THE CURVE OF IMMORTALITY.

We have printed as an Appendix to the present number of The Open Court an essay which is likely to be of real interest to many of our readers, and which for others will possess at least the attraction of a curiosity. The author, who is a septuagenarian, was for several years a University professor of Astronomy and subsequently for a third of a century scientific editor of one of the great Chicago dailies.

To forestall at the outset all possibility of misunderstanding, attention should be called to the fact that the author does not claim for his argument the value of a proof of the doctrine of sentient existence after death and that he expressly remarks that it would be "absurd" to do so. In addition to this explicit reservation of the author, we would insist on the following independent and general critical point of view which should be carefully pondered by the reader both before and after his perusal of the argument. Mathematics, being in one of its aspects, the science of form and of the combinations of form, there is no formal relation conceivable that cannot be expressed by it. Its world of pure and possible forms is absolutely inexhaustible, and is infinitely richer than the world of material and physical forms. It does not follow therefore that because a mathematical relation exists there must exist corresponding to it in the so-called objective world some definite physical reality. We have geometries of n-dimensions but no worlds of n-dimensions. Now as to the peculiarity of the curve in question, namely its completeness in one of its parts and the break in its continuity, it is to be remarked that it shares this property with a very large number of other algebraical curves, and that these curves present such "infinite variety" that there is scarcely a dogma of religion so wild or exceptional that could not be put into very close analogy with some one of them. It would be very easy, for example, to construct or find an analogy in algebraical geometry for the Buddhist doctrine of the transmigration of souls, or of the dogma of cycles of existence. In sum, the mechanism for graphically representing algebraical possibilities, which Descartes gave us, is far more powerful and comprehensive than even the wildest fancies of the founders and dog-
matists of the great historical religions. A skilful algebraical geometer could give
the author of Revelation his tit for tat at every turn. T. J. McC.

DR. ISAAC M. WISE.

We have learned with deep regret of the death of Dr. Isaac M. Wise, of Cincin-
nati. Dr. Wise was the Nestor of the Jewish rabbis in America, and as pastor of
the B'ne Jeschurun congregation was for a great number of years the protagonist of
reformed Judaism in the West. His activity, however, was not limited to the pul-

ISAAC M. WISE.

pit, for he was also the author of a number of books and pamphlets, and was greatly
interested in the theoretical questions of religion. He had been a reader of The
Open Court from the beginning, and we exchanged from time to time letters on
subjects of common interest. He was the founder of the Hebrew Union College,
and had been its president since 1875. He also founded and was until his death
president of the Central Conference of American Rabbis. He founded the Amer-
ican Israelite and Die Deborah, and edited both to the last. Deceased was within
a few days of his eighty-first birthday. His son Dr. Julius Wise, better known as
Nickerdown, will largely continue his father's work on the Jewish press.