through this knowledge. But no one has the slightest idea what this power of gravitation is, or through what medium it acts. It acts (to all human tests that can be applied) instantaneously, yet it must act through some medium; since, as Sir Isaac Newton pointed out and as the very latest researches in physics confirm, no action is possible through a vacuum.

It is proved that heat, light, chemical energy, electricity, and magnetism are all manifestations of one and the same force acting through the vibration of ether. But no one has the faintest idea what this all-pervading ether is; all definitions fail in hopeless self-contradictoriness. We only know that vibrations of something unknown, which for convenience we call ether, affect our senses. We do not know either what the motive force is, nor why or how it manifests itself in these different vibrations.

I would sum up by saying that whilst the agnostic feels he knows nothing of ultimate causes, he is not forbidden to hope for something better than this transitory life can afford, and that a ray of steady light penetrates to the ledge on which his feet are planted.

THE CONSOLATION OF ERRORS.

IN REPLY TO MRS ALICE BODINGTON.

THE second part of Mrs. Bodington's article, "The View from My Ledge," is the best evidence that the drug of agnosticism cures the disease of religious gnosis only when it actually kills the patient. Should the religious feeling, after being drugged with agnos-

ticism, come to life again, the old hallucinations and visions of dogmatism will be as powerful as ever. There is but this difference, that they become painful from the sickening after-effects of the poison.

The old anthropomorphic God-idea is a simile which contains a deep truth. As soon as agnosticism penetrates the mind of a believer, he begins to doubt God's existence and remains at the same time under the spell of the God-idea. There is a need of our believing in God, and if the simile is taken from us before we have understood the truth contained in it, we shall feel an unspeakable emptiness and sadness, and life will no longer appear to us worth living.

As soon as the old anthropomorphic God-idea is conceived as nature personified, such sham problems arise as those which Mill treats in his "Three Essays on Religion." We have analysed Mill's arguments and pointed out his mistakes at length, so that we need not here enter into the subject again.*

The most important dogma of the gnostics is their belief in the immortality of the soul. That there is a continuance of soul-life after death cannot be denied by agnosticism, but this to Mrs. Bodington is a poor substitute for the immortality of the ego. She says:

"To me this is not immortality, nor anything remotely like immortality. I want to know that my individual self-consciousness will survive the grave."

This reminds us of the Eskimos who asked the missionary whether there would be plenty of cod-liver oil in heaven. Upon being told that they would not need any cod-liver oil there, they said, "Your heaven is a poor substitute for what our medicine-man promises us after death, nor is it anything remotely like our hopes. We want plenty of cod-liver oil in heaven, and if we are not to have it, we do not care for heaven."

Man is the child of habits. We have become accustomed to certain beliefs, or rather, to speak more accurately, certain beliefs have become part of ourselves. When we find out that they are erroneous and must be given up, we naturally conceive it as a partial suicide. Says Mrs. Bodington:

"When I lost the belief in Christ as at once divine and human, I lost the most heart-satisfying belief that suffering mortals can entertain; nothing that science, nothing that the whole world can offer, can console me for the loss."

I understand Mrs. Bodington and sympathise with her pain, for I have passed through the same disappointment and suffered the same loss. But I know now that the simile is of no consequence, if but the moral is true that is contained in the simile. There is a deep meaning in the God-man idea; it teaches us that God's highest and noblest revelation appears in the tribulations of mankind struggling to realise its moral ideals. If this idea of a God-man is true, what an unspeakable

comfort does it afford us in anxieties, temptations, and vicissitudes! Now, which would you prefer: that the simile should be historical, that is to say, that it should literally have happened as it is told, and its meaning be untrue, or the reverse, that it should have never happened, but its meaning be true? If its meaning be true, what matter whether it did or did not happen here or there as an historical event?

How much we are children of habits in our traditional beliefs and in the preference we have for our private opinions can be seen by comparing Mrs. Bodington's eagerness to survive in her individual self-consciousness as the same ego, with the anxiety of Buddhists to enter into the repose of Nirvana in which the ego disappears entirely and shall not be born again, neither in this nor in the other world.

Should Mrs. Bodington call this habit of ours our idiosyncrasy, we must grant her that in this sense there is a truth in her proposition that different views are largely a question of individual idiosyncrasies. Thus the idiosyncrasy of a cow's stomach brings it about that she digests hay and straw, while to the stomach of the clearest thinker the same material would be indigestible. The question, however, is not which doctrines suit our idiosyncrasies best, but which doctrines are true. Truth is not a matter of idiosyncrasies, but of objective evidence, and our duty consists exactly in this: to adapt our idiosyncrasies to truth.

We remain unworthy of truth so long as we are slaves of habit and allow our idiosyncrasies to be the criteria of the doctrines which are to be accepted. We must overcome all that vanity (for it is a vanity) which sees desolation and utter ruin in giving up an error that has been cherished as a valuable truth; and we must have the confidence that truth is better than error.

The agnostic is like a reed shaken in the winds. He is like a sailor who breaks his compass and gives up all attempts to steer his ship. "We know nothing of the forces of nature, nor can we determine which will be the best course, so let us drift."

Not so, my friend. The position of agnosticism is neither logical, nor scientific, nor practical. Go and study the forces of nature; observe the courses of the sun and the stars; make good use of the compass; and keep your place steadily at the helm of the ship.

The compass, it is true, may be subject to variations and irregularities. That, however, should not induce us to abandon it, but on the contrary to study it more carefully, so as to become familiar with the law that governs these irregularities.

Inquire into truth, and the truth will guide you.

Accept the truth and live it, for the truth is always good. If the truth appears evil to you, or saddening, know that you have either misunderstood it, or that you have not as yet fully made it your own. The truth

* See *The Open Court*, Nos. 239, 241, and 242.

must become the very essence of your being ; it must be your own soul and your inmost self.

Errors are a comfort to the erring only, not to the truthloving ; and to him alone whose mind hankers after error does truth appear stern.

Surrender the errors that seem a comfort to you. To give up errors is no loss, but a gain. But to learn the truth, even though it appear sad to you at first, that is a real gain.

There is no consolation in errors ; genuine consolation can be found in truth only.

Trust in the truth, for there is no other saviour.

P. C.

BARCAROLLE.

BY CHARLES ALVA LANE.

Oh! we find the sails of our Souls unfurled
On Life's uncharted sea,
Where the tempest of Time across the world,
Blows stern and steadily.

But the mists never rise from the Port whence we sailed,
Nor the clouds from the Shores that wait ;
And never a barque was seen or hailed,
Bearing back from the Thule of Fate.

We leave but a trail of laughter and wail,
And deeds of the foam's quick kind,—
Yea, a little song and the hopes that fail
Are all we leave behind.

For the swirl and the swells of the fleets as they flee,
Eface the dim paths that we break ;
And the thirst of the Past that is under the sea
Drinks ever the foam of our wake.

But, forward, the ship with a glad phantom crew,
That fares among Fortunate Isles,
Doth glimpse to the glass of our hope from the Blue,
Where the far Future flatters and smiles

And ever we yearn to the visions that fly,
While the sheen of the heaven endures,
Recking not of the tempests that, slumbering, lie
In the folds of the Blue that allures.

For surely, (we murmur,) Life's palpitant miles
Are holding embosomed somewhere
The shimmering shores of the shadowless isles
Wherewithal the mirage tricks the air !

Oh! the hope of our dreams, and doom of our deeds,
Are they wrought of one fate's mockery,
That the phantoms are false, and the past that recedes
Seemeth vain as things never to be ?

Such swift, strange weathers the firmament fret,
That never the same seems the sea !
For Life with the leaven of Change has been set,
And the elements work restlessly.

But on the blue joy that exults in the waves,
And the flash of the foam of its smiles ; —
On the quick, yellow fire of the storm when it raves,
And the shudder of dark-rolling miles ; —

On the dawn that divideth our sails from the night,
And the sunset that tinteth our wake, —

On the far, purple gulfs that the foamy stars light,
And the dreams that swell 'round us and break—

On all with the eyes of an alien we gaze,
With the heart of an exile we brood ;
For the tide fareth forward where fogs gloom our ways,
And we yearn through the wide solitude.

While always the moan of the old weariness
That toils in the billows for rest
Is pulsing in echoes that wax in their stress,
Thro' the hungering hush of the breast.

And ever the gleam of an old Mystery
Haunts the far, taunting reaches of thought ;
Like phosphor-fires kindled by winds on the sea
Its dim coruscations are caught.

But never the Silences lisp to Night,
That ultimate secret reveal ;
Nor ever the flash of the fiercest noon-light
The gloom from its shadow can steal :

For a shimmer by night, 'tis a shadow by day,
And it haunteth and taunteth the soul,
Till a weariness acheth within us alway
Whether sadness or gladness control.

But high in the heaven or down in the deep,
A hidden Voice ever is heard :
It is calm with a breath Time never can sweep,
And the pulse of the tide never stirred.

Oh, Voice of the Infinite, echoing 'round
With a meaning too broad for the brain !
Hath the period of profitless heark'ning no bound ?
Must the hunger of Nescience be vain ?

Is a meedless desiring Life's sentence and doom ?
And the food of his strength, is it doubt ?
Nay, wandering Echoes ! Ye gladden the gloom,
Though ye breathe wordless messages out !

Ye hold Hope's ancient promise that glammers the brain
With a distant undreamable fate :
What though ear cannot catch the subtle refrain,
Nor the bosom its burden translate ?

We will trust that it whispers of times and a world
Where Desire has the will for his wings ;
Where Hope in the folds of fruition is furled,
Having passed from the uses of things ;

Where Knowledge the mist from the Mystery shall roll
That hideth Man's Godhood in gloom—
The Godhood that feeleth a part of the Soul
Whose will is the wielder of Doom—

The Godhood that openeth alien eyes
On a world that a birth has revealed,
And doubtfully deemeth the visions that rise,
An ancient life's memories unsealed ;

Till the past seemeth hid where the futures abide,
And we question the life if it be
On the ebb or the flow of the wonderful tide
With the wash of whose waves drift we !

Yea, Soul of the Silences hymning to Hope !
Our longings turn theeward for rest,
As a melody gropeth through memory's scope
In rhythmical, hungering quest

Of a song that was dear in so far-away times
That they seem of a life overpast :
Surely Doom hath a harbor in halcyon climes
Where longings may anchor at last !

Into thickening distances driving dim eyes,
We sail and we sail, wondering ;
While, darkening downward in piled fathoms, lies
The messageless main, murmuring.

For the firmament folds in its myriad miles
The mainlands of Knowledge from sight,
And the surface waves whiten with beckoning smiles,
While they hide their far Springs in the Night.

'Tis the long-lost light, not the living star,
The foam, not the fountain, we see ;
Hope hangeth her dreams in the spaces afar,
And fruition is Faith's phantasy.

So we sail and we sail, out of Night into Night,
Over waters unmapt and unisled ;
And a Day that is kindled with mystical light
Flashes down where the mists are piled.

And Law is the pilot, to wreck or to ride,
And he steers with the stress of the storm—
With the stress of the storm, and the toil of the tide.
And the beat of the billows that form.

Will the wandering Time-wind wail evermore
With the voices we shed on its speed ?
And the sea, will it hold, in its memory's store,
The foam-form of each sunken deed ?

Oh ! chafing to change, in thine infinite sweep,
The mass of the mutable All,
What calleth thee, Time-Tempest, over the Deep ?
And what Shore awaiteth thy fall ?

BOOK REVIEWS.

THE PRANG COURSE IN ART EDUCATION FOR PRIMARY, INTERMEDIATE, AND GRAMMAR SCHOOLS. Boston : The Prang Educational Company, 1893.

The Prang Course of Art Instruction is a direct outgrowth of the introduction of drawing into the schools of Boston in 1872 by Charles C. Perkins and Prof. Walter Smith, and embodies all the main features of the development of instruction in art in public schools during the past twenty years. Recently this Course has been further developed by Mr. Louis Prang, assisted by a number of professional and pedagogical experts. Its chief excellence, and that on which its promoters lay the greatest stress, is its recognition of the æsthetic nature as an essential part of mental endowment, and one which must be developed. The method is that of a self-evolution of this nature ; the pupil being taught to utilise his own powers of observation and expression, on principles supplied by the Course and expounded by the teacher.

The *direct* purpose of the Course is to bring a knowledge of the elementary principles of art into the service of the people and of common every-day life. But it is also represented as a strongly ally of the Kindergarten, of Elementary Science, and of Manual Training. It is not a mere series of drawing lessons, but a course of instruction in the principles and methods of fine and industrial art, utilising drawing as one of its means of expression.

The present pamphlet which contains more than fifty pages of explanations, cuts, and photographs, is handsomely got up. Its perusal will be of interest to all who are interested in these questions, whether teachers or not.

μκρκ.

A CONCISE HISTORY OF RELIGION. By *F. J. Gould*. London : Watts & Co., 17 Johnson's Court, Fleet St., 1893.

The purpose of this history, says the author, is to show "that Christianity is but one of a great family of religions—and like them the offspring of the human mind and the product of human evolution." The present volume is the first instalment of the history, and treats only of non-Christian systems ; Christianity, together with Judaism and Mohammedanism, being reserved for a future volume. The book is not one of original research ; and, in fact, is not intended as such ; but is simply a digest of the opinions of the best religious investigators and an abridged methodical arrangement of the results of the foremost religious historians. In the part of the book which treats of the origin and development of religion Mr. Gould mainly relies upon Tylor, Spencer, and Lubbock ; we have thus an historical rather than a psychological analysis of these questions. Both as a concise survey of the religions of mankind and as a hand-book for occasional reference, Mr. Gould's work is a recommendable one ; for it unites in a cheap and brief form (it contains only 154 pages) a great deal that could otherwise be obtained only from many expensive works. It is issued for the Rationalist Press Committee.

μκρκ.

Mr. Arthur MacDonald, now specialist in the United States Bureau of Education, contributions by whom have also appeared in *The Open Court*, publishes as "Circular of Information No. 4, 1893," in the regular series of the Federal Bureau of Education publications, a collection of a number of his writings on the subject of criminology, and also digests of the foreign literature which has appeared on this subject. The book is a well-indexed volume of four hundred and forty-five pages, and contains information, especially of a bibliographical character, which can, perhaps, be had in no other American treatise. Its title is : "Abnormal Man, Being Essays on Education and Crime and Related Subjects, with Digests of Literature and a Bibliography"; the volume may be had by application to Commissioner W. T. Harris, Department of the Interior, Washington, D. C.

THE OPEN COURT.

"THE MONON," 324 DEARBORN STREET.

CHICAGO, ILLINOIS, Post Office Drawer F.

E. C. HEGELER, PUBLISHER.

DR. PAUL CARUS, EDITOR.

TERMS THROUGHOUT THE POSTAL UNION:

\$2.00 PER YEAR.

\$1.00 FOR SIX MONTHS.

N. B. Binding Cases for single yearly volumes of THE OPEN COURT will be supplied on order. Price, 75 cents each.

CONTENTS OF NO. 327.

LIBERTY. I. A Historical Study. MONCURE D. CONWAY.	3887
THE VIEW FROM MY LEDGE. II. God and Immortality. ALICE BODINGTON.....	3888
THE CONSOLATION OF ERRORS. (In Reply to Mrs. Alice Bodington.) EDITOR.....	3891
POETRY.	
Barcarolle. CHARLES ALVA LANE.....	3893
BOOK REVIEWS.....	3894