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THE RELIGION OF SCIENCE.

The publisher and editor of The Open Court call their readers' attention to the new wording in the headline, which briefly characterises the aim aspired after in the columns of this journal. The old headline reads, "Devoted to the work of Conciliating Religion with Science"; the new one uses the terser expression, "Devoted to the Religion of Science." The change is not a change of principle; but we believe that the basic idea which prompted the foundation and supplies the motives for the further continuance of this journal will thus be the more readily understood.

The headline of a journal is a shibboleth, a motto, and as such it possesses a special significance to those who know what it stands for. It is like a small basin built below the spout of a spring. The waters that are constantly being poured into it, are more abundant than it can hold. They overflow and become a living stream to fertilise the meadows and fields through which their course will lead. So the term "Religion of Science" is a fruitful idea which has a deeper significance to those who understand the purpose which it is to serve.

Science is above all the search for truth. Our scientists apply the best methods of observation and the most rigorous criticism, in order to make, in their diverse fields of inquiry, a correct and systematically arranged statement of facts. The importance of science as the basis of human civilisation in its largest scope and as the condition of further progress is now well-nigh universally recognised. It is not doubted for industrial invention, nor for art, nor for politics, nor economics. It is doubted only for the most important province of human life—viz. for religion.

Religion is the basis of conduct. All those ideas are religious which regulate man's actions and support us in the vicissitudes of life. Religion is the ethical power in humanity, being the norm of human aspirations, the authority of rules and laws and injunctions, and the lofty ideal that sanctifies existence with its joys and griefs, consecrating every single individual to a higher purpose than himself.

It is a very strange fact that the importance of science, which is admitted in every other field, could have been doubted for religion. The reason is obvious to him who is familiar with the history of the various religions. Religious truths are such valuable possessions that their keepers wanted to shelter them from all danger; they were anxious to guard them as a sacred inheritance and hand them down to future generations inviolate. They wanted to protect the holy treasures from the vagaries of the scientist groping about after the truth and often failing to find it. So they declared that religion was independent of science and had nothing whatever to do with it. They did not see that scientists are not always identical with science, exactly as priests are not always the true prophets of truth. Thus they founded religion upon the authority of tradition instead of upon the rock of ages, which is truth—provable truth. They went so far as to call human tradition a divine revelation and to discredit that grand apocalypse which lies open to everyone of us—nature.

The absurd was sanctified; and reason, the divine spark in man that kindles the torch to enlighten his path, was scorned as an ignis fatuus.

Yet after all, what is religion but the trust in truth, the search for truth, and living the truth! Shall we, indeed, use the best methods of searching for the truth in all domains except in the most important domain, in religion. To suppress the truth where it is our duty to speak it out, is regarded as equivalent to a lie; and rightly so! Shall we suppress the search for truth in religion, the essence of which is, or rather ought to be, truth and which is transformed into abject superstition when errors are enshrined upon the altar of truth? Religion is to us inseparable from truth; and the search for truth is our holiest duty.

We might simply state that The Open Court is devoted to religion, for there is but one true religion, which is the religion of truth: all the other religions are superstitions. But we wish to indicate that our idea of truth is different from the ideas of those who believe in the duality of truth. Truth is no Janus-head with two faces. It is an error that something might be true in science which is untrue in religion, that "twice two is four" only in the multiplication tables but not in the catechism, that there are other methods of finding out or proving the truth for the religious
The Open Court.

Renan's Loss of Faith in Science.

By Prof. John Dewey.

The fundamental conception of Ernest Renan's work, "The Future of Science," is that science is both subjectively and objectively social: that its material, in its most important respects, is to be found in the history of humanity, and that its aim is furthering the organisation of humanity. The relation of science to the welfare of man is the true text of the book; and this in no limited definition of welfare, but in a sense so broad as to include his religious attitude, as well as his intellectual and artistic enjoyments. "As for myself," he says at the outset, "I recognise only one result of science: namely the solution of the enigma, the final explanation to mankind of the meaning of

prophet than for the savant—in short that science is human truth, while religion is divine truth.

Truth is truth. There is but one truth and that truth is divine. Man is divine in so far as he partakes of the truth, and science, the methodical search for truth, is the most important vehicle to aid man to progress, to grow, to develop, and to become more and more divine.

Science is holy. It is a religious duty of the scientist to search for truth in all fields, philosophy, ecclesiastical history, and biblical research not excepted. And it is a religious duty of the clergy to respect science. They need not accept the hypotheses of scientists, but they have to revere truth whenever proven to be truth, for truth is sacred whatever it be. There is a divinity in mathematics, of which the modern idolator of dogmatic Christianity has no idea.

All our religions have been founded as religions of truth. Jesus of Nazareth, the Messiah and Christ that made the new covenant with mankind upon the foundation of love, has nowhere, so far as our maturest biblical criticism can pierce, established any dogma, and least of all the absurd theory that above the truth there is another truth, and that this higher truth standing in contradiction to scientific truth must be believed because it appears, and even because it is, absurd.

So long as the scientist doubts, he inquires, but as soon as he has found the truth, he proclaims it and solicits the criticism of his fellow-workers. This same method is applicable to religion. He who doubts, must inquire; and he who believes he has found the truth must allow his fellows to criticise him, to point out what they regard as errors, and to let his views be tested by criticism.

Is it not pusillanimous to be afraid of criticism? And is it true that we have to protect truth against criticism? If our religion is true why prevent investigation?

It is said that the scientist may err, and that his critics may err, and that errors are more powerful than the truth. Yet we answer with Milton:

"Whoever knew truth put to the worse in a free and open encounter?"

Those who err may be more powerful than those who speak the truth. Those who speak the truth may be put to death; nay, they have often been put to death; and errors are more plentiful and fertile than the truth. Nevertheless, truth is more powerful and will always prevail in the end.

Science is calm, impartial, rigorous, and many warm-hearted men and women have a dislike for science because of its austerity. They should know, that while the search for truth must be made by cool-headed thinkers, the application of truth demands enthusiasm and fervid zeal. The religion of science is the most elevating and noble ideal of mankind.

The old religions have become dear to their adherents, and justly so. For all the religions upon earth are intended to be religions of truth—the same truth that scientific truth is made of. And they are the more orthodox (that is, possessing the right doctrines) and the more catholic (that is, universally valid) and the freer from superstitions (that is, freer from absurdities believed to be exempt from scientific criticism), the nearer they come to their common ideal, which is the religion of science.

We do not preach the religion of science in order to destroy the old religions; we preach it that the old religions may avoid false dogmatism, and that they may adopt the method of science which is a systematic search for truth without reserve and open to criticism. This will widen the narrowest sectarianism into a cosmical religion, as broad as the universe, as reliable as the revelations of God in the book of nature and as sacred as the truths of science.

We expect that all the various sects of mankind will by and by acknowledge this principle of the religion of science. Indeed, they will have to! For how can they otherwise stand the bracing air of progress? They need not give up the peculiarities which are not in contradiction to truth. They can, and let us hope they will, preserve their character, their organisation, their brotherly love, their zeal for their special tradition and form of religion. Only, let them drop the pagan features of their worship as soon as, in the light of science, they recognise them as pagan.

This is our confession of faith: We trust in truth, and claim that truthfulness (i.e., fidelity to truth generally and especially also to exact, provable, scientific truth) is the condition of all religion. And this religious ideal is holy to us. We cling to it with enthusiasm and leave it as the most sacred inheritance to future generations.

Editor.
things,—the explanation to man of himself,—giving him in the name of the sole legitimate authority (the whole of human nature) the creed which religion gave him ready-made.” And if Renan conceives the theoretical outcome of science to be this revelation of man to himself, his conception of its practical resultant is no less broad: “The whole march of Europe for four centuries is summed up in this practical conclusion: to elevate and ennoble the people, and to let all men have a share in the delights of intelligence.”

I intend to quote, at some length, a passage from the beginning of the fifth chapter of the “Future of Science,” which sums up his idea both of the nature and the end of science, and afterwards I shall go over some of the main points one by one.

“It is not altogether inadvertently that I designate by the name of science that which is ordinarily called philosophy. To philosophise is the word by which I would most willingly sum up my life; nevertheless, seeing that the popular use of the word still expresses only a partial form of the inner life, that besides it only implies the subjective fact of the individual thinker, we must employ the more objective word; To know when assuming the standpoint of humanity. Yes, the day will come when humanity shall no longer believe; but when it shall know; the day when it shall know the metaphysical and moral world as it now knows the physical; the day when the government of humanity shall no longer be given to accident and intrigue, but to the rational discussion of what is best, and to the most efficacious means of attaining what is best. If such be the aim of science, if its object be to teach man his final aim and law, to make him grasp the true sense of life, to make up with art, poetry, and virtue, the divine ideal which alone lends worth to human existence, if such be its aim, then is it possible that it should have its serious detractors? But, it will be asked, will science accomplish these marvellous destinies? All I know is that if science does not accomplish them, nothing else will, and that humanity will forever be ignorant of the significance of things.”

The definition of science, then, is to know from the standpoint of humanity; its goal is such a sense of life as will enable man to direct his conduct in relation to his fellows by intelligence and not by chance. It is to this that I would direct special attention—Renan’s faith in ‘48 in the social basis and aim of science.

According to Renan the present era is marked by intelligence coming to consciousness of its social function. Up to, say the French Revolution, the function of science had been analytic—mainly negative and dissolving. All science is criticism, but criticism in the past has been equivalent to an analysis of existing conceptions, sentiments, and habits which resulted in destroying their validity. Reason has thus appeared to have no positive and constructive function; its work is to be exhausted in analysis, in disintegration of the given. But science, having carried its analysis, its tearing apart, to the end, finally comes upon the underlying unity; the destruction of the preconceived ideas and institutions only serves to reveal the basic whole. Thus analytic science finally came upon humanity as that unity to which all is to be referred. The work of science is henceforth predominantly synthetic. The unity reveals the law and end; theory must pass over into practice; knowledge into action. This is the final significance of the French Revolution. Humanity finally became conscious of itself as one whole; “after having groped for centuries in the darkness of infancy without consciousness of itself, and by the mere motor force of its organism, the grand moment came when, like the individual, it took possession of itself.” The French Revolution is the first conscious attempt to make action, the practical affairs of life, the expression of reason. It presents a scene hitherto unknown in history: “the scene of philosophers radically changing the whole of previously received ideas and carrying out the greatest of all revolutions on deliberate faith in system.” That the outward, the apparent, result should have been in many regards unsatisfactory is no cause for wonder. The Revolution interpreted its idea, the control of life by reason, in the light of a narrow conception of reason; it did not recognise the reason already embodied in institutions, simply because that reason had not been inserted by itself; it interpreted reason in a sense which made it opposed to instinct. The inevitable temporary result was the substitution of instability and upheaval for an established order. The outcome was such as to discredit with many the whole attempt. But this is to confuse the application of the principle, at first necessarily imperfect, with the principle itself. In reality, “the principle involved admits of no controversy. Intelligence alone must reign, intelligence alone. Sense is to govern the world.” And again Renan says: “The doctrine which is to be maintained at all hazards is that the mission of intellect is the reforming of society according to its own principles.” And once more: “Hence by every way open to us we are beginning to proclaim the right of reason to reform society by means of rational science and the theoretical knowledge of existing things.”

What, then, is to be the effect of this development of science when it gets to the point of recognising the unity of humanity, upon art—including poetry—and religion? Upon these points Renan had no more doubt than upon the social mission of science. When science gets to the comprehensive synthesis of humanity, poetry and science must flow together. Just because science, in its fulness, is the science of humanity, its highest development must mean, to give the whole of human nature full play—to give the sympathies their due place. But, on the other hand, since it is the business of science to reveal in its truth the unity, sympathy and admiration can have their full (free) chance only as science does its work, tearing down false idols in order to make plain the truth. “The pretended poetic natures who imagined that they could
get to the true sense of things without science will then turn out to be so many chimera-mongers, and the austere savants who shall have neglected the more delicate gifts . . . will remind us of the ingenious myth of the daughters of Minyas, who were changed into bats because unable to get beyond argument in presence of signs to which a more generous method of explanation should have been applied.” If, indeed, there is no meaning in the world, then science can only destroy poetry; but only on this condition. How shall we limit the real universe by supposing that the paltry dreams which we have been able up to this time to invent are superior in grandeur and splendor to the reality which science shall reveal to us? “Has not the temple of our God been enlarged since science revealed to us the infinity of the worlds? . . . Are we not similarly justified in supposing that the application of scientific method to the metaphysical and moral region . . . will also simply shatter a narrow and paltry world to open another world of infinite marvels?” The truth is that either there is no ideal, naught but a deceiving dream, or else this ideal is embodied in the universe and is to be found and drawn thence by science. “The ideal is near everyone of us.”

So with religion; whatever science takes away, it is only because it presents us with deeper truth. This conception is, indeed, the animating spirit of the book; it is so interwoven with the whole treatment that I shall only select one or two quotations. The man of science is the real “custodian of the sacred deposit”; “real religion is the culmination of the discipline and cultivation of the intelligence”; “social and religious reform will assuredly come . . . but it will come from enlarged science common to all, and operating in the unrestricted midst of human intelligence”; “hence, science is a religion, it alone will henceforth make the creeds, for science alone can solve for men the eternal problems, the solution of which his nature imperatively demands.” In the course of his discussion, Renan brings out at length the point only suggested in the above—that this religious outflowering of science is to be expected when, on one hand, its scope has been extended to take in humanity, and when, on the other, its practical outcome, if not its abstruse results, has been made the possession of all men. “It is not enough for the progress of human intelligence that a few isolated thinkers should reach very advanced posts, and that a few heads shoot up like wild oats above the common level. . . . It is a matter of great urgency to enlarge the whirl of humanity; otherwise a few individuals might reach heaven, while the mass is still dragging along upon the earth. . . . The moment intellectual culture becomes a religion, from that moment it becomes barbarous to deprive a single soul of it.”

I may sum up by saying that Renan’s faith in ’48 was that science was to become universalised—universalised in its range by coming to include humanity as its subject-matter; universalised in application by being made, as to its salient outcome, the common possession of all men. From this extension, Renan expected further results to flow: he expected that science was to become a “social motor,” the basis of ordering the affairs of men; he expected that it was to find expression in a wonderful artistic movement, and that, above all, it was to culminate in a great religious outburst. How was it in 1890?

In one sense Renan stands where he stood forty years before. He still believes that he was right at the outset of his “intellectual career in believing firmly in science and in making it the object of his life.” He even says that after all he was right in ’48; “save a few disappointments, progress has travelled on the lines laid down in my imagination.” And yet when we come to examine Renan’s later position in more detail, these few disappointments seem of more importance than the successes attained. Science in the abstract, science as the most worthy end of the few capable ones, Renan undoubtedly still believes in as firmly as ever. But the faith in the social career of science, of a wide distribution of intelligence as the basis of a scientifically controlled democracy, has all but vanished; the idea of science as lending itself to art, to a wide idealistic interpretation of the universe, and as flowering in a religious outburst, the conception of an appropriation of truth by all men has become to him the dream of a youthful enthusiasm. He has learned through the experience of mature years that “intensive culture constantly adding to the sum total of human knowledge, is not the same as extensive culture disseminating that knowledge more and more for the welfare of the countless human beings in existence. The sheet of water in expanding continues to lose in depth.” Thus it is that “enlightenment, morality, art will always be represented among mankind by a magistracy, by a minority, preserving the traditions of the true, the good, and the beautiful.” Instead of science becoming a social motor and thus giving a basis for social organisation at once free and saturated with law, there is now disbelief in the power of science to make its own way and realise its truth in practice: “We have to pay dearly, that is in privileges, the power that protects us against evil.” “While, through the constant labor of the nineteenth century, the knowledge of facts has considerably increased, the destiny of mankind has become more obscure than ever.” Could any retraction be imagined more complete, I had almost said more abject, than this when compared with his constant proclamation of ’48 that “the business of science is just to reveal to man his destiny—that any other conception of science makes it but an elaborate trifling?
As against the faith of '48 that science is to reveal the meaning incorporate in reality, and that this is the only true idealism, we have the constant identification, in his later writings, of the ideal with certain fond dreams which the cultured man will always cherish for himself, yet without hope of verification. The ideal is no longer the aim indicated by the universe itself, and to be followed as laid bare by inquiry; "it is very clear that our doctrine affords no basis for a practical policy; on the contrary, our aim must be carefully dis-simulated." As for science and religion, we must give up all hope of attaining, so far as the mass is concerned at least, any faith and enthusiasm based on knowledge. In his "Intellectual and Moral Reform," already alluded to, Renan virtually proposes to the ruling powers a concordat: the ecclesiastic authorities are to allow the savants complete freedom of thought and inquiry, provided the savants, in turn, leave the masses to their existing faith without attempting to extend to them the enlightenment which they themselves have gained. In his preface of 1890 to the "Future of Science" he seriously doubts whether any consensus of belief is open to mankind at large, except upon condition of return to primitive credulity. "It is possible that the ruin of idealistic beliefs is fated to follow hard upon the ruin of supernatural beliefs; that the real abasement of the morality of humanity is to date from the day when it has seen the reality of things.... Candidly, I fail to see how the foundations of a noble and happy life are to be relaid without the ancient dreams."

While a study of the reasons which have induced this apparent loss of faith in the larger and social function of science would be even more interesting than the fact itself, I do not propose here to enter at length upon the discussion. Renan himself indicates one reason when he says that at present science seems to be made for the schools rather than the schools for science. So far as much of its spirit and aim is concerned, science is the legitimate successor of the old scholasticism. The forty years since Renan wrote have not done much to add the human spirit and the human interpretation to the results of science; they have rather gone to increase its technical and remote character. Furthermore, Renan does not seem to have realised sufficiently the dead weight of entrenched class interest which resists all attempt of science to take practical form and become a "social motor." When we remember that every forward step of science has involved a readjustment of institutional life, that even such an apparently distant and indifferent region as the solar system could not be annexed to scientific inquiry without arousing the opposing force of the mightiest political organisations of the day; when we recall such things it is not surprising that the advance of scientific method to the matters closest to man—his social relationships—should have gone on more slowly than was expected. The resistance from the powers whose existence is threatened by such advance has not become less effective in becoming more indirect and subtle. One thing is certain: this decrease of faith cannot be explained as a personal idiosyncrasy of Renan's; it lies deep in the life of the last half century.

I confess to surprise that this partial retraction of Renan's has not been exploited by the reactionaries. It is certainly spoils for those, who, in their assumed concern for the moral and spiritual affairs of humanity, take every opportunity to decry science and proclaim its impotence to deal with serious matters of practice. I cannot but think that the Renan of '48 was wiser than he of '90 in the recognition of the fact that man's interests are finally and prevalingly practical; that if science cannot succeed in satisfying these interests it is hardly more than an episode in the history of humanity; that the ultimate meaning and control will always be with the power that claims this practical region for its own—if not with science, then with the power of the church from which Renan was an early apostate. It is a continual marvel that so many men of science who have abandoned and even attacked all dogmatic authority, should take refuge for themselves in agnosticism—that they should not see that any lasting denial of dogmatic authority is impossible save as science itself advances to that comprehensive synthesis which will allow it to become a guide of conduct, a social motor.

CURRENT TOPICS.

A joint resolution brim full of good intentions has been offered in Congress by Mr. Springer of Illinois. It proposes to amend the Constitution so as to make the President's official term six years long, and to declare him ineligible to re-election. The plan has met with almost unanimous approval by the press; and the prevailing sentiment is well expressed in the following sentence which I quote from one of the great newspapers: "It is probable—indeed it is nearly certain—that if a proposition extending the term to six years and making the President thereafter ineligible to the office were submitted to the popular vote it would be ratified by an overwhelming majority of the voters." No doubt of it, because it is in the direction of severity, the Dead Sea of politics, whether the American people are hurrying with innocent fatuity. Within the resolution is concealed a scheme to strengthen the American monarchy and weaken the American republic; to increase the kingly powers of the President and lessen the democratic authority of Congress. It is not progress; it is not even stagnation; it is a reaction toward the substance, if not the form of monarchy. It is an attempt to steal thirty-three per cent. from the value of the maxim "of the people, by the people, and for the people." Better would it be to amend the Constitution by reducing the President's term to two years, and thus bring the Executive and the Legislative elements closer together, instead of wrenching them farther apart by the adoption of a six years term. The people are to establish it in their organic law that the term of one President shall be equal to that of three Congresses, and the President all the time
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holding in his hands the veto power. That the people welcome the scheme proves nothing; they like a novelty, a makeshift, and a change. I have heard a prisoner thank the sheriff because he fitted him with a stronger and more elaborate pair of handcuffs as a Christmas gift; and there are times in the lives of every people when "they know not what they do." They have lucid intervals, of course, but these are few.

Mr. Springer's proposition in its present form is an artful bit of statecraft, confusing two separate and independent purposes in such a very ingenious way that the voter must indorse both of them or get nothing. In the language of the lawyers "it is bad, for duplicity"; it includes two changes within one question, making them stand or fall together, which is in the nature of a cheat. If the proposition is an honest one why not make two questions of it, each to be decided on its own merits, thus: Shall the Presidential term be six years? And, Shall the President be ineligible to re-election? One of these might be adopted, and the other not; or both might be adopted, or defeated; but at least, the voter would have a fair chance to declare his will. Even in the form of separate propositions the people have nothing to gain, for the affirmative of either encroaches upon freedom, and diminishes the share of democracy in the government; a share which ought not to be contracted, but enlarged. A four years reign conferred by one election is long enough for any American king; and why should the people handcuff themselves, that they may not vote for him a second time, or a third time, or a fourteenth time if they choose to do so? Has it come to this, that we are afraid of our own ballots? Or, are we afraid of our own elected President? If we are, that fact itself is evidence that his term of office is already too long, and it is a very good reason why we should not lengthen but shorten his reign. At every presidential election the great parties bet a four years tenure of all the offices in the government, and the magnitude of the stake accounts for the turmoil, strife, struggle, and corruption of the campaign. Mr. Springer would increase the stakes, pleading as an excuse for doing so that the game would not be so often played. The compensation is not valuable enough to justify the sacrifice.

"Wide open and unguarded stand our gates, and through them passes a wild motley throng, men from the Volga and the Tartar steppes, featureless figures of the Hoang Ho, Malayans, Scythians, Teton, Kelt, and Slav, flying the old world's poverty and scorn; these bringing with them unknown gods and rites, those tiger passions, here to scratch their claws. In street and alley what strange tongues are these, accents of monace alien to our air, voices that once the Tower of Babel knew. O, Liberty! white goddess, is it well to leave the gates angared?" This hysterical apostrophe to Liberty, the "white goddess," and all the rest of it, passes for poetry in the original; and although I have written it in the form of prose, it can be resolved into poetry again by the easy legerdemain of breaking it up into conclusive lines and thereby giving it the appearance of Miltonian blank verse. Any sort of rhetorical delirium, if put into that shape claims the rank and dignity of poetry. The above specimen is by Mr. Thomas Bailey Aldrich, the American poet, and a very fine poet he is, in spots, but this effort shows that poetry will not lend itself to narrow, inhospitable, and ungenerous things. In this example the scream "O, Liberty!" is a dyspeptic spasm, not poetry. It is not in the power of genius to refine into poetry this offering to the "shut the gate" craze, now raging as an epidemic among the American people, and appealing to our littleness of spirit. Much elevating poetry has been inspired by hospitality: by inhospitality, none. The rudest phrases that express welcome are poetry, as for instance this, "the latch string hangs outside." "Open the gates to the stranger," is poetry and religion too, while "shut the gates," is dull and gloomy prose. If the threatened scheme to shut the gates is to be carried out it will be a calamity to the American people, greater than the cholera which is drafted into the service as an apologue and an excuse. Our character for generosity will be forfeited, our Eagle will droop his crest, and our fame will diminish among men. We shall acquire the reputation of Lord Bacon, and win historic renown as the "greatest, wisest, and meanest" of the nations; which indeed appears to be the ambition of our statesmen. Then we may say of the American republic what Corin the shepherd says in the play of "As You Like It":

"My master is of cheerful disposition,
And little recks to find the way to heaven,
By doing deeds of hospitality.

Last week it was my privilege to attend the banquet of the Evolution Club; and the after-dinner subject of debate was "Vivisection." Many of the members present were physicians, or college professors of biology, physiology, and kindred sciences, so that the learning shown was rather technical, and redolent of medicine. This was to be expected; and as all those doctors and professors were experimenters, using vivisection to increase their knowledge, they were of course defenders of the practice. There was only one man present who took the moral side of the question in opposition to the purely materialistic or utilitarian side, and he was a lawyer. In a speech bristling with horrors collected from the report of a royal commission appointed to investigate the subject, he condemned vivisection as cruel, useless, irreligious, and immoral. He maintained that the lower animals have rights, not merely claims upon kindness, but rights which impose corresponding duties upon men; rights which are not at all dependent on the whim, profit, or pleasure of the human race. At the dinner table, this lawyer happened to be "the gentleman on my right," and in the course of conversation, he fired a few psychic puzzles at me. "How do you know," he said, "that there are not invisible beings of a superior order practising vivisection upon you with a spiritual scalpel? How do you know that they have not been testing you with supernatural poisons for their own profit? How do you know that your headaches, rheumatisms, and lumbagos; your pains and penalties, your losses, trials, and disappointments, are not the results of their experiments upon you? As I deny the right of any superior beings on the earth, above the earth, or under the earth, to inflict pain upon you in the interest of their own science, therefore I deny that you have any right to inflict scientific suffering upon those creatures who are below you in the scale of life." All that was too metaphysical for me, and so I laugh at his riddle as weird and mystical, because I am not able to solve it; a plan which I find excellent in every case of ignorance, and which I can heartily recommend. We have been so busy about the rights of men that the rights of horses and dogs have been forgotten. Vivisection is now forcing the following question upon conscience, "May physiologists cut up healthy animals for the speculative benefit of unhealthy men?"

It was no trouble for the Evolution Club to analyse the subtle spirit of the universe, and to resolve the Cosmos into its constituent elements, assigning to each ingredient its proper place and duty. It was easy to claim that vivisection was not merely a practice, but a principle of high rank in the religion of Evolution, for the very first commandment in the decalogue of science tells us that "the fittest shall survive." That phrase has been overrated and underrated, and sometimes it has been inversely understood. It has been perverted to the uses of injustice, and the torture not only of the lower animals but also of the lower men. It has become the cant of science, and we apologise for the sufferings of others by pleading that their unhappy fate is only a punishment ordered by the law of Nature in its flippant formula "the fittest
shall survive." When Herbert Spencer spelled energy with a capital "E," and made it Energy he thought he had created a new deity and given to it a divine potentiality and substance. When we spell nature with a big "N," we think that we have done so too; but I cannot believe that nature or Nature is anything more than a method by which things arrange themselves according to their conditions, neither can I believe that Nature has any authority to create a law of injustice, nor any law at all. Every living creature has an equal right with every other, to say, "I am the fittest; and the world was made for me." That appears to have been the opinion of Pope, who also thought that he had made a divinity of nature by spelling the word with a big "N." He lived before the discovery of Evolution, and he thought that his divinity in conferring life had included within the gift the absolute right to live.

"Know, Nature's children all divide her care;
The far whoars a monarch, warn'd a bear."

A claim was made that vivisection is forbidden in the gospels, and perhaps it is, but no evidence to that effect appeared. However that may be, strong testimony on the other side is offered by the book of Genesis in the bill of sale given to Adam, granting him "dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth." Under this comprehensive title the sons of Adam have declared and do now declare that they have despotic power over the lower animals and the unconditional right to do whatever they like with their own. Fortified by this authority, Pope the Ninth proclaimed that it was "error to say that man owed any duty to the lower animals." He did not mean to assert the duty of men to be cruel, but he did assert the theological right of man to dominion unqualified over the brute creation. This religious view of it has great influence over the peasantry of Italy, as appears from the testimony of an American traveler in that country, who demonstrated one day with a peasant for cruelly beating a donkey. The man replied, "What of it; the donkey has never been baptised." Had the donkey been baptised, his owner would have regarded him as a fellow Christian, and perhaps have given him better treatment, although it must be admitted that even Christians do not always treat their fellow Christians as mercifully as they might. And this reminds me of a story which I got from that same "gentleman on my right," the lawyer aforesaid. A Greek priest who had never been outside the rural parish in which he lived, went up to London, and while there visited the Zoological Gardens and became greatly interested in the monkeys, especially in one patriarchal monkey who appeared to take an equal interest in the priest. Whatever his reverend did, the monkey imitated him, and at last the priest became so much delighted at the intelligence and feeling displayed by the simian that he exclaimed, "See here, there's nobody looking now, and if ye'll just hand me that cup of water there beside ye, I'll baptise ye this minute." Why not? Surely monkeys need spiritual grace as much as any of us. It may not be an orthodox belief, but I will cherish it, that whether baptised or not, a good monkey has a better chance in a future state of existence than a bad man.

M. M. Trumbull.

CORRESPONDENCE.

LETTER TO "THE OPEN COURT."

To the Editor of The Open Court:

It is so long since I have written anything for The Open Court, that I think it would be a not undeserved penalty, if I were stricken from the roll of correspondents; and yet I should be sorry to find myself entirely out of relation with a journal so brave and unique.

But as according to the beautiful French custom, at New Year's time, friends however long separated, may make a social call without questions asked, or apologies offered, so I feel disposed to sit down for a little chat, trusting for my welcome, to that love of gossip in human nature, which never deserts us in the last extremity of life.

A paragraph in the morning paper recalls to me a subject of which I have often thought as deserving public recognition. A young lady of twenty-four years of age, having formed a friendship with a lady of similar tastes, remains with her in her home, and her father appeals to legal authority, to bring her back to his house, and others resort to the violent explanation of hypnotism to explain the strength of the new relation.

This seems very strange to one, who for many years has been accustomed to the existence of ties between women so intimate and persistent, that they are fully recognised by their friends, and of late have acquired, if not a local habitation, at least a name, for they have been christened "Boston Marriages." This institution deserves to be recognised as a really valuable one for women in our present state of civilization. With the great number of women in our state, in excess of the men, and with the present independence of women, which renders marriage, merely for a home, no longer acceptable, the proportion of those who can enter into that relation is diminished, and the "glorious phalanx of old maids" must find some substitute for the joys of family life. These relations so far as I have known, and I have known many of them, are not usually planned for convenience or economy, but grow out of a constantly increasing attachment, favored by circumstances, which make such a marriage the best refuge against the solitude of growing age.

In some cases women of the medical or other professions form a partnership at once social and professional; or frequently a physician finds comfort for her leisure hours in the society of one of literary tastes or possessing the fine art of housekeeping. Sometimes a wealthy but solitary woman is delighted to share heart and home with one less favored by fortune.

In some cases where family ties still have their claims, the parties do not live together, but are constant companions in the summer excursions or the winter studies and engagements, in which they are mutually interested. As far as I have known, these "Marriages" are of long continuance, and I can hardly recall an instance where a decided rupture has occurred. Of course I do not include in this statement those girlish intimacies which are only what flirtations are to serious matrimonial attachments. Naturally these relations are generally between women of middle age, who have learned much from the duties and sorrows of life, and perchance have known the pleasure, or more often the pains and disappointments of love. To such the tie affords a home for the heart, intellectual companionship, and often help in the pecuniary support, which gives value and worth to a period of life, too often very sad and lonely. As such I must look upon them as a great blessing which should not be interfered with or unduly fostered, but recognised in all simplicity and friendliness.

There is one danger attending such unions, when they are entered into by those who are not destitute of family ties, and the married woman and the mother, even sometimes the aunt and sister should be cautious of assuming a relation which may make her less faithful to the natural ties of family life. I rejoice to say that instances of such mistakes are rare, and that in many cases the friend becomes also one of the family, and helps to preserve and deepen the family affection.

I do not propose that we should formally adopt the Boston Marriages into our civil code, and celebrate it with ceremonies and festivities, for simplicity and privacy especially become it, but I do think it is good to think of it with respect, and welcome it as
one of the helps to human welfare, and not let any jealous feelings mar the happiness of those concerned in it.

The approaching festival (in February) of the twenty-fifth anniversary of the New England woman's club naturally leads the mind to consider the wonderful development of the woman's club in the last twenty-five years. It is primarily due to the fact that the club was not the creation of one person or even clique but evidently came from the recognition of a need widely felt, so soon as a means of meeting it was suggested.

The two oldest clubs, the New England and Sorosis, sprang into being quite independently and yet within two days of each other, and the movement has known no retiring ebb but gone steadily on to its present high tide of success. The woman's club is now a powerful and recognized agent in all intellectual reform and educational work, as well as in social enjoyment, and is binding women together in organized life in a way that will enable them to act unitedly and effectually, if ever an emergency occurs which calls upon them to do so.

Looked at in this way, the club well deserves the attention of those who are forecasting the future of America. If united with universal suffrage, and general co-education of the sexes, this movement will strengthen the best forces of the state, and combining moral considerations with political interests, may lead to purer politics and higher statesmanship than we have ever known. But if the separation of the sexes be enforced in political and educational life, a power may grow up, unknown to the state, and perhaps narrow but intense, which may thwart many of the most beneficial purposes of legislation.

I think it is undeniable that the late school election in Boston was carried by a party of women closely banded together, and ruled by one or two dominating motives. By their help the entire school ticket of the Republican party, which had failed to elect its candidates in other elections, was chosen, and the portion of the board elected this year strongly represents the views of a particular clique. Although I happen not to sympathise wholly with this party, yet I believe them to be sincere in their opinions, and I am glad that the power of woman's vote is thus shown, and that politicians will see that they must be considered in the nomination of candidates for the school-board, and that they are equally important in all political matters. But women should work in consultation and on equal terms with men, to prevent the preponderance of one set of opinions, to the exclusion of others perhaps equally true and important.

An item of interest in this connection is, that the school committee of Boston are about to name a new primary school-house of handsome proportions, in the Jamaica Plain district, on the very land where she formerly lived: the Margaret Fuller School. The School Suffrage Association asked for this favor, which request was warmly endorsed by the representative on the board, and the gentlemen of the neighborhood spontaneously offered a United States flag to be placed on the school-house, with a streamer floating to the breeze, on which is the honored name.

Is not this a prophecy that "The Great Lawsuit" will soon be settled and that "Woman in the nineteenth century" will find justice and recognition before its close?

One word more and my long letter shall come to an end. I wish to recommend to your readers a new book by Elizabeth H. Botume called "My First Days among the Contrabands."

Miss Botume has been for about thirty years working for and with the freedmen of the South, and she has given her experiences with them as they first came out of slavery. It is a perfectly truthful, intelligent record of this wonderful time, and is told with such conciseness, simplicity, and humor that one reads every word. It is a valuable contribution not only to our history, but to the study of human nature and ethical peculiarities. As the publisher said to me "It is a book that will be worth even more fifty years hence than it is now." It should be read by every American citizen who has to help in solving the great question of how to secure justice to the negro, and enable the two races to live in harmony. It is a small book and is published by Lee and Shepard of Boston.

With warm wishes to all friends of The Open Court for a Happy New Year,

I remain yours, 

Edward D. Cheney.

P. S. It is said that Harvard College has at last consented to open its doors to women, as the old miser Trapbois would do anything "for a consideration." Cannot Harvard remember the large sums already lavished on Harvard by women, and the mothers and sisters who have toiled to support their young men there, and if lagging behind other colleges at last "rise to the height of this great argument" and open its doors with a welcome to women without a bribe! We would promise its management that they would be no losers by the step.

NOTES.

The foremost Canadian Journal of Politics, Literature, Science, and Art is The Week of Toronto. This magazine has recently changed its shape; so that it now much resembles in external form as well as literary purposes the Athenaeum and Saturday Review. The tone of The Week is of the highest. Its pages are everywhere marked by calmness and evenness of judgment. To all who take an interest in Canadian affairs, in fact to all who wish to keep abreast with current matters generally, we may confidently recommend this magazine. (Toronto: C. B. Robinson.)

More might be said on the topics touched upon by General Trumbull in this number. The six years' term of the presidency is not necessarily an infringement of popular liberty, nor is vivisection, because of its sentimental foundation, more moral than vivisection.

THE OPEN COURT.

PUBLISHED EVERY THURSDAY BY

THE OPEN COURT PUBLISHING CO.

EDWARD C. HEGELER, PRES. 

DR. PAUL CARUS, EDITOR.

TERMS THROUGHOUT THE POSTAL UNION: $2.00 PER YEAR. 

$1.00 FOR SIX MONTHS.

All communications should be addressed to

THE OPEN COURT, 

(Nixon Building, 175 La Salle Street,)

P. O. DRAWER F. 

CHICAGO, ILL.

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