

THE CONFLICTS OF THE AGE

1. AN ADVERTISEMENT FOR A NEW RELIGION.
By AN REVOLUTIONIST.
2. THE CONFESSION OF AN AGNOSTIC.
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3. WHAT MORALITY HAVE WE LEFT?
By A NEW LIGHT MORALIST.
4. REVIEW OF THE FIGHT.
By A YANKEE FARMER.

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These Papers appeared lately in the North American Review, and are published (with a few additional paragraphs), because they reflect the opinions of the age.

CONFLICTS OF THE AGE.

I.

AN ADVERTISEMENT FOR A NEW RELIGION.

BY AN EVOLUTIONIST.

AMONG our advanced thinkers two points are now happily settled beyond the need of further inquiry or even the propriety of reconsideration. One is, that all the old religions, including Christianity, in one sense the best and in another the worst of them, are waxing old, and must soon die. Each of the creeds has had "its little day," as our Broad Church poet sings—little compared with the many and prolonged geological ages, or even with the myriads of years which have elapsed since the man-apes began to stand upright, and try to look up to heaven; but the ages of the past are merging into the future, as the dawn brightens into the day. First, fetichism had its day, probably a very long, prehistoric one, when men, just risen above monkeys, struggled to speak, and had an awe of earth-powers; then came the worship of the higher works of Nature—sun, moon, stars, and animals; then polytheism, which divided the complex one into many to give a power to each agent of Nature; next, or at the same time, hero-worship, with idolatry and carved images, then a pantheism on the rise of philosophy, and among

the Hebrews the exaltation through national pride of a tribal god into a One God, supposed to rule over all the world ; and finally an incarnate God, at once divine and human in Christianity. We now know that all these have been developed out of the rude ideas and wants of the human heart, and had their shape given them by the environment. Monotheism, too, has had varied forms, retaining so much of polytheism in its Virgin and angels and saints in the Romish Church, and military hero-worship in the faith which shouts every morning, "Allah ! Allah ! there is one God, and Mohammed is his prophet !" We can now thoroughly understand and explain all this on the grand new scientific principles of "natural selection" and "the struggle for existence." Lecky has shown very skilfully, in his work on "Rationalism," that antiquated systems pass away—like old men—not because they have been attacked by argument, but simply because, like the races which have perished slowly in the geological ages, they are not fitted to the new circumstances, and cannot survive among the new ideas which have sprung up by spontaneous generation. In the struggle for existence, certain beliefs are cast off, and only those continue which can stand the new conditions. The Reformers undermined the faith of the Catholic Church, and Mr. Leslie Stephen has shown how the deistical writers of the last century successfully undermined the strangely mixed and incongruous faiths of the Hebrew and Christian Scriptures. Rationalism and Unitarianism have exposed so much of the weakness of the infallible Bible that shrewd men now see that all must go. The great thinkers of the last century and a half have been against the Bible :—Hume and Gibbon, and we may add Froude, among historians, fitted to examine evidence ; Voltaire, Rousseau, Goethe, Sainte-Beuve, and Matthew Arnold, among men of literary genius ; while philosophers like Kant, Fichte,

and Hegel, have looked coldly on inspiration ; and Schopenhauer and Von Hartmann have shown how wretched a world this is ; and our great *savants*, Laplace, Humboldt, Darwin, Huxley, and Tyndall, have set the Bible aside as not worthy of being looked at. Christianity, both in the form of Popery and Protestantism, has still roots fixed in the soil ; but they are like those of the old oaks which I have seen in England, condemned as useless for ship-timber in the days of Cromwell, with the top-branches dying and ready to be blown away by the first tempest moving on irresistibly to fill up the vacuum created by the burning up of old faiths.

A new era has dawned, more important than the ternary, when mammals appeared ; or the quaternary, when man appeared. Great typical men have come forth, undermining not only revealed but natural religion,—it is now acknowledged that, when the Bible is gone, no rational religion can remain. Hume showed at one and the same time that there is no valid proof for the existence of God, as worlds may have come into being without a cause ; and that a miracle cannot be proved, men being so liable to delusion in such matters. Kant confuted all the old and venerable arguments for the Divine existence, and was not very successful in building up a new one by means of the practical reason ; for, if the speculative reason may deceive in holding that every effect has a cause, why may not the practical reason, with its God and immortality, also be delusive ? Indeed, the practical reason, or conscience, is now shown by Bain and Darwin to be simply the product of circumstances and hereditary. Comte has demonstrated that we cannot discover either first or final causes—the two dark caves from which all religions have issued, like wild beasts, and into which they retreat when pursued. Mr. J. S. Mill has admitted that, on the principle (which, however, has

no evidence in its favor) of causation being universal, there may be some presumption in favor of the existence of a God; but then he proves that this God cannot be an omnipotent God, otherwise he would prevent the evil. Darwin has plucked from man's brow his proud claim that he was specially created by God and in God's image, and has demonstrated his derivation from the ascidian through the catarrhine monkey. Huxley, the great physiologist, has satisfied naturalists that man does not differ so much from the lower animals as they do from one another, or as one portion of mankind differs from another, and has found a physical basis of mind, in which latter point he has been followed by Lewes. Last of all, there has risen up in these times the highest development of all in one who combines in himself Locke, with his experience, and Kant, with his forms, and has explained all physical Nature by the persistence of force, and all life and mind by the interaction of internal and external relations. I need not say that I refer to Herbert Spencer.

But there is a second truth admitted with nearly equal unanimity—indeed, by all but a few conceited youths who boast that they have gone beyond all religion and have lately been talking very loudly. It is that man has religious instincts—is, in short, a religious animal, and must have some sort of worship. Hume used to go at times to church in Scotland, and labored to make the moderate ministers there, corresponding to the Unitarian ministers here, adopt a rational religion. Kant, the intellectual Samson, who brought down the temple upon others, but also on himself, left us no God speculatively, but then he called in the practical reason, with its corollaries, a conscience, a day of judgment, an immortality, and a God, and thus restored what he had taken away. We have all seen "*Deo crexit Voltaire*" on the temple at Ferney, where nobody worships, plainly because the age

is beyond deism, but has not yet reached the true religion. Rousseau is full of pious sentiment, and has pronounced the most beautiful eulogium ever uttered on Jesus of Nazareth, declaring that, while Socrates died as a man, Jesus died as a god. Comte had no god, but he had a *Grand Etre* in collective humanity, and he had a priesthood and nine sacraments, and enjoined public honors to be paid to his deity and to women, allowing no liberty of conscience or of education to any one. Huxley, as a member of the School Board in London, insists that the Bible be introduced into every school, and avows that science does not tend to make men moral, and that the Bible, though full of error, is the only book fitted to form the character of the young. Tyndall is exceedingly indignant at those who would charge him with doing away with religion. "No atheistic reasoning," he says, "can, I hold, dislodge religion from the heart of man. Logic cannot deprive us of life, and religion is life to the religious. As an experience of consciousness, it is perfectly beyond the assaults of logic." Herbert Spencer has allotted a very spacious region to God and to religion, the Unknown and Unknowable, and commends the Athenians for erecting an altar to the unknown God.

It is a very interesting circumstance that there are little groups of advanced, truth-loving men and women, who meet for conference on the Sundays in London, and in New York, Chicago, and other enlightened cities. I have at times attended their meetings. At one of them, which I remember particularly, we had a very burning address from a man of genius, who had started as a Scotch Calvinist, and run through all modern forms of faith, and now believes in the ETERNITIES, of whom, or of which, he discoursed in a glow surpassing that of the setting sun. He had evidently taken his faith and his language from Thomas Carlyle, who is one of the prophets of our own,

and who believes in Force as a god, and gives him or it sufficient omnipotence, and ever flares up into the "immensities," and the "realities," and the "moralities," and the "idealities," as does also our own Emerson. M. Renan, after showing that Jesus was tempted, by the necessity of upholding his mission, into imposture at the grave of Lazarus, tells us in the very strongest language that he has not cast aside religion, but believes in an "eternal religion." In short, the great men who have risen like mountains in our world have all been profoundly religious; thus, to name some of them in their historical order: Socrates, Plato, Jesus of Nazareth, Paul, Bacon, Descartes, Newton, Spinoza, Leibnitz; and, in this last age, Herschel, Faraday, Mayer, and Henry.

Both these truths have been established by a large induction, going as far back as history and archæology can carry us. In reaching them there have, in the struggles for existence, been furious conflicts between Science and Religion, of which Dr. Draper and President White have been the popular historians—altogether on our side. There have even been internal feuds in each of the hostile camps, both on the religious and the irreligious (so charged) sides. This we might expect, for the whole of cosmical action is carried on by undulations and by the repulsions as well as attractions of molecules, and human history has to speak as much of war as of peace. Religions have had their dissensions, and so have positivists. Prof. Huxley has once and again used very irreverent language in speaking of our great system-builder, M. Comte. Replying to the Archbishop of York, he says:

"So far as I am concerned, the most reverend prelate might dialectically hew M. Comte in pieces, as a modern Agag, and I should not attempt to stay his hand. In so far as my study of what specially characterizes the Posi-

tive Philosophy has led me, I find therein little or nothing of any scientific value, and a great deal which is as thoroughly antagonistic to the very essence of science as anything in ultramontane Catholicism. In fact, M. Comte's philosophy in practice might be compendiously described as Catholicism *minus* Christianity."

But a far more painful attack has been made within the last few months on one of our very grandest men, who has for years past been acknowledged to be the greatest of our logicians—in fact, the special philosopher of his age. Prof. Jevons is so presumptuous as to speak thus of Mr. J. S. Mill :

"For about twenty years past I have been a more or less constant student of his books ; during the last fourteen years I have been compelled by the traditional requirements of the University of London, to make these works at least partially my text-books in lecturing. Some ten years of study passed before I began to detect their fundamental unsoundness. . . . I will no longer consent to live silently under the incubus of bad logic and bad philosophy which Mill's works have laid upon us. . . . If to all his other qualities had been happily added logical accurateness, his writings would indeed have been a source of light for generations to come. But in one way or other Mill's intellect was wrecked. The cause of injury may have been the ruthless training which his father imposed upon him in tender years ; it may have been Mill's own life-long attempt to reconcile a false empirical philosophy with conflicting truth. But, however it arose, Mill's mind was essentially illogical. . . . I undertake to show that there is hardly one of his more important and peculiar doctrines which he has not himself amply refuted."

I might quote pages of similar opprobrious language. There may be some truth in it as applied to Mill's formal logic, in which he has never been regarded as an adept. But he makes an equally strong attack on his inductive logic, which has commonly been regarded as perfect. He describes "Mill's mind as essentially illogical;" he speaks of "the perversity of his intellect;" declares that "the philosophy of the Mills, both father and son, is a false one;" and says of a certain paragraph that "it is likely to produce intellectual vertigo in the steadiest thinker." He disparages Mill's famous canons of induction, and affirms that he confounds both causation and induction. But all this dogmatism will not prevent Mr. Mill from surviving. Men will soon discover that Jevons' attempt to make logic mathematical is an entire failure. It is not a proper interpretation of the judgment "man dies," to put it in the form "man = some dying creatures." It is clear to me that, in the struggle for existence, Mill will long outlive Jevons.

As man must have a religion, and the old religions are sick, dying, or dead, so we must have a new-born religion. We cannot hasten the orderly but slow processes of nature. A premature birth must produce a weakly child. Emerson says truly, in a late number of the *North American Review*, "It does not yet appear what forms the religious feeling will take." So we are not able to describe fully what the new religion already in the womb is to be. But we can confidently affirm that it must obey certain conditions, and can specify some of the negative ones.

1. It cannot have a God living and personal. This would be pure, or rather very impure, anthropomorphism. In the philosophy of Plato, and in the Old and New Testaments, and the popular apprehension, man is supposed to be formed after the image of God; but the truth is, man has formed his god after his own image, quite as

much so as when the old idolators cut down a tree and made a man-god figure out of it. The old Greek philosopher Xenophanes satirically remarked that the Thracians gave blue eyes and the Ethiopians snub noses to their gods; so the Christians make their god hate what they hate, and denounce as sin all that is too liberal for them, and send all to hell who do not believe as they do. There can be no objections with Spencer to call the Unknown by the name of God, but then he must not be regarded as having properties that can be named, or even thought of,—the lofty Neoplatonists of Alexandria were right in placing their god so high and ethereal that no predication can be made regarding him.

2. It cannot insist on a personal immortality to the soul. This would be bringing an Egyptian mummy of the days of the Pharaohs into a modern drawing-room. True, every object known is not only immortal, but eternal, as the doctrine of the conservation of force shows; and has existed in all past time, and shall exist forever—if there be a forever. But the individual soul is the product of the brain, and, when the brain is decomposed, the soul must dissolve with it into its material elements; and is really so insignificant that it is not transmuted into any other force. I am not aware that the soul of Shakespeare, or of Newton, when they died, added any weighable powers to the dust to which they returned.

3. There must be no terrors drawn from a day of judgment. These may frighten children, and men and women weak as children, but highly developed men are beyond them, and look down with pity, not unmixed with contempt, on those who are swayed by them. True, there is a judgment set up in our world—one which pronounces terrible sentences that cannot be reversed. It is the struggle for existence, in which those not suited to the environment—the weak, the deaf, the blind, the decrepit,

the idiots, the negroes, the Indians—as being useless, must perish; and the strong, the healthy, the bold, the philosophers, especially evolutionists, will survive and advance the civilization of the world.

4. There can be no ghostly sanctions or motives derived from a supernatural power, or a world to come. The thinking portion of mankind have never been much swayed by considerations drawn from these regions above or below our ken. Any attempt to enforce them in this advanced age will be resisted by every man of sense and independence.

5. Everything beyond what can be seen must be represented as unknown and unknowable. The Hebrews were right in saying that clouds and darkness cover the face of God's throne, and furnish a mystery fitted to awe us; and in that region, as in the heathen groves, religion may be allowed to dwell.

It is vastly more difficult, beforehand, to tell positively what the new religion is to be. Still the prophets of our own, and the priests who have charge of it, have given us certain characteristics. Mr. Mill has given us a description of the worship set up by Comte, though he is not prepared to adopt it: "Private adoration is to be addressed to collective Humanity in the persons of worthy individual representatives, who may be either living or dead, but must in all cases be women; for women, being the *sexu aimant*, represent the best attribute of humanity that ought to regulate all human life, nor can humanity possibly be represented in any form but of a woman. The objects of private adoration are the mother, the wife, the daughter, representing severally the past, the present, and the future, and calling into active exercise the three social sentiments—veneration, attachment, and kindness. We are to regard them, whether dead or alive, as our guardian angels, *les vraies anges gardiens*. If the last have

never existed, or if in the particular case any of the three types is too faulty for the office assigned it, their place may be supplied by some other type of womanly excellence, even by one merely historical." All who have benefited the race are to be the *Dii Minores* of this theology : and days might be set apart to Democritus and his atoms which make the world ; to Lucretius, who expelled all superstitious fears ; and Hobbes, who derived all our ideas from sensation ; not omitting Comte himself, who rid us of first and final cause. I do fear, however, that this religion will not survive in the struggle for existence. Some of Comte's followers speak of it as an evidence of his lunacy.

But there must, I suppose, be a worship of some kind, were it only to accommodate the religion to human nature, which wishes to have an outlet to, and an expression of, its feelings. But this worship, as Huxley has profoundly remarked, must be " chiefly of the silent sort." Worship has, in fact, never had much influence on the life of the worshipper. Borrow tells of the gypsy mother who said to her child, " You may go and steal, now that you have said your prayers." Religious emotion is an ebullition which wastes the energy without yielding much good. But this worship of the " silent sort " may have a quiet influence without anybody being able to notice it.

With Humanity as its god, the religion must have an immortality, after which all are striving. Mr. Harrison, the most spirit-stirring of our later prophets, has been lately developed to tell us what it is to be. It is not to be a personal immortality, but it is to be a continued life in a man's works. Thus Homer lives in the Iliad. In like manner the orator lives in the words he has uttered ; and the actor in the parts he has played ; and the singer in the tunes he has sung ; and the trumpeter in the noise he has made ; and the ploughman in the earth he has turned up ;

and the fisherman in the fish he has caught ; and the butcher in the cattle he has killed ; and Mr. Harrison in the posthumous influence-theory in the "Symposium" of the *Nineteenth Century*. This leads me to remark how happy a thing it is that we have such organs as the *Fortnightly*, the *Contemporary Review*, and the *Nineteenth Century* to give the prophets of the new religion an opportunity of being heard by respectable exemplary people. I find that the old lady, the *Quarterly*, always "so dastardly," complains of this. We are the more dependent on these two young organs since the old fires of the *Westminster Review* have burned themselves out, and left, like the volcanoes in the moon, only extinct craters ; and that once powerful organ is in the position of a man who has out-lived his faculties.

Along with this belief there might be *fêtes* and festivals to rival the grand Catholic ceremonies. There would be some kind of Sabbath, but removed as far as possible from the Jewish and the Puritan ; and to distinguish it it might be called Sunday, that is the sun's day, and we might have it like the French Revolutionists, once in ten days, instead of seven. On these occasions there would be lectures of the true American type, developing the theory of development, evolving man from the brute, and showing that he may rise higher than he has ever yet done, though it is to be hoped never incapable of marriage. There might be hymns in honor of the great mother, Nature, more worthy to be revered than the Virgin. With this there might be idols representing in symbol the great world-powers, such as Evolution, Persistence of Force, Heredity, Panzoism, and Physiological Units. Around the places of worship there might be groves like those dedicated in old time to Baal, the powerful fire-god. There would be assemblies of males and females with Bacchantic dances, where time would be delightfully spent, and the

remembrance of which would be pleasant—vastly more so than the dreary hours spent in our preaching and praying conventicles. It will take time to create the fitting sentiment; but time is an essential condition of all natural evolution, and we can give the new religion ten thousand years to develop. In the struggle for existence all other religions would disappear and this alone remain, till it gives birth to something still higher: not more heavenly—that is, ideal; but more earthly—that is, real and practical.

But at this point we are met by a difficulty which we must meet if we can. Man, it is acknowledged, has religious instincts which cannot be destroyed, even in the fiery struggles for existence. Whence come they? How is it that they cannot be eradicated? We evolutionists tell religious men (so-called) that they may give up their fears, for religion has its seat so deep in the soul that it cannot be dislodged. But our prophets assure us that the human soul is developed from the higher animals, and these from the lower, and that there is a physical basis underneath the whole. How or when have these indestructible instincts come in? If they have come in from without, we have here a very marked phenomenon of which the evolution hypotheses can make nothing, and which, our pietists will say, implies a supernatural power. But, if we are to bring in one thing independent of development, why not more? Why not free-will, with Dr. Carpenter? Why not reason and intelligence, with the metaphysicians—until we overwhelm the whole glorious theory, evidently seen to be insufficient? And if, on the other hand, it be merely a natural product then it should disappear in the struggle for existence like other superstitions. Already there are signs of its beginning to vanish in this nineteenth century of the present religion, and it must evidently all be gone before the nineteen-hundredth century. I fear that this contradiction must for the present be allowed to

remain with the antinomies of Kant which have undermined all rational cosmology. But then Hegel has shown that all truth is contradictory, and there will cast up a synthesis to bridge over the gap in the analysis.

This new religion must come. The conditions are ready. Just as life appeared when inanimate matter was ready for it, and sensation came and consciousness came when the nerves were woven, and intelligence came when the brain was fashioned for it; and as Abraham went forth, not knowing whither he went, to publish the unity of God; and the son of the carpenter, at Nazareth, came to preach altruism under the name of love; and as Luther started up, like the crowing of the cock which sounded in the ears of Peter, to bring the Church to see its errors—so the new faith has now to come forth, as the sun does at its appointed time. The world is ready to receive it; and as paganism gave way before Christianity, and the superstitions of Romanism fled before the reading of the Bible, and as rationalism has undermined evangelism, with its faith in blood, so a new priest must come with his rod to swallow all the rods of the magicians. It must all come by development. A virgin must once more bring forth a child; and, that this can be done, is illustrated by the lately established doctrine of parthenogenesis. A variety will become settled into an unchangeable species, and will continue for ages, till it is superseded by something else, fitted to fight under the new conditions. “It doth not yet appear what we shall be.” There have been anticipations, however, and the leapings of the babe in the womb. But there must be a time longer of struggle for existence, till the strongest assert its might (which of course is right)—as we see among cattle in the field, the stronger cow fighting till she gets her pre-eminence allowed. Rational theology has done good by its assaults on Scripture; but then it professed

to accept so much of Scripture as is rational—as if any of it were rational. Pure deism has always been felt to be chill as death, and now its supposed proofs, and indeed all rational theology, have been undermined by Hume, Kant, and Mill. Unitarianism is dead, and lying in state in order to burial, and of the dead I desire to speak *nil nisi bonum*, especially as Unitarianism has no longer any power over young men, while it has helped to develop the present crisis. Mormonism, the only new religion which has sprung up in our rather barren age, is very coarse and gross, and is a warning to us of what an unscientific faith may become. I fear that the butterfly, when it appears, may have somewhat of the slime of the grub from which it has been developed. All this shows the greater need of a new faith founded on the latest natural knowledge.

There is an urgent need for a new belief to come, and that speedily. If not soon forthcoming, there is a risk that our young folks rush into forbidden ground. We are at present in a transition state, which is a critical state; we are in danger of being crushed in a collision between two trains, one of which has come upon the other before it has started. Our sons claim that in prosecuting their rights they are just as much entitled to advance beyond their fathers as their fathers did beyond their sires. Encouraged, as they allege, by our example, they are waxing bold, not to say petulant. They laugh at the worship instituted by Comte, and will not attend our select conferences. They have no great awe, and no dread whatever in regard to the unknown of Spencer; if it can never be known, why should they either revere or fear it? Nay, they maintain philosophically that the *phenomenon* does not logically imply a *noumenon*, and so they are carried back to the old Hume positions of there being nothing but appearances without a thing appearing, and

affirm that the *noumenon* is a remainder of an old, superstitious philosophy, brought in awkwardly by Kant, and sustained by Hamilton, Mansel, and Spencer, to save them from blank skepticism, and now ready to disappear like mist before the light of the rising day. They seem to be satisfied with the appearances, and to care nothing about the unknown thing. Darwin is religious enough to call in three or four germs created by God; but Tyndall insists that anthropomorphism, which is to be so avoided, "is as firmly associated with the creation of a few forms as of a multitude;" and Huxley has started a pregnant hypothesis of a supposed early stage of the star-dust, when it produced germs which it cannot now do. Huxley and Tyndall are falling behind the age which they led for a time, and resolutely oppose spontaneous generation; but Bastian comes after, and gets bacteria out of liquid substances in which all the germs have been killed by heat. Men like Sir John Herschel used to point to the human eye as giving evidence in its numerous adaptations of design; but the great physicist of our day, Helmholtz, tells us that, if an optician brought him so blundering an instrument as the eye, he would return it to him. Tyndall thinks he can explain even mental action by matter, and, in his sweeping lecture at Birmingham, would persuade us that we are responsible in the same sense as the dog; that a criminal is absolutely necessitated to act as he does, but that we are necessitated to punish him to prevent the recurrence of the offence, as we strike a dog to prevent him from stealing again. There may be some truth in all this, but it is dangerous to publish it, as it may tempt young men to get as many of the sweets of the bee as they can, if only they can keep from being exposed to its sting.

Aristotle maintained that "Nature abhors a vacuum." He was wrong in applying this to the rise of water in a

tube, as was shown by Torricelli, but he uttered a profound truth notwithstanding. The heart must have something to cling to beyond a negation, of which no one can say whether it has or has not a meaning. If what is unknown could be known, there might be some hope and activity; but it is unknowable, and so no human interest can attach to it. My adopted daughter when in London went to a Wesleyan meeting one part of the day, and to a Sunday lecture, by Huxley, on another part; and, strange as it may sound, she preferred the sincere shouting, the amens and groans of the Methodists to the worship of "the silent sort," in which there seemed to be no heart or adoration—except in the organ. A bright young lady, after listening for six weeks to lectures on "Humanity," declared that she would rather worship the Virgin, who seemed to have a loving heart, and whom she identified with the statues of her in Italy. Some of my lady-friends have told me that when crossed in love they would prefer a nunnery to an Owen phalanstery or a communist settlement at Oneida. But our greatest anxiety is about the young men, our sons, who, of course, will be brought up without a Bible, and without prayer, public or private, and whose reading will be in physiology male and female, and in books we are not able to keep from them (this is said by travellers to be the case with the young ladies in Russia); and who go to theatres, which we freely allow, as they are schools of virtue, and see the sort of company in the gallery and the boxes, and go home with some of them simply to know more of them. We honestly tell them to be honest, and obliging, and chaste—always according to our ideas, which are surely liberal enough. But they puzzle us with questions which we have difficulty enough in answering satisfactorily to them in their present unsettled temper. If Comte loved adoringly another woman than his wife, "why," they say,

“ may not we do the same ? If Mr. Mill constantly associated in the tenderest manner with the druggist’s wife, in the absence of her husband, why may not we have the like privilege ? ” They remind us that these illustrious men have been teaching us that there must be a new relation between the sexes established, and have left it very doubtful what it should be, and our youths think they may experiment on the subject. They remind us that Bradlaugh and his lady associate have been quoting the authority of Mr. Mill for their books condemned by the law courts. They speak doubtingly of the relation of our philosophic female novelist and Mr. Lewes, whose wife is still living. We used to claim that we freethinkers of this age were moral compared with the infidels of the days of Tom Paine ; I fear that we can no longer make this boast. It is alleged that in circles affected with our views directly, and more frequently indirectly, there is a loose code which allows those who yield to animal affection to justify themselves by an appeal to the now established doctrine of human parentage and descent—as, in the declining days of Rome, licentious men and women fortified themselves by the philosophy of Epicurus ; and in the days of Louis XV. of France, by the science and example of the encyclopedists. The origin of man certainly does not furnish us with any arguments for monogamy or against temporary concubinage, our ancestors among the monkeys knowing no restrictions in these matters.

We do tell these youths to be moral. But they hint that morality, in the vulgar sense, has been undermined. We do not address to them any appeals drawn from the divine existence and a judgment-day ; if we did so, they would laugh in our faces. Some of them are bold enough to tell us that, the sanction being gone, the law has gone with it, or, at least, is not to be considered as unbending, but may fit itself to conditions and environments. We do

at times appeal to the conscience. But they remind us that Prof. Bain and Herbert Spencer have shown us that the conscience is simply the product of circumstances, founded on man's capacity for pleasure and pain; and the verified hypothesis of the evolutionist is, that it has been built up, in ten millions of years, from the primitive sensations of pleasure and pain felt by our ascidian forefathers. Having examined the title, and exposed its validity, they deny the right of this pretended despot to rule over us. Tyndall acknowledges that there is a religious instinct; but then he has also detected its origin among material atoms, and our youth doubt whether it can claim any authority.

We speak of the beauty of "altruism"—so much more significant a phrase than "love," which the Bible uses. Our youths answer, first self and then another, and ask, now that conscience is gone, what claim altruism has on them. "Let the another," each says, "look after himself, and I will look after myself, and oblige him when it suits me." But we urge upon them that it is for their interest to be good, and to do good. They answer that this is not so very obvious, and that they are so interested in the present pursuit, and so fascinated with an engaging affection, that they are willing to risk all earthly consequences, and they remind us that we need not fear any consequences in the world to come. All this can no doubt be answered, but not very satisfactorily, I fear, till we get the new "kingdom;" not, indeed, of "God," or "heaven," but of the "earth," in the highly developed state which it has reached in this quaternary era of its history. But, when the new religion comes, it will collect around it a faith and attractive associations; and it will generate an artistic worship full of glow; and the hearts of our young men and women will be drawn toward it, and we shall have a joyous religion, with a free and gen-

erous morality, rejecting all asceticism, and attracting by its own charms.

Multitudes are looking and longing for the new religion, and the longing will bring it—just as was shown by the great naturalist, Lamarck, the longing of the animal brought it fins to swim in the sea, and wings to fly in the heavens. Some, I know, in this state of transition, are intensely and overwhelmingly anxious. They have lost their old faith, and the new one has not yet come. Strauss, in some of his earliest editions, used to say that it was not the truth, but the belief, that is powerful as a motive; not the resurrection of Christ, but the belief in it. But, it being now known that there is no religious truth, and that there has been no resurrection, the faith has died for want of its needful nourishment. The heart is empty, and aching and crying for food—as the man dying of hunger does; and for water—as the man dying of thirst does. There are, to my knowledge, terrible conflicts in the souls of some of our young men. There are distracting fears, also, in the bosoms of some of our young women who love their brothers and their lovers, and would like to follow them, but are afraid to do so, and have to use like language with the wife of James Mill, when she said of her husband in his later life, “He says things that frighten me.” Our youths remember the grave counsels of their fathers ever appealing to heaven, and the prayers of their mothers committing them with uplifted hands to God. They cannot forget that they used themselves to pray, and found comfort under bereavement when they could thus unbosom themselves, in the belief that there was an eye watching over them and a heart pitying them. They have a tender memory of the parting with fathers and mothers and sisters, who assured those left behind that they were going to heaven, and wished those they loved to follow them—all of which they are now obliged

to regard as a delusion. Some of us have to look back on these days with a sigh. We have recorded instances of such feeling in Jouffroy, when his philosophy deprived him of his religion; and in Greg, when deism took away the faith of his childhood.

But, as honest men, we must follow the truth—the difficulty being to know which path she has taken, the darkness being so dense. We cannot return to the simple faith which we have left far behind—the water cannot return and run up the hill down which it has descended. In the struggle feelings, more bitter than tears, have been wrung from the heart. The cry is for the touch of a vanished hand, which has been cut off and committed to the earth, from which it will never rise again. There is a shriek heard more piercing than that which comes from a house on fire with inmates locked in, than that which comes from a ship on fire or a lunatic asylum in flames. It would reach the ear of God, were there a god with ears to hear, or a heart to feel for it. I have been cursed by a young man, who has fallen into vice, and who charges me with leading him from the faith in a God and Mediator, in which his mother had reared him, without giving him anything else in its place, and who says he is disposed to believe in God—which is as certain as that every effect has a cause—but does not now know the way in which to approach him. The voice cries in broken accents, “They have taken away my God, and my faith and my hope, and I know not where to find them!” It is certain that there is no God to answer the complaint, but I have faith in the development which has done so much in the past, and will do more in the future, that it will fill the void it has created. “The children have come to the birth,” and what we need is one to deliver them; and I advertise for such from among our scientific doctors all over the world.

II.

CONFESSION OF AN AGNOSTIC.

BY AN AGNOSTIC.

UPWARD of a year has elapsed since my old master, "An Evolutionist," advertised in *The North American Review* (July, 1878) for a "new religion." I understand that very few of the multitudes, young and old, who are dissatisfied with all existing religions, have answered that application, and these have proposed schemes which my friend regards as absurd and fit only to be laughed at. A Bostonian, a leading member of one of the literary clubs of the capital of New England, advocates rationalism, being an advanced Unitarianism, which takes only so much of the Bible as commends itself to reason, and shuts its eyes to the facts that this compromise was tried from the middle of last century to the middle of this ; that it was all along felt to be cold as an icicle, failing to draw the heart of any man or woman or child to it ; and that its favorite rationalistic tenets about God and immortality have melted away into an offensive yellow foam under the scorching criticisms of Kant and Mill. A smart young Unitarian preacher settles the whole question by leaving out of the Scriptures all that is supernatural and all that relates to a bloody sacrifice, regeneration, and eternal perdition, but keeping the poetry which he admires, and adding some maxims from Buddha taught in the school of universal religion at Harvard ; and he tries to draw audiences by discussing all the questions of the day on these liberal

principles. A higher man, trained in the school of Hegel, regards the Scriptures as merely the manifestation of the religious feelings of the writers and of their age, but containing some unconscious presages of the religion to come, and has constructed an *à priori* religion with a Trinity and a reconciliation of all contradictions by a Logos. Unfortunately, Hegelianism has run its course in Germany; and in this country youths wonder at it, but do not accept it. Some Western men have proposed a worship without any beliefs, like that of M. Comte, and would set up shows with music and processions, and the adoration of heroes such as Buddha, and Jesus Christ, and Mohammed, and Oliver Cromwell, and Voltaire, and George Washington, and Emerson—as soon as he is removed to the land of shades. My friend sees that such a mystic faith will be scorned by the hardy farmers and miners of the West, though it might be agreeable enough to some of their wives who feel that they must have a worship. My advertising patron is thus left, as I confidently anticipated, without a religion.

I belong to a younger and a more advanced generation; and I am entitled to go beyond my master, even as he went beyond his Unitarian teachers. Beliefs or unbeliefs are now hurrying on with amazing celerity, and make as much progress in a year as they used to do in an age—at this present moment they are rushing on as the waters do at Niagara, and are about to take a determined leap. All men are acknowledging that there is no hope or fear of a new faith being developed,—as some might wish to remove their doubts, or, as I know, only to restrict our liberty of thought, or to trouble us with ghosts coming out of the graves in which we have decently buried them. Mormonism, I expect, will be the last new religion appearing in our world, and I have no objection to its disappearing with the rest.

Professor Tyndall and certain middle-aged philosophers are still telling us that religion is natural to man; and Herbert Spencer has provided a grove for it in the "unknowable," and Huxley, we may believe, is there paying his devotions, "chiefly of the silent sort." They are correct historically in saying that in ages past man has been a religious animal. The few noted exceptions, such as Lucretius and Hume, prove the rule; they may be compared to those anticipations of coming man which Agassiz took such delight in pointing out in certain anticipatory organs of the earlier geological ages. By our new theory of development we can account for all this. We can show, on evolution principles, how man should insist on having some object to fear or to trust, and that this tendency should take certain shapes; that he should first be a fetich, then an idolater and a polytheist, and finally a theist, with all sorts of intermediate forms, such as Popery with its one God and its Virgin and saints, and Protestantism with its one God and Bibliolatry. All this grew out of man's position, out of his felt wants produced by his environment, and the stages of his intelligence and tastes. In the struggle with his surroundings, man felt that there was a power above him and independent of him, guiding Nature in a mysterious way, and restraining him by terrible penalties. We now know this to be Development, which is all but deified by my old master, "An Evolutionist." We younger men, led by Darwin and Spencer, who, however, are being left behind by us, have seen clearly how all this has been produced, and we know and are sure that all religion must disappear. The veil has been withdrawn, and we discover how haggard and repulsive the prophet is who so long kept us in terror. The secret has been let out, or rather we discover that there has been no secret. The temple has been opened, as that at Jerusalem once was, and it is found that there are there no

tables of the law, no mercy-seat, no pot of manna, no rod that budded, and that there never were any such objects, except in the superstitious imaginations of the worshippers. In the struggle for existence, which is the characteristic of our world, "the fittest survive;" and we have the law of development, which is our temple, standing, while the superstitions are dying out like the extinct races of animals, and these contests of religion with science are merely like the writhings and death-struggles which Hugh Miller used so graphically to describe among the animals of the Old Red Sandstone when they could no longer live in the new and better state of things. We are at present in a transition state, like that between one geological era and another, and every belief is unsettled; and our young men are driven from the old to the new, and, for a space, from the new back to the old, by the recoiling waves. The turmoil of warring elements will soon cease, and there can be no doubt that this will end in a settled state of confirmed unbelief. We are now in the tossings and the foam where the cataract has fallen, but the surviving stream will soon flow on peacefully and resolutely. Our youth, reared at our advanced colleges in England, Germany, and, of later years, in the United States, and reading our scientific works, such as those of Darwin, Spencer, Huxley, and Tyndall, and our progressive periodicals, such as the *Fortnightly*, the *Nineteenth Century*, and *The Popular Science Monthly*, know not what to believe. But the bolder of them will soon come to the conclusion that it is no matter what they believe, it being certain that there is no supernatural religion, and, therefore, in fact, no religion to believe in; while the weaker will skulk back in a cowardly manner to the popular Christianity, and quietly shelter themselves from annoyance in a creed in which they have no faith. It may require another struggle and convulsion before all men

have the courage openly to avow the unbelief in their hearts.

We are under great obligations to the men represented by "An Evolutionist," of the age now passing away into the past as the dawn does before the day. They have awaked us from a troubled dream into which we can never again fall. They occupy important positions in some of our higher colleges, European and American. They talk to their young men and in their addresses to popular audiences of a faith which they still cherish and which they mean to hold by, but they do not deign to tell us what it is or what its foundation. With many of them it is a determination to cling to some broken spars of the shipwrecked vessel, to keep them from sinking in bottomless waters. Such persons disclaim with indignation the charge of atheism, and they go to church at times to save appearances, and would rather that their children, especially their daughters, would adhere to some form of religion. With some the profession of religion is mere vapping and pretence, is in fact hypocrisy to avoid public odium and the business injury it might do them. In the case of others it is a wild cry proceeding from an emptied heart, which has had its idol pulled down, and with nothing to take its place. But the struggle will be only for a brief space; owing to the rapidity of the evolution in the pregnant womb of time, much more rapid than in the earlier revolutions of opinion. The travailing has begun, and the birth must soon follow. The old faith is nearly dead in Germany, is kept alive merely by infidel theologians, and will soon have to be buried out of sight. Sustained by Oxford and Cambridge, which only half believe, it is clinging to a feeble life in England, and will probably continue to do so for an age longer. The lease of an age longer may be allowed it in America, where it has had a convulsive activity given it by sensational preaching and

by revivals which disgust all men of intelligence. New hereditary instincts are being already evolved in the wombs of mothers without their knowing it, embodying and transmitting the doubts and the unbelief of the father, and rendering all credence of an old creed or a new physiologically impossible, and these will go down from father to son and one generation to another—just as the old religious beliefs used to do.

My old master was ever telling me that he had to follow truth whithersoever it might lead him, even should this be into an utterly unknown region. In this respect I follow him. But, in doing so, I am driven by the momentum he gave me further on than he had light or courage to go. I cannot return to the flesh-pots of Egypt, and I resign myself to the principles which the scientists and philosophers of his age have propounded. What I have to do is to pursue these to their logical consequences, and this though it should lead me to conclusions from which he would shrink, more especially as having to lecture to young men, whom he would not have abandon religion altogether. I confess I have had to pass through some terrible struggles (Herbert Spencer has shown that this world has been one of struggle with its environment from the beginning) before I reached my present firm position. I have had to resist the remembrance of a father's counsels of prudence, and an impulsive mother's entreaties, and some hereditary instincts which, in spite of all my efforts to subdue them, crave at times for light and guidance and comfort from a supernatural power. But logic, following science, has driven me on to my present place, and left me no retreat, having thoroughly shut up the road behind me.

One after another of the old beliefs which I got by that powerful law of nature, heredity, and in which I was trained by my mother when the religious feeling was upon

her, have been peeled off like the husks and scales of a bursting bud, or as the blossoms are blown away when the fruit is being formed. I am not to defend the positions which have been so successfully gained and thoroughly established by the great men, many of them still living, of the age immediately preceding my own. My father's father had felt the influence of Tom Paine and the French Revolution, and started doubts and uttered scoffs which sank deep into the soul of his son; and from these that son, my father, could never deliver himself. But he saw the excesses that followed the convulsions of opinion, and he could not on the one hand uphold the system that led to them, while on the other every seed of faith had been rooted out from his bosom. So he shut himself up in silence and opened his mind to no one. My mother was full of religious emotion; but had no steady faith, or in fact consistent religious conduct. My teacher in the state school professed neither religion nor irreligion, did not seem to have had any earnest belief, and at times let out a scoff which showed what was passing within. My education was completed under "an evolutionist." He came originally from England, and had felt the undermining influence of the philosophy of James Mill (who had thoroughly imbibed the principles of Hume), which was confirmed by the abler exposition of the negative system of his son, Mr. John Stuart Mill. He was a professor in one of our most advanced and liberal colleges. His public lectures were simply undermining, showing that the arguments for the separate existence and immortality of the soul and for the existence of God are not conclusive. But in quiet conferences in his study he ridiculed the religion of unreasoning faith, of blood, and of eternal punishment, and talked enthusiastically of a new religion, rational and benevolent, about to appear, and, like the sun, dispel all darkness. The inherited seeds of belief derived from an

indifferent father, with some physiological units (Spencer can explain what these are) descending from the body of my scoffing grandfather, predisposed me to listen to him. I had doubts of the Bible from an early date, though I clung to it for a time,—as a man falling down a precipice will hold by a stalk of grass to stay his descent. As my father never made any profession of religion, I was horrified with the thought coming upon me at the time when he died that he would have to wriggle for ever in the lake of fire and brimstone, and the language of Burns rung in my ears—

“In hell they’ll roast ye like a herring.”

I was now told that the argument for the Divine existence was inconclusive. It proceeds on the principle that every effect has a cause, which may be true within our experience, and “a reasonable distance beyond,” as John Mill says; but, as we know nothing of the nature of a cause, it may not be true of world-making of which we have no experience. When on one occasion I saw death with grim visage looking in at the curtain of my bedstead, I did feel reluctant to give up all hope of living in another world; but then I had no God to guarantee the belief, and as physiology had taught me that the soul was a complication of nerves, and philosophy had taught that things were merely an aggregation of appearances or impressions, I saw that we have no proof whatever that the soul would live when the nerves are dissolved, and that the impressions would continue after the senses that produced them ceased to act. The Christian’s hope is a pleasant dream to those who believe in Jesus Christ, but it can bring but little comfort to the great body of mankind, who, as not having passed through the process of regeneration, must perish everlastingly. So I resisted the temptation presented in my hour of weakness, and

have ever since been more courageous, as having fought a battle and gained a victory.

It was a favorite principle with my instructor that the students could not have a high culture without the assistance of the theatre. So I got introduced to a most fascinating woman, the daughter of a line of actors and actresses. I might have been joined to her in a civil contract. But the theatre, which I am prepared to defend, when it is properly managed, which it surely may be, though I admit it seldom is, was not the fittest place for the training of a young, impulsive girl with such predilections as she inherited from her parentage, and I was afraid to connect myself with her in life by a legal bond, though I meant to act honorably toward her. So we lived together in a relation which the prudish regarded as criminal, and the men and women of the world spoke of as ambiguous. I lost, in consequence, some of my early friends. My mother refused to visit me and my partner in our home; and when we met by accident she fell on my neck and poured forth floods of tears. But I kept firm to my principles, and gathered round me a body of young men and women whose domestic relations were not much different from my own, and who indulged with me in all manner of speculations on religious subjects.

My preceptor had introduced me to his favorite authors. I read carefully Grote's "History of Greece," and was led to take the positive view of the development of events in history. But I received the greatest profit and pleasure from the works of Goethe, whom I reckon the greatest of modern poets. Shakespeare may possess more varied genius, but then he takes and describes life as he finds it, and starts no speculative questions and suggests no change or improvements in society or in opinions. Goethe, on the other hand, holding no fixed creed, views all sides of a question, even as he sought to pore into the

hearts of all the ladies he fell in love with, and so has become the poet of an inquiring, doubting, unsettled age. I took my science, as might be expected, from Darwin, Huxley, and Tyndall, and became firmly convinced that the doctrine of evolution established in our days is more important than the law of gravitation discovered by Newton. Mr. J. S. Mill was my first philosopher; but I saw that no one could build any grand theory on his negative principles, and I resorted to Herbert Spencer, who, by help of modern, physical science, can construct the whole universe. My favorite novelist was George Eliot, who, though brought up in evangelical principles, has had her faith in historical religion undermined by Strauss, whom she translated, and her faith in natural religion by her husband, Mr. Lewes', science and religion. The domestic relations which had been maintained by some of these eminent persons, such as Goethe, Mill, and George Eliot, drew me toward them more closely, and helped to justify my connection with the woman who had such control over me.

Once more I had a terrible struggle. I was again prostrated by a dangerous disease. My partner nursed me with excessive devotion. At my suggestion she had followed George Eliot, and like her had inspected all creeds, mediæval, reformation, methodistic, and Jewish, but merely as we inspect the machinery of a clock on a mantelpiece, to see its springs. Her heart, however, was melted on the occasion of my illness, and, as she watched by my bedside, she expressed an earnest wish that I would yield to some kind of religion—she did not much care which—and implored me to have our connection sanctioned by marriage; and urged, as an argument, that Goethe, and Mill, and George Eliot, had all, in the end, betaken themselves to wedlock. But I had the courage to deny her request. Most unfortunately, the new science and phi-

osophy have not yet settled the most perplexing of all questions, what should be the relation of the sexes. But all advanced thinkers are agreed that Christian marriage, with its indissoluble connection, is most unjust and irrational, interfering with liberty, and making love a bondage, and I felt that it would be a weakness and a dereliction in me to sanction it by my example. We are in a more advanced age than those persons referred to who betook themselves to marriage, and it becomes us to walk worthy of the times and of our convictions. My partner was deeply wounded, threatened to separate from me, and actually left my house. She was led by her hereditary instincts to go on the stage for a time; but she had too much personality of character to enter into the personality of others, and her acting was a failure. Finding herself helpless, she had to return, and I was glad that she did so.

We are getting on as well as most married couples do; all the better because neither is tied to the other by any legal bond, which would certainly chafe the souls of both of us. The romance of life is now over with us, and we submit to our position. I have found her engaging in practices utterly inconsistent with my life-theory. She told me boldly, almost impertinently, that she must have a religion and a worship, and I noticed her stealing away to the Catholic cathedral on the occasion of its high festivals. I was at first amazed and indignant when I discovered that she had set up an altar in our nursery. It was of a composite structure. Proceeding from her heart, it unconsciously represented the stages through which religion has passed. There were flowers in profusion, corresponding to fetichism or nature-worship; there were idols, and among these the Virgin and Child, corresponding to the worship of human heroes; and there were statues of philosophers like Rousseau and Comte, point-

ing to the worship of mind. The whole had a theatrical look, like stage scenery, and much of the time of the mother and girls was employed in ornamenting it. I resolved on repressing the practices, and threatened to burn the figures; but this only led to a scene, and I found it best to let nature, that is, heredity, have its own way. It may take an age or two to remove the inherited diseases of the past.

My oldest son was a boy of bright parts, and I proceeded to train him, as James Mill did his son John. I have the most confident faith in the progress of the race. Natural selection has developed new species in the past. Why should it not do so in the future? The coming man should as far surpass the present man as the present man does his ancestor, the monkey or the fish. Indeed, I cherish the hope that, in thousands of ages, man will rise as far above his now condition as he has already risen above the ascidian. I had a secret expectation that my son might have some original quality, which would go down to posterity. But man's progress is still greatly hindered by his environment. My boy's brain was of an excitable character, like his mother's, and gave way under the strain to which it was subjected. I would rather not express the feelings that rose as I consigned him to the tomb. There was not only disappointment but resentment, but I could vent it only on objects which, like the cold mountains and distant stars, took no notice of me. My oldest would have followed my schemes, but my second son has no such enthusiasms. His mother at one time made him spend a considerable time at the domestic altar, but he has become wearied of it and indulges his mother's taste for theatrical performances. She has succeeded in getting our two daughters to enter into her spirit, and I think it better not to interfere. Since the death of my first-born, I feel I must give to the world

directly what I would have given first to him. My philosophy tells me that we must overlook the individual in attending to the species.

Meanwhile our system is making progress all around. We have with us knowingly, or unknowingly, all the shining spirits of the age. The great historian Grote was altogether with us, and has shown us how events can go on by natural causes without a providence to ride upon them and guide them. Science is entirely in our own hands, and there is not a naturalist under thirty years of age who does not believe in evolution. There has really been no reply to Darwin except the denunciations of priests and sectaries. St. George Mivart is too great a naturalist (and so has made immense concessions to the theory) and too poor a philosopher to counteract Darwin. The more knowing of the clergy have been obliged to change their tactics, and, admitting development, are trying hard to reconcile it with their theology. The theories and the nomenclature of our school are circulating through all our literature and our scientific text-books; and we read in every periodical of "evolution," of "development," of "the struggle for existence," of "the survival of the fittest," and "heredity." Our young men are imbibing the hypothesis as unconsciously as they draw in health with the air they breathe.

Philosophy has now come in to give stability to the system. We have two living philosophers of our own. We have Spencer, whose field, like that of Bacon, is all knowledge, and who can construct theories, *ad libitum*, to account for all phenomena and bring them within his ambitious grasp. Quite as influential as he, we have Huxley, installed by Darwin as specially the philosopher of his school. By his courage and outspokenness he has gained the whole Saxon race who love frankness, and by his style he can command the attention of the common people. He

has just published a summary, with a criticism of Hume's system, which furnishes an immovable foundation to our Agnostics, and will henceforth be the text-book of our philosophy.

Hume may be regarded as the founder of Agnostics. From what a host of unfounded beliefs did he deliver the thought of mankind ! Thomas Reid sought to bring these back, but had no argument to urge except that of common sense, which has no right to dictate in philosophy, and all the erudition of Sir W. Hamilton has not been able to buttress him up. Kant allowed to Hume all that we care to claim. Kant has, in fact, done more to establish our principles than any other philosopher. He started with our position that man can never know anything about things ; that all he knows or can know are phenomena in the sense of appearances. Grant us only this, and our system has got a foundation from which it can never be moved. We can now let Kant and his followers in Great Britain and America have as many high-sounding transcendental forms as they please (say the forms of space and time, the categories of quantity, quality, relation, and modality, and the ideas of God, freedom, and immortality), as long as they suppose them formed by the mind, in no way relating to things, and having no objective existence. Huxley has evidently a partiality for Kant's phenomena ; but he wisely falls back on Hume and on *Impressions*, and has given us the whole of Agnosticism, which is evidently destined to be the final philosophy in a nutshell.

People believe that they know things ; that they know themselves, as perceiving, thinking, resolving ; and know material objects immediately around them. But in all this they are adding by their imaginations to what we actually perceive. All that we actually know are *Impressions*. I suppose that I have *a red rose before me*, but I have really

no evidence of the existence of anything else than a red impression, and it is an illusion to conclude that I am a person perceiving it, or that there is a rose perceived. Our impressions are of three kinds: SENSATIONS, PLEASURES AND PAINS, RELATIONS. To this we have to add IDEAS which are simply copies of our impressions. This is the whole "content of the mind." The relations which the mind can discover are of impressions and not of things. They are three in number: coexistence, succession, and similarity. It has been proved by physiology that all these impressions, with their relations and ideas, are the product of brain-action.*

This is his simple but comprehensive science of mind. No other has given us so few faculties. Even Hume has a larger number. It enables him the more easily to ascribe the whole to material action. In this system we are not troubled with such ideas as moral good, freedom, and infinity. Mind is a congeries of impressions the result of brain-action, which brain-action—Huxley does not see this—is again simply an impression. The mind has not the power (which metaphysicians allot to it) of discovering the relation of identity, and there is no proof of its having any identity or persistency of any kind. Metaphysicians have said much about the mind perceiving the relation of causation. But cause and effect are mere invariable succession as far as our limited experience goes. People argue that there is a God, the cause of the order and fitness of the world, but the argument is palpably inconclusive, as we have no reason to believe that cause and effect rule beyond our experience, and we have no experience of world-making. The argument for the soul's immortality is gone, now that the soul is found to be a bundle of impressions produced by a bundle of impressions

* This is an epitome of "Hume," by Professor Huxley.

which we call nerves. This leaves responsibility and a judgment-day among the superstitions of the past. Nor are we entitled, in order to relieve our perplexities, to appeal to a supernatural revelation; for it would be as difficult to prove that there has been a miracle as to prove the existence of a centaur; and the supposed testimony is not able to carry such a weight. Huxley has said little about morality and the relation of the sexes; but all this will be cleared up in the great work on "Morals" which Herbert Spencer is busy in preparing, and which will soon be published amid loud cheers, with only a few hisses which will show how much some are afraid of it. Huxley has laid the foundation and Spencer will put the keystone on our building. It thus appears that, when people ask what Agnostics are, we can now hand them our creed and confession written out in clear articles.

As more satisfactory than these able expositions and defences, we see Agnostics working its proper effects and forming character. There have been anticipations of this result in all ages in some men and even a few women—such as Miss Martineau—being able to live without religion. But these are becoming more numerous as creeds are dying out, just as races of animals did in the geological ages when they were no longer suited to their environment. I may refer to Babington Macaulay, brought up in the strictest sect of Pharisees, and yet never referring, after he had passed through the training of Cambridge University, to religion as either troubling or comforting him. We have a like example in a late great orator and statesman of Boston, who tells us that he had no desire for or aversion to death or immortality. But the most noted example by far of the effect of our training is seen in our illustrious living novelist, the greatest analyst of character that ever lived. Von Baer and embryologists have shown us that the young animal in the womb goes

through in a few months the same stages as its ancestors have done in long geological ages. George Eliot has in her own person gone through in a few years the stages which developing thought has been passing through for generations. She has in her own person exemplified the grand generalization of M. Comte, and has advanced from the theological, up through the metaphysical, and has now attained the positive stage. Starting from evangelical faith she gave us "Janet's Repentance" and "Dinah." As years rolled on, we have a searching and an exposure of the hollow religion of the respectable middle-classes in England. In "Daniel Deronda" she showed that all religions are alike, and put a sort of galvanic life into Judaism. Her husband in his last work has proved that psychology is a branch of physiology and to be advanced by the study of the nerves; and now, as evidently having felt his influence, she is constantly accounting for peculiarities of character by heredity. She seems now incapable of entering into her early faiths, and to have lost all her former ideals (this is evident in her resorting to the Jews): and in "Theophrastus Such," out of the accumulated sweepings of her study, she is describing such characters as we may expect in the era of Agnostics from one who has imbibed the creed. It is an indication of the state to which not only novel-writing, but poetry and history, must come.

I have thus fully explained my position. I am not ashamed of it. I am proud of it. I would not, for all the hopes that heaven holds out, sink back into the low level of the superstitious world I have left. I call no man master. I am independent and free. I am afraid of no power above me, and of no evil in the future. The past is past and cannot touch me; and we mean to make and mold the world to come.

Those who hold our creed may have to part with some

things that are pleasant. Now that we know better, they can please us no longer. The charm has been broken, and can never be restored. It is certain that, now that we know what nature is, what mind is, and what matter is, we shall have to give up our admiration of these. Schelling labored to show that the beautiful arose from a correspondence between the subjective and objective worlds. Men like Wordsworth, and his worshipper, Principal Shairp, have been raving about the loveliness of vale and lake, and the grandeur of rock and mountain. But all this illusion has been dispelled. Mr. Grant Allen is proving scientifically that all beauty arises from pleasant physiological sensations. A shrewd critic in the *Contemporary Review* for November, 1877, has put an end to all the vaporing so common for the last age or two about the beauties of nature. "If language be intended not to veil but to convey thought, the phrase 'the poetic interpretation of Nature' implies that Nature means something, and has something to say. I must venture to affirm, in contravention of this implication, that Nature is a dumb oracle, who of herself says nothing, but will most obligingly emit any voice the poet chooses to put inside of her." This is the necessary issue of all recent science, and of the philosophical view of the mind.

To one trained in rigid and not superficial science, beauty so reckoned must very much disappear, along with other mental perceptions. Colors, apart from what our fancy adds to them, are merely vibrations in an ether of which we know little or nothing, the variety being produced simply by the rates at which they travel. The supposed sublime or lovely forms of nature; the lofty mountains, the deep canyons, the jagged ridges, the bold promontories, the sweet valleys do not, in the view of a genuine geologist, differ from the elevations and depressions settling in a semi-liquid mass as it cools and as seen

by a fly as it crawls over it. When the deception is detected this feeling of admiration must vanish.

It is a fact that our men of science do not glorify the works of nature so much as the common observer, who clothes them with a fictitious, that is, a false lustre. As research reveals the realities of things, men will be delivered from the foolish sentimentalities and ravings about beauty which boarding-school misses do so indulge in. The ancients did not rise into such raptures. Humboldt has remarked that all the passages about the beauty of natural scenery in the Greek and Roman classics might be printed on a single page—Homer speaks of certain rich plains as being good for feeding asses. The poet Goldsmith passed last century through the scenery which in this century Scott has made so romantic and he simply complains of the inconveniences to which he was put. Bishop Berkeley passed about the same time over the Alps, and was impressed only with their horrors.

Scientific men now know that mechanical motion can explain everything. Laplace felt that he had no need of the hypothesis of a god to explain the celestial motions. Comte maintained that the heavens now declare the glory, not of God, but of Hipparchus and Newton. Tyndall is evidently not very solemnly impressed with the hackings and devastations seen in the Alps. People now feel that it was appropriate enough in the poet Shelley to write "atheist" after his name on the shattered and useless rocks of Switzerland. It is well that we should know what is the real world in which we live, and not have a deceitful glamour thrown over it by an idle fancy whose tricks are being detected. I say this even though it should land us in pessimism. I would rather fight to the death with the evil than submit to pretension and delusion. But men are now coming to see that it is wisdom just to take things as they seem and not to waste energy

in seeking anything within or beyond, which, if it exist, can never be discovered by man.

If Agnostics has taken away some pleasant feelings it has, at the same time, rid us of more unpleasant ones. It delivers us from the regrets, the remorse which have hitherto so tortured humanity. What propriety can there be in mourning over acts which have been evolved by laws which work irresistibly, and allow the will an apparent and no real freedom, as was so elegantly shown by Tyndall in his Birmingham address? Let life be enjoyed as long as it is enjoyable, and then parted with when it becomes intolerable. What a relief to the miseries of our world if men were taught that they can take away life when it pleases them, with no risk of being afterward tormented eternally! As society advances, I believe there will be an authorized means of ending, in a painless manner, the life of those who so wish it and when they wish it; and this without requiring them to imbrue their hands in their own blood, and exposing them to public scorn.

Mr. Mill has thrown out the idea that there may be a religion without a belief in a God. I do not call it a religion, but it may be a faith to take the place of the old faiths. There may be grand aims, gathering round them all the energies of our nature. If Agnostics shears off some of the superficial æsthetic sentiments, it may generate and evolve some deeper mental forces, like those exhibited by Paul and by Mohammed, only devoted to more liberal ends. I feel this power moving, like the strong wind, within me. We see it working with tremendous impetus in the Nihilists of Russia, in delicate women quite as much as strong men, fearlessly facing Siberian banishment and the gibbet. I have myself felt the impulse that moved the communists of Paris, and led them to massacre their archbishop. In nearly every coun-

try there are tyrants to be mowed down because they are crushing liberty. In every country there are idols to be cast down. How eagerly do I enter into the spirit of Cambyses and the Persians when they hewed down the huge bulls of Egypt, and of John Knox when he dashed to the ground the images of the Virgin, and of Christ himself; and I feel that I am called on to go and do likewise! And as we thus courageously fight with our opposing environment, the walls will fall down, and after the battle will come peace, when all foes have been destroyed—as the idolatrous Canaanites were.

III.

WHAT MORALITY HAVE WE LEFT?

BY A NEW LIGHT MORALIST.

AT no time in the history of the world has there been such a rapid—I might say revolutionary—advance of opinion as within the last few years. As much progress is now made in a year as used to be in an age. Two or three years ago, intelligent men, though they had left Christianity behind, fondly clung to the idea that faith was not gone, and “An Evolutionist” advertised for a new religion (July, 1878). Under the sentiment that then prevailed, the most intellectual university in this country started an endowment for its theological seminary, and made the religion it teaches, not Christianity, but a universal religion, in which a fair place might be given to Buddhism, which, though inane in its creed and abject in its requirements, is at least better than the religion of blood and perdition. This measure met with considerable opposition from our more advanced thinkers, who maintain that the day of all religions, even of Buddhism, has passed away forever. At this stage—that is, in the period of transition, when the old had not given way before the new—appeared the article written by an Agnostic (September, 1879). About this time, one who pretends to all knowledge—the president of a college called by the late Professor Diman the Ehrenbretstein of orthodoxy—feeling that religion was tottering, formally avowed that there was truth in development; which, I may remark, will

soon sweep away the half-way house which he has built, and to which some have retreated to shelter them from the coming flood. Since that time thought has taken another cataract leap, and, since the publication of Spencer's "Data of Ethics," our promising youth are everywhere inquiring into the foundations of morality, which had previously been considerably shaken by the doubts insinuated in Sidgwick's "Method of Ethics."

I am myself a graduate, of a few years' standing, of an orthodox college, of the Puritan type by heredity. That college has for the last year or two been considerably exercised about development; some of its teachers and a number of its independent-minded students rejoicing in the new light, while the great body of them are in a state of somnolence, from which they will soon have a terrible awakening. Here I may remark that the majority of the Middle States colleges in America are in much the same position—asleep on the edge of a volcano soon to burst. A few of the lately established State Colleges have the courage to make no profession of religion. With others the profession is hypocritical, as they are retaining the form merely to save appearances, which they will part with as soon as it can be done with safety. The scientific schools, I may add, have not studied the question; but, not being instructed in any creed, they are nearly ready to join the advancing movement, as they know that development, which renders the interposition of God unnecessary, is as certain as gravitation, or any other law of nature.

I was trained by my mother (my father was not a professing Christian, and took no special charge of me) in a Puritan religion and morality somewhat relaxed. Her training in respect of the Sabbath and of amusements was not nearly so strict as that of her father and mother, and that was considerably below the model of their grand-

parents ; still it was stiff enough, and was all founded on the Bible. In college I fell in, at first reluctantly, but afterward heartily, with the current of the times, with evolution and heredity ; and was a great admirer of Huxley and Tyndall, and some of our professors who favored their views. I was greatly fascinated with the eloquence of the great Lynbrook preacher who, from time to time, visited our college, and with the freedom of opinion and of action which he allowed us ; but, as he had no philosophy and no science and no consistency, his teaching did not tend to stay or stablish me. Since my graduation, being free from all parental control and college restraints, I have set myself to ponder some very vital questions. Religion I know is gone, and all traditional belief regarding a supernatural power, the immortality of the soul, and a day of judgment. I have to consider where I now am. In particular, I have to settle whether there is any foundation left for morality.

First. My mother's morality is evidently gone. It was founded on the Hebrew Scriptures, and consisted in a constant appeal to God. She taught me to pray in infancy, and made me go to church in my childhood. She bade me not to tell lies, assuring me that if I did so God would punish me. My father concurred, having evidently no other principle to inculcate. But all this grew less, and finally disappeared under my new teaching. Except on rare occasions, and when under impulse hereditary, I gave up prayer, as I had no God to pray to. When allured to evil, I am not sure what principle to fall back upon. If I avoid falsehood, it must be from some other consideration than the fear of hell.

Second. The ethical teaching of my college professor is also gone. My teacher belonged to what is called the "intuitive" school of morals, which has had mighty influence from the days of Bishop Butler. He founded moral-

ity upon instinct or intuition; or, as it is called since Kant's time, *à priori* reason—that is, upon a moral power, or conscience, regarded as an ultimate and independent arbiter. But this mud foundation has been washed away. Hume and J. S. Mill ingeniously explained our moral convictions by associations of ideas. But Herbert Spencer has shown in a profounder manner that these, like all other intuitive or necessary beliefs, are merely the product of the gathered experience of our ancestors, animal and human, through the ascidian, the mollusk, the monkey, on to man, and handed down by heredity. A power gendered of such materials cannot be regarded as infallible or entitled to claim supreme authority. The ancestry of conscience has been inquired into; and it has been shown to be as doubtful as apostolic succession, which has flowed through so corrupt a stream of popes.

Third. I took refuge for a time in utilitarianism, and then in hedonism. It seemed to me so beneficent to promote the welfare of all. In this way I got rid of that sour and ascetic, that stern and cruel morality which was displayed in burning witches by our Pilgrim forefathers. But my professor and his disciples pressed me with the question: What sanction have we for the principle that every man ought to promote the greatest happiness of the greatest number? What, in fact, is to lead any one to look after everybody's, or, indeed, anybody's happiness, except his own? The religious man, they showed me, has a motive to induce him to follow this end. God has commanded him, and can encourage and reward those who do good. The intuitive moralist points to such a sanction in our essential nature, commanding him to love and obey God and do good. The two combined form an amalgam with powerful magnetic attractions. But utilitarianism has in itself no such claim, obligation, or duty. At the imperfect stage which development has yet reached,

I am afraid that the motive which utilitarianism supplies will not be able to prompt men to great actions or keep them from yielding to temptation. We shall see, as Mr. Spencer shows, that it will be different when evolution has done its work.

Utilitarianism draws its plausibility very much from the ambiguity of certain phrases, such as "good," "general welfare." If these are employed simply to denote pleasure or happiness, they are used appropriately enough. But the difficulty in that case is to show that there is any obligation to promote the general happiness, or any happiness except our own, or, indeed, to promote our own ultimate happiness in preference to present pleasure or passion. But surreptitiously and illegitimately these phrases carry with them a meaning carried over from intuitive morals, and are understood as moral good which brings with it duty and obligation. But the ambiguous middle has been detected and exposed. The utilitarian theory would insist that men *ought* to promote the greatest happiness of the greatest number, but this *ought* is of the nature of an innate or *à priori* principle, which all modern philosophy rejects. Intuitive morals founding on a law does insist that we should seek the happiness of the greatest number. But utilitarianism has no authority to go beyond saying that you may do so if you choose. If they do not choose, men are under no obligation to pursue any one's happiness except their own—not even their own permanent happiness.

Every one is led by instinct to seek pleasure. Hedonism is a native, natural, and genuine theory which has great attractions for me. But man is in fact led by other instincts, coming from brute ancestors, and differing in different individuals, such as appetites, attachments, loves, and hatreds. Each of these craves for gratification. These special appetences, the love of money, of sex, or of praise,

have often greater power than the love of happiness to others, or even to ourselves. Men will often gratify their appetites or tempers, being quite aware that their doing so is contrary not only to the happiness of others, but to their own happiness. Most people will indulge their resentments, even though these should bring them into trouble.

Utilitarianism is thus seen to be powerless, logically and practically, unless it is supported by something foreign to itself. It was brought forth and set up as a system when it was seen that the innate or *à priori* theory was weak and ready to die. It kept back the advancing tide for a time, but has now been undermined and its defences strewn to the waves.

Professor Sidgwick, of Cambridge, has a mighty name in England, as falling in with the spirit of the transition period. He is the most skilled man in our day in seeing and expounding doubts and difficulties. With great acuteness he has pointed out the illogical nature both of intuitionism and utilitarianism. He is particularly successful in exposing the perplexities and uncertainties of the calculations which ordinary men are able to make of the greatest happiness of the greatest number in order to determine the path of duty for themselves, and the consequent liability to which they are exposed of making the wish the father of the thought. Having pierced each of the twins with his sharp lance, he has not been successful in his attempt to construct a living body of morals by tying the dead bodies together.

Left in this disheartening position, some of us were looking forward for years to Herbert Spencer's promised book on Ethics, the keystone of the grand building which it has taken him so long to erect. I expected to find in it an advance on all that has gone before, and a solution of the difficulties that still press on those of us

who have given up the theological, the intuitive, and utilitarian ethics, and have left to us only the epicurean or hedonistic, without knowing how to justify it in demanding more than the appetite for the present pleasure. The work as a whole has disappointed Mr. Spencer's numerous worshippers in this country. It has certainly not fulfilled the end which I expected from it. It is a book not so much on the data of ethics—that is, of the principles we are entitled to start with in ethics—as an exposition, very masterly I admit, of the grand moral results to be reached thousands of ages hence, when development, biological and sociological, has done its work.

He begins with an inquiry into conduct, which is defined as “acts adjusted to ends.” This is his definition, which would apply to a burglar's key and a forger's signature. “Always acts are called good as they are well or ill adjusted.” This tends to widen and liberalize ethics considerably. It contains one most important truth—he makes morality a means, and not an end, grim and inflexible, as our old moralists did. He maintains that the end in virtue is happiness; this makes him avowedly a hedonist or utilitarian. I am not sure that this utilitarianism is in any respect different from or superior to that of Hume, Bentham, and Mill, though he thinks it is so. He stands up for rational utilitarianism. All right; but what are his reasons in this rationalism? The theological moralist has such a reason in the revealed law, the intuitionist in the natural law, which laws require us to look to the general happiness. But where does Spencer get his data? He gets them from a long geological development, which the great body of people—men, women, and children—do not understand, and which the select few who do understand them may not value and will not be swayed by. He is perplexed, as all before him have been, with the difficulty of hatching altruism

out of self-love, when we have no independent moral law requiring us to love others. He speaks of political, religious, and social sanctions. The religious sanction he has banished to the region of the unknown and unknowable, whence, happily, not even a ghost will ever come out to trouble us. The political and social sanctions must evidently depend on the general beliefs and sentiments of the community and of the age; and these, having no fixed moral standard like natural law or revealed law, will vary from age to age, and be different in one country from what they are in another; and there is much in these late discussions to undermine them.

But he has done one great service—he has drawn the distinction between absolute and relative morality. In this way he has delivered us young men from the inflexible morality which the theologians have been preaching—without practising. The absolute morality applies only to a distant future; many will rejoice that for the present they are not under it. He tells that “conduct which has any concomitant of pain or any painful consequence is partially wrong,” and “the coexistence of a perfect man and an imperfect society is impossible.” Unnumbered ages must run their course before there can be such morality. “Ethics has for its subject-matter that form which universal conduct assumes during the last stages of evolution”—adding “these last stages in the evolution of being when man is forced by increase of numbers to live and move in presence of his fellows.”

In the present state, which is one of struggle, man is under the relative ethics. Here, “it is the least wrong which is relatively right.” He tells us that, “throughout a considerable part of conduct, no guiding, no method of estimation, enables us to say whether a proposed course is even relatively—as causing proximately and remotely, specially and generally—the greatest surplus of good over

all." He says truly, and greatly to our comfort, that, "as now carried on, life hourly sets the claims of present self against the claims of future self, and hourly brings individual interests face to face with the interests of other individuals, taken singly or as associates. In many such cases, the decisions can be nothing more than compromises." He illustrates this by the case of a farmer whose political principles prompt him to vote in opposition to his landlord. "The man in such a case has to balance the evil that may arise to his family against the evil that may arise to his country. In countless such cases no one can decide by which of the alternative courses the least wrong is likely to be done." This relative ethics stands in admirable relation to man as he now is. We see at once that it does not require us to make such sacrifices as the early Christians, the Waldensians, the Huguenots, the Puritans, and Covenanters made, without at all counting the cost of their sufferings against the happiness they might have had, had they taken the other alternative and submitted.

As an ethics for a hundred thousand years or ages hence, Spencer's Ethics is perfect and will be so acknowledged when that time comes. The fine nervous organization which constitutes Mr. Spencer's mind will then be dissolved and unconscious; but he will be thoroughly appreciated by the finer organizations dwelling on the earth, and placed above our highest philosophers and scientists. He does not announce very clearly the chronological relation between this period of perfect morality and the final conflagration which he and all scientific men say is to close our present world that it may start anew. But all things are tending toward the era of absolute morality, when pain and what men call sin will have disappeared. In the struggle for excellence, all sharp points and roughnesses will be removed and everything become

rounded and smoothed, as the pebbles which lie on our beach have been, by the dashing of the ocean currents. The heights having been ground down and the hollows filled, all will be one rich plain,—“every valley shall be filled and every mountain and hill shall be brought low.” “The conduct to which we apply the name good,” says Spencer, “is the relatively more evolved conduct.” The jugglers in ancient Egypt, the gypsies, the hereditary thieves in our great cities, seem a considerably evolved class, and answer his definition; but they will then be crushed out by something yet more evolved. In the struggle, the fittest will always survive, and the good will go down by heredity and become instinctive. “Swords will be turned into plowshares and spears into pruning-hooks,” for there will be no evil to fight against. All men, and women, and children will be moral, for nobody will have any motive to *sin*—that word which our *savans* carefully avoid, that thing which the popular religious creeds have created by their restrictions. Men will have a much more pleasant millennium than the Christian one, which makes the felicity proceed from a perpetual Sabbath and psalm-singing. Men will then do moral acts as “matters of course,” as they eat, and sleep, and wed by the instincts gendered in them. Men will do moral acts without being conscious of it, without willing out, without meaning it. There will be no need of such deeds and sacrifices as were required of our heroes, for all will flow on according to our wishes. There will be no need of commandments which do so stir up rebellion in independent spirits, for all action will be natural and easy. As our great thinker says so profoundly: “The sense of duty or moral obligation is transitory and will diminish as fast as moralization increases.”

Herbert Spencer's Ethics will certainly be the final ethics. But the question does press itself upon us, what

is to be the ethics for the time now present and passing? What it is to be myriads of years hence is an interesting scientific problem. But man is yet in too undeveloped a state to be attracted by these distant motives, which have as little power over men or women generally as the most distant star or particle of star dust has on the motion of our earth. There needs, then, some man, very inferior it may be to Spencer, to draw out a provisional morality, always of the relative sort. Professor Fiske might be better employed in this supplementary work than in simply bringing out, in graceful style, the views which his master is quite competent to unfold and defend in his own robust way. For myself, I do feel that this final morality is not fitted to guide me in those critical struggles through which I have already passed, and through which I may yet have to pass. As a matter of fact, the world is not ready to be swayed and guided in the intended way by the profound biological motives supplied by our having been evolved from the brute; and it is conceivable that some may argue that as they are descended from the brutes they may live as the brutes. It is quite accordant with the principles of evolution that, if the generation living at any one time does not keep to the moral standard, the succeeding one will rather become worse, and heredity will transmit the evil to the ages that follow.

Fourth. The morality of conscience is gone. Everybody acknowledges the existence of conscience—no one more freely than Mr. Spencer; but it must be kept in its own place. A mist, an irradiated mist, has crowned it as a halo. It was believed to be the immediate gift of God, his vicegerent and his witness. But in our day they have had the courage to inquire into the authority of this imperious lord. Bold thinkers have made a search among the old geological records, and found its genealogy and its ancestry; and its lineage not so heavenly as was sup-

posed. "The intuitions of a moral faculty are the slowly organized results of experience received by the race," says Herbert Spencer. In fact, the conscience has been discovered to be merely a nervous structure. "I believe," says our authority, "that the experiences of utility, organized and consolidated through all past generations of the human race, have been producing corresponding nervous modifications, which by continued transmission and accumulation have become in us certain faculties of moral intuition." It thus appears that our conscience consists of nervous modifications become hereditary.

It is preposterous to represent such a functionary as revealing an unalterable and eternal law, or its necessitating us to believe in a perfect law or lawgiver. It is simply absurd to speak, with Butler, of its being entitled to decide anything infallibly and authoritatively. It is at best a mere impulse, like other nervous affections and appetites, which may be inconsistent and war against each other. It is now to be regarded, not as a king reigning with a divine right, but simply a subordinate, and by no means a very consistent or trustworthy officer in a republic. Being the product of circumstances, it has the force of the circumstances. It has the authority, not of God, but of our brute ancestors. The circumstances being to some extent the same, the decisions are so far alike. The circumstances being so far different, the judgments are also different. The conscience of the East does so far differ from that of the West; the conscience of the Jew from that of the Christian. So far from being infallible, it has often been a deceiver.

O Conscience, what crimes have been committed in thy name! Thy laws have often been more cruel than those of Draco, and should be written in blood. Claiming the authority of God, thou hast so pictured, or rather caricatured, Him, as to make Him offensive to all benevolent

minds. Calling thyself Duty, thou hast perverted all morality. Is there a crime which thou hast not at times sanctioned—murder among the Thugs, deceit among the Jesuits? When men have done evil, thou hast lent thy sanction, confirmed them in their wickedness, and aggravated their crimes. In all good conscience, as he claims, Saul breathed out threatenings and slaughter, and haled men and women to prison. The Inquisition, with its instruments of torture, is thy symbol. In obedience to thy command, good men have been burnt at the stake, or shut up in the darkness of the dungeon till they became maddened. What is vastly worse, thou hast in wilfulness deprived whole communities of innocent enjoyments, and led multitudes to bow before the most abject superstitions, and to expose themselves to the most terrible lacerations.

Since my graduation, I have passed through serious scenes in this yet imperfectly evolved world, of which struggle for existence and for pleasure is the characteristic. I feel a delicacy in opening my heart to the public; but good may arise from doing so, as people cannot, by mere general statements, be made to understand the struggle passing through the minds of our thinking youth. Under precisely such a pressure as that which I have been able to bear, through the struggle between the past now gone and the future to come, a fellow-student of mine, high in the estimation of his college, cut his throat.

My father had, unfortunately, fallen into habits of intemperance, and there is a tendency in my nervous system to crave for excitement. While in the college I lived in the circle of the most spirited youths of their quadrennial; and at times I had to drink, especially at certain meetings of the Greek Letter Society, of which I was an enthusiastic member. My pen cannot describe the resistance I had to offer. I enjoyed more than others our social meetings. I was always the most adventurous and

most hilarious of them all. But next morning, what languor and lassitude! After too many excesses my conscience began to talk to me pretty loudly. But then I had learned that conscience was the product of circumstances, was merely a stage in the progress of things, and had, therefore, no binding authority. I did turn back at times to my mother's religion with a fond eye—as Eve, according to the myth, must have looked back on the Garden of Eden. But a flaming sword, turning every way, prevented my entrance. Often, in my weakness, did I wish that there were only some one to forgive the past, and enable me to start with my burden removed. I was in a college in which there were occasional “revivals” of religion (so called), and I was all but carried along by the current of prevailing feeling. Some of the leaders were mere pretenders, and I scorned them. But others were genuine youths, and I accepted their offer to pray with me. But I could not join with them, being held back by the underlying unbelief, as the frost in the ground in winter keeps the genial rain from penetrating into the soil. Often did I wish that, like some of my classmates, I had a throne of grace to go to, and there unbosom myself. But, when I tried it, I got no answer from the supposed mercy-seat. My prayers came back upon me like vapors frozen into hail as they ascended. I reasonably concluded that the whole feeling was an illusion, gendered by the inherited superstitions of the past. I am thus left alone, and yet feeling at times as if I could not stand of myself. At such seasons I feel as if I were entitled to demand that my masters should supply me with a morality suited to these moods of weakness—as I acknowledge them to be.

I feel a yet greater difficulty in opening another struggle, as *savans* call it—temptation, as my mother would have called it, proceeding on the obsolete theological

creed. I was thrown in the way of a lady a few years older than myself, who had been unfortunate in her marriage relation, quite as much as Mr. Lewes had been when he fell in with Miss Evans. She had been treated inhumanly by her husband, and yet had no proof of any criminal act on his part such as would secure her a divorce in the old-fashioned State of New Jersey, in which she lived, and which is so far behind the more advanced State in which I sojourn. I listened sympathizingly to her tale; I felt for her deeply; I admired her full-blossomed and flamboyant beauty, and her lively spirit, and soon a softer feeling was kindled, ran through my veins, and penetrated my whole frame. What was I to do? Ask her to unite her destiny to mine? I consulted my authorities. During my struggle the "Data of Ethics" was published. I turned eagerly to it, expecting a solution, only to find that the mighty speculator had not faced the subject. I turned to my models: to Goethe, my favorite poet; to Mill and Comte, my philosophers, before Spencer superseded them; to Miss Evans, my analytic novelist, who penetrates human motives as distinctly as I see the springs and wheels of my clock on the mantel-piece. I read Wilhelm Meister, and was, I confess, somewhat disgusted with its filth, while I admired its genius. Sympathizingly, I wept over the sorrows of Werther. Getting no guiding principle from these quarters, under an irresistible impulse I offered myself to her. Though she had encouraged my attentions, and allowed me liberties such as no married woman should have done, she declined my overture, and had the impertinence to give as a reason that I had no religion, to which I replied that at least I knew that she had none. This altercation brought on a counter-irritation, which so far conquered my love-sickness. The question often occurs to me, in what state I should have been had she accepted my offer.

I am still a young man, with the world before me—the only world I believe in. My mother died lately. I waited upon her in her dying hours. I listened to her prayers and her counsels, but could not in honesty give her the consolation of falling in with them. My father is about to take a second wife—a widow with children—and I see crucial questions arising before me as to family property and domestic relationship in which I must be sorely tried. My profession being the hard one of a lawyer has also its slippery positions. At times I feel as if I needed a power behind to uphold me. But I know that this is only the remains of hereditary prejudice, with which posterity in its more evolved state will not be troubled.

I protest against the thought that I am seeking to injure morality; this would make me either a fool or a madman. I am simply lopping off the rotten branches, that the tree may be healthier. Much, indeed, of what has hitherto been regarded as morality must be abandoned; we have to part with the weak limb if the body is to be kept alive. The old tables of the law supposed to have been given by God at Mount Sinai, and which are as forbidding and as sterile as that granite mountain, have now been as effectually shattered in pieces as when Moses threw them down as he saw the liberty the people craved. The first table cannot be mended, as we cannot be bound to love the Lord with all our heart when we know that the flaw in the argument for the Divine existence has been detected and exposed. It will not do in this age to rewrite the inscriptions on the second table, as all of them are provokingly prohibitory, and some of them are quite antiquated and require to be changed and made less repulsive. When everything else is improving, when religion is waning and science brightening, it is time that morality were putting on a new face. If a

stern religion like Calvinism has given offence, I am sure a rigid morality has repelled a still greater number of promising youths. After all, morality has always been practically connected with faith, and when we have parted with the old religion we shall have to part also with the old morality. A new and relaxed edition of the commandments must be provided and published,—no, not of the *commandments*, for there is no one to command them; but of the *invitations*, which must all (fewer than ten will serve) appear in a gay dress, and with smiles on their faces to attract young men and maidens. I am not competent to draw out this law; our leaders must do it. I can, however, point out a few things which must be attended to in the construction.

First. We cannot insist any longer that in order to be morally right good must proceed from love. Love cannot be commanded. According to the old law, goodness was supposed to consist in law and love; the law has disappeared, as there is no lawgiver, and the love cannot be insisted on. Love has no fundamental place in the morality of our great masters, such as Mill and Spencer. The latter rejects it. He rejects expressly certain theories: “(1) Those theories that look to the character of the agent; (2) to the nature of the motives; (3) the quality of the deeds.” There is a difficulty in showing how the great body of mankind can be induced to do the outward act, to keep from equivocation and evil-speaking, and to live honestly and purely in all circumstances, unless they are swayed by love. A provision must be made to secure this for the present generation in the new code. We shall see that this is provided by Spencer in the latter stages of development, when all men will be moral.

Second. There must be an allowance made for breaches of the law. Our stiff divines and moralists have been acting on a very different principle. The law is said to be

eternal and unchangeable, and then they argue legitimately, if you admit their premises, that all men are under a heavy condemnation or curse—a tenet which weighs down so many buoyant spirits and makes them believe that exertion is useless because hopeless. All mankind—even the best—do in fact transgress; and it is surely wiser to permit them to do what we cannot prevent. The father acts in this way toward his children, if he is not to be viewed and hated by them as a tyrant, and we may act in the same way toward grown-up children. No doubt our opponents will puzzle us with the question: how great is the license to be? For on such a principle every one will feel himself to be at liberty to go aside from the straight line in his own way: one by relaxing the law of speaking the truth; another the law of filial obedience; another the law of temperance; another the law of chastity or of rigid honesty. I admit that there must be rules or understandings on this subject prescribed with statesman-like wisdom. This is one of the desiderata of our time which I am urging our leaders to supply. Meanwhile, one thing is clear: the law can continue to stand only by being accommodated to the times and the actual practice of mankind. “The Sabbath was made for man, and not man for the Sabbath.” On the same principle, the law must be made for man, and not man for the law.

Third. In our expurgated moral code we must leave out a great many virtues and graces (as they call them), and cease from calling the absence of them a sin. Half of the graces recommended by the Galilean in his “Sermon on the Mount,” usually reckoned the New Testament version of the law by his followers, by men like À Kempis, Calvin, and Edwards, should be omitted; such as poverty of spirit, humility, meekness, sorrow for sin, self-sacrifice! I agree with Hume in regarding these as simply showing abjectness of spirit and as being incon-

sistent with that manliness which has led to the glorious deeds of which our world is proud. It is a maxim in jurisprudence not to prescribe laws which cannot be obeyed, and which therefore only provoke rebellion and a multiplication of offenses. It is time that a like principle be laid down in morality. Spencer has so far helped this important practical principle by drawing the distinction between absolute and relative morality, the latter suiting itself to circumstances.

Fourth. Certain acts forbidden by divines, by ascetics, and by our Puritan forefathers, must be freely allowed. The ball-room must be thrown open ungrudgingly, even the masquerade ball, which calls forth the actor talent. The theatre, so far from being denounced, must be encouraged, as one of our schools of refinement and virtue, and giving us deep insight into human character. We are not to be prevented from receiving enjoyment from the genius of Sara Bernhardt by prudish considerations, which in most cases are pharisaic. In lessening the number of commandments (the word is irritating) we should certainly leave out the fourth, requiring us to remember (we should rather seek to forget) the Sabbath to keep it holy (that is in attending preaching conventicles); though of course health and convenience will persuade us to adopt practical means for giving leisure to the working-classes and to all men, amusements being provided. Happily, the great men who are doing most to widen the boundaries of science are also seeking to remove the restrictions to Sabbath freedom. Huxley and Tyndall, by their lectures, have struck a blow at the Puritan Sabbath from which it will never recover, though it may continue to kick and groan till it breathes its last. By the removal of such restrictions, the number of supposed sins will be much diminished and painful reproaches become few and slight.

Fifth. In regard to the marriage relation, our leaders

have not spoken out with their usual clearness. It looks as if they were afraid. Those who follow them will not be. It is evident that they all approve of some modification of the Biblical law, and have hinted that it ought to be changed. What they have not codified they have recommended by their example. Goethe lived a considerable portion of his life with his housekeeper as if she were his wife. Comte, founder of positivism, the immediate predecessor of agnosticism, had a rapt admiration of Clotilde, his wife being still alive. John Mill made love to the druggist's wife while her husband was living. Miss Evans lived with Mr. Lewes while his wife was not dead. I observe with interest that portions of the religious (so called) press are speaking of this lady as having very pious instincts, and dying with Thomas à Kempis near her bed, and a defence of Spinoza not far off. These are the signs and precursors of what is coming, the streaks of light that forecast the dawn. The wide license given to divorce in a number of the American States, and the thousands of women in each of our great cities ready to welcome all who call, clearly indicates that there must be some regulated system of liberty. But the time has not yet just come for speaking out on this subject.

At times I heave a sigh because the old moral truths are dissolving one by one. But I confess I do not feel so much in parting with the cold and musty morality as with the warm religious truths. Professor Goldwin Smith, who, though a bright writer, has never got adjusted into his proper place (discontented with his own Oxford, and America not contented with him), thinks we are living in a moral interregnum. Such interregna are dangerous, as the old kingdom is gone and the new republic has not got its authority recognized. No one feels this more than Herbert Spencer. "Few things," he says, "can happen more disastrous than the decay and death of a regulative

system no longer fit before another and fitter regulative system has grown up to replace it." I know how foolish it is to move out of a house that has sheltered us till another has been provided. But our masters have told all men that the old house is unstable, that the rotten ship is sinking, and it is only common prudence to escape, in the hope of meeting, in the broad ocean on which we are cast, some vessel to take us in. I confess I see no such vessel near me, though I know that there is a grand land at a distance. In the year 1744, Hume was a candidate for the chair of Moral Philosophy in Edinburgh University, but did not get the appointment, as people at that stage did not see what morals he could teach their young men in consistency with his system of nescience and atheism. He had, in consequence, no opportunity of constructing a positive system of ethics; and no one since his day has taken up the work. The college in which I was educated did not supply this want, and some of us have had to suffer all the evils of the interregnum. Our president opposed the new light coming in upon us. A professor gave us Spencer's political science, but did not take up the morality which ought to underlie and bear up all social laws. I have given my reasons for not being satisfied with Spencer's structure, which has no foundation to rest on till long ages have passed, and leaves a thousand practical questions unanswered. We are arrived at the same stage in morals as we were a few years ago in religion. Just as the evolutionist a few years ago placed in this journal "An Advertisement for a New Religion," so do I now formally insert *An Advertisement for a New Morality*.

IV.

A REVIEW OF THE FIGHT.

BY A YANKEE FARMER.

A GREAT many people have not known what to make of the articles in the *North American* advertising for a new religion, a new standard of truth, and a new morality. It is understood that some weak people ceased to subscribe to the *Review* because of their supposed irreligious tendency. An editor of an able religious paper wrote a reply to them, but was induced to withdraw it by a wiseacre who persuaded him that they were a sly defence of religion. Most people were curious to know who could have written them, and wondered what was the aim of the author or authors. A newspaper writer of strong personal antipathies malignantly ascribed them to a college president, who did not take much pains to deny them till he found himself caricatured, and then could not speak of them with temper.

It so happened that I am well acquainted with the writers, who are personal friends of mine own. The oldest used to give occasional lectures in the New England academy in which I was trained. The second was an old pupil of that institution, and often visited it. The third was a fellow-student with me there.

It was the full intention of my father to give me an education of the highest order, and I was about to enter the famous university in our neighborhood when he died. What was I now to do? The farm was a bare, gravelly

one, with more rock and stones than soil, requiring much care and yielding little produce. My mother had nothing left her but that farm. I resolved at once to give myself up to her as she gave herself up to me. While my companions went off joyously to the college, I devoted myself to tilling and sowing; and, upon the whole, I do not regret the sacrifice (as I felt it at the time) which I made. I love the old homestead with its fields, its cattle, its horses, and fruit-trees, which I have come to look upon as personal friends. I have persuaded myself that farming is as favorable to independent thinking as the student life down there in that university, with its technical scholarship, its sophistry, and its haughtiness. I find that, with Robert Burns, I love the daisy and the mouse far more tenderly than these college lads, who handle only dried skeletons. I can follow the plow and yet be musing all the day long. I have long winter evenings with little to do, and I employ them in reading fresh books, lent me by a professor from the college library. The pure air invigorates me, and the aspects of the earth and sky, morning, noon, and evening, of spring and summer, of the fall and winter, are watched with interest, and are felt through my whole being. I feel as if from my rocky height here I could take a fresher view of life, of the world around me and the world above me, than my former school companions, who are narrowed by the abstractions of learning. Fortunately, I have been able to keep up my friendship with members of the college. They come out one by one or in little groups on the Saturdays, and tell me what they are doing in their intellectual gymnasium, what sort of man the last appointed professor or tutor is, what the latest original work that has appeared, and what the topics discussed in the societies and in the little clubs. I often put on a sort of inquiring Socratic air, and question them as to the worth of what they are learning from these

dead or living languages, metaphysical subtleties, and old bones.

When the articles appeared in the *North American*, I recognized the writers at once. I felt as if I saw their fallacies, and was strongly tempted to answer and expose them, the more so as they were after the tune of the times, and were misleading some of these college youths. I longed excessively to bring the authors together, that we might have a symposium, at once of bodily and intellectual food. So I asked them to spend a spring afternoon at our farm. I ventured to propose to my mother that she might ask the Agnostic's lady to come with him. Her whole nervous frame became intensely strung on the instant. She evidently grew an inch or two taller. I was sure I saw sparks issuing from her eyes. She looked precisely like her ancestress who came over in the *Mayflower*, and she treated the proposal as indignantly as that ancestress would have treated a mistress of Charles II. I abandoned the proposal on the instant. She wondered what sort of thing a symposium was, and was in doubt about it till I told her it was to be after the model of the conferences in the Book of Job. She was only half satisfied, but told me she hoped I would act the part of the young Elihu, when the older men might be "darkening counsel by words without knowledge."

The three gentlemen arrived on the appointed day. The Evolutionist was advanced in years, with a well-developed but narrow forehead, of the very opposite pattern to that of Plato, the broad-browed. The Agnostic was thin, with an expression of scorn, like that which sits forever on the face of Voltaire. The New-Light Moralist was stout and burly, and looked as if he wished to enjoy life. My mother provided a well-loaded table, and I got glimpses of her, with her snow-white apron, guiding—or, in fact, serving—the somewhat awkward Irish servant.

Our Evolutionist praised the beef, and remarked that it could not have been so excellent unless it had been developed ; upon which I simply remarked that the development of my breed of cattle, so far from being fortuitous, had had a good deal of skill bestowed upon it. The Agnostic relished somewhat the flowers and fruit, and I said that I was glad he found a reality. There was wine on the side-table (my mother would not allow it on the dining-table), and the Moralist, as he drank it, denounced the bigoted temperance men who were depriving people of lawful enjoyments. I hinted that the young men down there in the college did need to be guarded against the terrible temptations, either after the method of Mr. Gough or Dr. Crosby. The conversation gradually slid into farming operations and the topics engrossing the adjoining university.

After the dinner, we retired to a pleasant, rocky height, whence, through the apple trees in full blossom, we had a distant glimpse of the ocean over which the ancestors of my mother sailed, and of the college buildings, from which, though a good many miles off, we almost felt as if we heard the hum of the recitations. It was agreed, out of courtesy, that, as each of the three writers had enjoyed an opportunity of expressing his views in full, I should be allowed to answer them each in turn. Two students, who had come out on their Saturday excursion, joined us. One of them, a scientific, sat with a leer in his eye, wondering at our foolish discussion, and evidently rejoicing that he had a fine scientific apparatus and a whole host of fossils to go back to. The other, a big-headed fellow, with shaggy brows, listened with intense eagerness, industriously took notes, carried them down with him to his college, and showed them to his professor of philosophy and a dozen plodding students, who read them with eyes as wide and

as wise as those of owls. The issue of the whole is this article.

FIRST ROUND.—THE AGNOSTIC AND THE YANKEE FARMER.

As I saw that, in order to any work being done, it was necessary to have some posts fixed to which to tie our ropes, I began with the Agnostic.

FARMER.—I am very anxious to know what Agnosticism is. The word has come into use since I left school. I suppose it is much the same as used to be called Nes-
cience, which, inconsistently enough, professes to know that we can know nothing, and Nihilism, which proclaims that there is nothing to be known, which implies that Nihilism is nothing, though that of Russia knows how to kill kings. These systems always seemed to me to be suicidal, that is, self-destructive—represented by the serpent which swallowed itself, not even leaving its tail behind.

AGNOSTIC.—There have been a great many able Agnostics from an early date. Gorgias, the sophist philosopher, maintained that he could demonstrate that nothing exists, that if it exists it is unknowable, and even if knowable is not communicable. All the Greek sophists were virtually Agnostics, as they held that man cannot discover independent truth. I do not claim for the fraternity the absolute skeptics such as Sextus Empiricus, who refused to run out of the way of carriages coming upon him. These men made a great mistake in denying anything; they should have contented themselves with refusing to affirm. We claim Hume, who allowed the existence of only impressions and ideas, without a thing to impress or a thing impressed, and Kant, who admits phenomena in the sense of appearances, with, it may be, things behind

which can never be known, and Sir W. Hamilton, who elaborated a theory to the effect that "the knowledge of nothing is the principle or the consummation of all true philosophy." But our living masters are Spencer and Huxley.

FAR.—Then your Agnostics are ignorant men, seeing that they know nothing.

AG.—The very opposite. The sophists were very intelligent men, teaching the highest class youths of Greece, in the days of Pericles. Since the defences of Lewes and Grote appeared, the sophists are placed above Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle, who were all pretenders to truth which they did not possess. Kant and Hamilton were profound scholars. Huxley, it will be admitted, knows a good bit of biology, and as to Herbert Spencer, he is filled with universal knowledge.

FAR.—My poor brain is becoming sadly puzzled. These men are evidently very learned, and I am prepared to admire them excessively. I am inclined to say of them what an Irish servant said of his master, who got a fine government office: "My master has got a grand situation; he has nothing to do, and he does it well."

AG.—That is a caricature of our meaning.

FAR.—What, then, do you mean when you say, "We know nothing?"

AG.—We certainly do not know things. But, as Hume allows, we have impressions, which, when reproduced, become ideas. More philosophically, we have phenomena, appearances, as Kant assumed and Hamilton and Spencer allow. But what reality, what thing is, or things are in these, or beneath these, or above them, no one can tell.

FAR.—In my ignorance and stupidity I always looked on appearances as appearances of something—as, in fact, things appearing. Even that cloud consists of drops of

moisture which, in that rainbow, are tinged by beams of the sun.

AG.—They exist as appearances. What they have, or whether they have anything besides, we, in our modesty, neither affirm nor deny, for we are not skeptics.

FAR.—But if the words you use have any meaning, they must have appeared to some one, to you or me, whose existence is thereby implied.

AG.—You are going too fast. They are appearances to us, who are also appearances, with what reality we know not.

FAR.—Then we have a vast volume of appearances. I am reminded of what I read in my school-days, of the exclamation of Anacharsis, the Thracian traveller, as he listened to Greek dialectics, *Væ quantum nihili!*

AG.—All that Spencer knows—in fact, the whole universe, so far as we can know it—consists of appearances. Science, even that of Newton, is nothing but the classification or arrangement of appearances.

FAR.—But things are arranged according to their qualities, are classified according to their type and structure. These, therefore, must be known.

AG.—Yes, known as appearances.

FAR.—If we know them as appearances, they cannot be absolutely unknown. I am become intently bent on finding out (I suppose I dare not say *knowing*) what we do know, and what we do not know, about these appearances. Lately I was standing by my plow in the field when the horses plunged, and the plow-share was knocked into my leg, which has scarcely yet recovered. What known reality had I there! I suppose I had pain.

AG.—This may be allowed; it was an impression. It was an appearance, though what the pain was we cannot tell.

FAR.—It is useful to have one reality conceded. But

I had some other appearances: a couple of plunging horses, a limb torn and bleeding, the wound continuing for weeks, remedies applied, and a healing process. Somehow I believe that these existed just as the pain did, and that the pain was felt by me as a conscious being taking pains to be relieved from it. I believe in the painful measures taken by the surgeon, and in the very surgeon himself; in the soothing imparted by my mother, and in my mother as thus soothing me, I feel that I had much the same evidence of all of these. I may allow you to call them phenomena, but then they are of things appearing. It is utter nonsense to give an abstraction a separate position from the thing appearing.

AG.—But do you really go so far as to maintain that all appearances are realities? That this white appearance is a ghost risen from the grave? That this sound heard at midnight was the attack of a burglar, as the old maid is sure it was? That every unexplained event is a miracle?

FAR.—I crave no such application of my maxim. I do hold that every appearance implies a thing appearing. But we may have to make some inquiries, and exercise judgment in order to determine what the thing appearing is. An appearance literally is an affection of the eye, and this is a reality. There may be need of inquiry, and there may be doubts as to what caused the affection of the eye. I remember of my seeing a white figure in a grove near my father's house, and of my running into the house and declaring that I had seen a ghost. My father took me by the hand, and we went out to the place, to find that the object was a white sheet thrown out on a tree and being moved by the wind. A tree reflected in a smooth pool is a reality; it is light reflected from water, though it is not a tree growing with its crown downward. If there be a real appearance, there must be a thing ap-

pearing, but we may have to make investigation before we can settle what the thing is—in fact, may never be able to find what it is. In particular, the apparent deceptions of the senses are not real deceptions. In looking across an arm of the sea, I see a rock on the other side which I believe to be a mile off; but in sailing toward it I find it three miles away. This is merely a wrong inference, founded on the rule, correct enough in ordinary cases, but not applying here, viz.: that when there are few things intervening, the object must be near. In our common books of science, these mistakes are carefully pointed out, and the veracity of the senses guarded by its being shown that the supposed deceptions of the senses are merely wrong inferences made in the rapidity of thinking.

AG.—It is a fortunate circumstance that we have Kant to fall back upon; Kant, the most influential philosopher in this century and who is to be so glorified this centennial year in this country as well as in Germany.

FAR.—I have observed of those youths, who, after finishing their course in the college down there, set off for a year or two to Germany, that they come back with a most formidable nomenclature, as ponderous as the armor of Goliath of Gath. How I do rejoice to find a youth rising up to lay them prostrate with a more primitive weapon. For they have become unbearingly haughty, and would kill all who cannot pronounce their shibboleth at the fords of speculation. They are introduced at the German universities to a set of distinctions which seem very deep. The distinction between form and matter, subject and object, *à priori* and *à posteriori*, phenomenon and noumenon, by which they are led into a labyrinth with no clue to bring them out. In all these distinctions, and in the nomenclature expressing them, there are subtle errors lurking which lead through idealism into scepticism. The Americans, to their credit, never followed Locke in deriv-

ing all our ideas from sensation and reflection, even in last century, when his influence was so predominant. I hope that in this century they will not give in to Kantism, which provides only appearances with an unknown reality beyond. I hope that this magnifying of Kant will only lead to a more thorough sifting of his critical method and its results. What we need in the present day is a fresh study of the mind by one who knows both Locke and Kant, but follows them only so far as their doctrines are an expression of the operations of the mind.*

AG.—But every educated man knows that it has been established that heredity determines men's dispositions, judgments, and opinions. A mountain-range divides a people of one character and religion from those of another, and this because the two peoples are of a different ancestry. Every child is the product, not just of his immediate father and mother, but of his progenitors through indefinite ages. People wonder that this infant, just born, has a pug nose, which neither parent has. But older people can tell you that there was a grandmother who had precisely such a nose. So there are characters which seem to separate from their whole kindred; but if we knew all the ancestry, we should find that we have only a mixture, often incongruous, but sometimes consistent, of the peculiarities of forefathers and foremothers. Judgments thus caused by fate or fortuity are worthless, and we are not sure that there is truth in any of them. In our highest intellectual exercises we have only appearances, which in other circumstances and with other heredities, might appear very different.

FAR.—We farmers are inclined to attribute much to

* The men with high aspirations who met at Concord in August, wished to throw back the low materialism of the day. But they will not be able to do this with the American public by resorting to the forms of Kant and Hegel.—ED.

heredity. We like to have a good breed of horses and cattle; but I prize the mettle of my horses feeding there as a positive and real thing, even though it may have come from their stock. Whatever my ancestors may have been, I have some gifts which I claim as my own, and which I exercise. I have a perception of things, and a power of judging them and reasoning about them. I perceive the horses down there, and know pretty well which is a good one. I may have got my power of discernment from my Yankee mother; but it is mine now, and I find I can trust in it. I know things and the relations of things. I inquire into the past and the distant, and can, so far, anticipate the future. If this power has come from heredity, it is a wisely regulated heredity,—quite as much so as that of my horse there, the breed of which has been carefully attended to. I will allow no man to deprive me of this power of judging. I denounce Agnosticism as not only false, but injurious, when it denies me a power of independent thought, and makes me a mere product of circumstances—an advanced catarrhine monkey, which somehow got the power of speech. He who regards himself, and allows himself to be regarded, as a beast, will sink toward the beastly state. I prefer dwelling rather on my heavenly origin, and hope thereby to be aided in attaining a heavenly character.

AG.—But surely you must be ready to give up that beauty with which our later poets have been daubing the face of nature.

FAR.—I am sure that there is more in nature than mere mechanical force, or, as some of you make it, mere motion. I believe not only in the skeleton of nature, but in its flesh and muscles, and the forms and colors with which the whole is clothed. I am sure we have a perception of the sublimity and beauty of the objects in nature; and these proceed from and give evidence of high qualities; of the

power in these rocks and waves and mountains, and the proportions and harmonies of these stars, plants, and animals; I have the capacity and I actually observe them, and am sure they are realities. I am sure that higher than these we have moral and spiritual realities.

AG.—Is it possible that a man of sense like you can really credit these fables about an unseen world, which, if it exists, cannot become known to us?

FAR.—I now clearly discover what is the kind of truth to which you Agnostics are so opposed. You believe practically in meat and money as at least attractive appearances. It is not of much moment whether you believe in them theoretically or no, as by hereditary instinct you will eat and drink and seek honors and pleasures in life, whether you do or do not acknowledge them to be realities. But when you set aside moral and spiritual realities, the existence of God, the authority of a divine law, the immortality of the soul, and a judgment-day, there is no natural inclination making us practically allow these truths to restrain and constrain, to guide and elevate.

[At this stage my mother sent us out some fine strawberries, whereon]

AG.—These must have come from the South, as no fruit is yet ripe in this region of ours.

FAR.—Good reasoning upon realities known.

As the strawberries appeared and the guests rose to receive them, the burly New-Light Moralist easily turned the ghostly Agnostic out of the way, as if he were as great a nonentity as he affected to be, and proceeded:

SECOND ROUND.—THE NEW-LIGHT MORALIST AND THE YANKEE FARMER.

MORALIST.—We have had enough of this nonsense. I am satisfied that there are realities, and I am anxious to

have as many of the good things of this world as I can. I believe not only in the reality of the pleasure I have got from the strawberries, but in the excellence of the strawberries, and in the validity of the inference that they must have come from a warmer climate. I acknowledge the force of your arguments against my friend, who says we can know nothing. But you can advance no such arguments against me.

FARMER.—You should not be so sure of this. You admit that we have perceptions of the senses external, and, I may add, internal, that is, self-consciousness. It is possible that we may have equally trustworthy perceptions of higher realities. You put trust in your intellectual perceptions. We have also moral perceptions.

MOR.—What do you mean by intellectual perceptions?

FAR.—The perception of the strawberries, and of the validity of the inference that they grew in a warmer climate than this, and all like perception of objects and logical conclusions drawn from them, such as the existence of your friends and their characters.

MOR.—It is quite in my way to admit all this. It is the result of experience.

FAR.—But an experience gathered by the intellect, in which, therefore, you trust.

MOR.—I do not see that you will gain much by my admitting this.

FAR.—It implies that we can distinguish between truth and error. You will admit that the judge and jury in the court in which you plead can, in certain cases, tell whether the prisoner is or is not guilty. It is surely conceivable that we should also have moral perceptions to distinguish between good and evil. You believe that the jury did right in finding that servant of yours guilty who stole the hundred dollars. But are you not also sure that what she did was bad? Are you not as sure of this as of the fact

that she did the deed and that the judge condemned her ?

MOR.—I see you adhere to the intuitive theory of morals. You do not seem to call in the Will of God and Scripture, which I am glad of.

FAR.—It has been shown that virtue is good, not because God wills it, but that He wills it because it is good, such being His holy nature. I am not a college-bred man, and I do not know nor care what they call my view. I do not know that I have any theory. But I have a fact of consciousness that both you and I perceive certain deeds to be good and certain others to be evil. In this way I rise to a law which I find to be the law of God. The two supply a very deep foundation for morality. To which theory do you adhere ?

MOR.—Certainly not to the Will-of-God theory, nor the intuitive theory. I have a partiality for the utilitarian, or rather the hedonist theory, that we should seek pleasure for ourselves and for others. I believe in both what we now call egoism and altruism.

FAR.—But you acknowledge that you are not altogether satisfied with utilitarianism. Can utilitarianism show you why you should seek pleasure not only for yourself, but for others. Natural, that is, inherited instincts will lead you to seek pleasure for yourself, but why should you labor and suffer for strangers ?

MOR.—To promote the interests of others is often the best means of promoting my own.

FAR.—If this is all the length your altruism carries you, it is, after all, only a systematic egoism—that is, selfishness. There are cases constantly occurring in which men do not see very clearly how doing good to others will do good to themselves ; to stand up, for instance, for a maligned man, when the community upon whose favorable opinion our professional success depends is set against

him. When such a creed prevails, we shall have few of those noble deeds of courage and self-sacrifice of which our world is so proud. You see at once that hedonism has no obligation to lay on you to promote another man's pleasure; it cannot show that you *ought* to do this. In short, it fails to provide a motive for promoting its own end, that of promoting the greatest happiness of the greatest number.

MOR.—I confess I have some difficulty in determining what the greatest number is, and what is their greatest happiness. I have no desire to see slavery restored in this country, but I cannot settle in my mind whether the colored people have more pleasure in their present than in their former state. But the utilitarians lay down certain regulating principles as to the beneficial tendencies of acts.

FAR.—It is all but impossible to calculate the precise consequences of certain acts, and there is a great risk of miscalculating under the influence of prejudice. As to the general rules laid down by utilitarians, it is often difficult to apply them—to say when they apply, or which of them does apply in a given case. But the grand difficulty of the theory lies in the circumstance that it holds out no motive to constrain men to attend, in critical emergencies and when under temptations, to the principles of morals. You do not seem to attach much value to Herbert Spencer's modification of the utilitarian theory.

MOR.—You misunderstand me. In the end his morality may rule the world. Heredity will then make all men moral. Pain will cease. Men will not then need a moral law. They will be virtuous "as a matter of course" without its being necessary that they should be swayed by love. But development is not yet sufficiently advanced to accomplish this. We who live in the period of "struggle" often do not know what to do.

FAR.—I see no evidence that development is fitted to remove either pain or sin from our world, though, if guided by God, it may lessen both. Certainly they both exist at present, and ethics should teach us how to act in a state of things in which they abound. But Mr. Spencer has introduced what he calls a rational utilitarianism, which “deduces from the laws of life and the conditions of existence what kinds of action necessarily tend to produce happiness, and what kinds to produce unhappiness. Having done this, its deductions are to be recognized as laws of conduct, and are to be conformed to, irrespective of a direct estimation of happiness or misery.” The old objection applies to this, that it contains no motive to constrain attention to deductions. What does he mean by the “laws of life?” I am afraid some would not understand them, and many would not feel any obligation to attend to them.

MOR.—He must mean the great laws of development and heredity, the laws derived from the gathered and inherited experience of ancestors, brute and human.

FAR.—But that experience is not uniform. Some of our ancestors, among the lower animals and men, have been cruel; some are deceitful—do, in fact, live by guile; others are sensual. There is the fierceness of the tiger, the cunning of the fox, and the grossness of the pig. These qualities, it may be supposed, are going down in the descent. Are we to follow these, because they come from our fathers? Or are we to resist and reject them—or, at least, some of them? If so, it must be from some law separate from and distinct from heredity, above heredity, and to which heredity should yield.

MOR.—I notice you are always coming back to an intuitive perception of good and evil—that is, conscience. You know that it has been shown that conscience is the product of heredity, and in that respect is like the other

animal propensities, and carries with it no peculiar weight. Darwin has shown that it appears in the lower animals. You may see evidence of it in the look and attitude of the dog, when he has done a deed fitted to please his master, and in his running off, with his tail between his legs, when he has offended. It can carry with it no authority.

FAR.—It may carry with it as much authority as the intelligence which you believe to be also the consolidation of hereditary experience. Your understanding may have been developed, but you are sure it speaks true when it declares that all the angles of a triangle are equal to two right angles, that you were once at college, that you are now a lawyer, and that the judge decided the case against your servant. May not your moral nature be equally right in declaring that the deed of the servant was wrong and the sentence of the judge just, and that you are entitled to demand that your clients pay their fees?

MOR.—I, too, believe this; but this not because of that fallible conscience. I decide thus, because I see what evil would arise from not punishing my servant, and from allowing those for whom I have labored to pay my fees or not, as they please.

FAR.—This is falling back on utilitarianism, the weakness of which you have exposed. Your account of the nature of conscience in your article is very graphic; but you are evidently laboring under a misapprehension as to its function. You suppose that the conscience is the moral law itself, and is to be regarded as infallible; but this is a mistake. Let me explain what I mean by an illustration: My mother has an old clock on the wall, which is now usually silent, but which she sets agoing occasionally, when it sometimes goes too quick and sometimes too slow, and often stops. She believes (I do not) that it

came over in the *Mayflower*. Now, we do not regard this clock, or any other clock, as regulating time, or as settling the length of the day. These are determined for us by the sun. But there are two things that the clock does: it exhibits hours and days, and, when it is in a sound state, it makes them known to us. Precisely analogous is the function of the conscience. It does not constitute the good or make the law. Its perceptions do not render an action, considered in itself, to be either virtuous or vicious. What it does is to reveal the quality to us. It is not my eye which makes the apple-tree before us—it simply makes it known to us. Just as little do the decisions of the conscience constitute the goodness of an action. The tree exists, and truth exists, and moral good exists, whether the intellect or the conscience perceives them or no. The moral and intellectual powers are merely the organs through which the good and the true are disclosed. And as the eye may be diseased, so may the conscience, and the intellect too, become perverted. But the eye implies an object to be seen, and the intellect implies that there is truth; so the conscience implies that there is moral good, which shines up there in the sky even when there is (as now) a cloud concealing it. There are standards of truth, as in mathematics, even when the boy makes mistakes in his demonstrations. So there is a moral standard, even when men do not attend to it. That standard is not the conscience, but the moral law, which is the law of love—that is, law and love; the law requiring and regulating love. The conscience may vacillate, and even err; but the moral law is immutable and eternal.

MOR.—But you make that law too pure and lofty—as high and unbearable as the midday sun is to the eye. It frightens the young, and is offensive to all, because it is so stiff and rigid. I do not propose to do away with law,

but it should accommodate itself to our nature and to circumstances, and admit exceptions.

FAR.—A military officer cannot exact obedience beyond his own province—cannot, for instance, demand a special religious belief from his soldiers; but in his own domain he cannot allow exceptions to his orders. The magistrate cannot stretch his penalties beyond his own field, which is that of property and life; but in his own jurisdiction he cannot allow people to keep one law and break another; to steal, provided he does no murder; to raise a drunken disturbance on the streets, and be guilty of seduction, provided he be honest. If God's law be holy, just, and good, He must require perfect obedience. What God requires is love under law, and He demands attention to its requirements.

MOR.—But why place the ideal so high?

FAR.—It is of vast moment to have a model before every man, and before society, to keep them from falling, and to lift them up when fallen. Your principles would produce a state of society like that in the time of the Roman Emperors Augustus and Tiberius, like that of Louis XV. in France, and like that of Charles II. in England, from which all men, perceiving the evils, turned away with such a terrible revulsion. You object specially to the Sabbath?

MOR.—Certainly, because so gloomy.

FAR.—I have always looked on the Sabbath as one of the most beneficent of our institutions. It is so to me, my household, and my horses, obliged to toil all the rest of the week. I have observed, too, in my rare travels, that in France, in Germany, and in certain parts of our Western country, the people, though well enough educated in the elementary schools, have less intelligence, because they have no quiet Sabbath on which to think and keep up their reading.

MOR.—But we might have all this without making the day so awfully sacred.

FAR.—The difficulty would be, without a divine sanction, to make people combine as to the time, and to impose and obey the necessary restrictions. The selfish master would insist on labor from his dependents in certain circumstances—the merchant, for instance, when he had pressing lucrative orders. The pleasure-loving would insist on amusements, requiring labors, which, so far from being amusements, imply severe toil among vast multitudes. You may say law should secure the restrictions; but laws, under popular governments, can only be passed where there is a popular sentiment in their favor, and such laws would not be passed in a state of society such as I have pointed to. Besides, even though law might enjoin a day of rest, it could not make men engage in elevating exercises—in short, to remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy. Our forefathers may on some points have been too stern; but their descendants, with their railway travelling, their reading of novels and secular papers, and their theatre-going, may be rushing to the opposite and worse extreme. I know a promising young man from this neighborhood, who went into a newspaper office where he had to work the whole Sabbath: he struggled for a time, and then lost all sense of everything spiritual. I am told that he now, to justify his course to himself, writes the pungent articles in his organ against the Puritan Sabbath. The Sabbath (like every precept of the law) was made for man by the God who made him, and knows what he needs, and has set apart this day to give him rest and leisure for holy meditation.

The Evolutionist here interposed. As he had been at one time my preceptor, as his head was all silvered over where it was not bald, and as his manner of late had be-

come more subdued and less dogmatic, I treated him with more respect than I did the younger men.

THIRD ROUND.—EVOLUTIONIST AND YANKEE FARMER.

EVOLUTIONIST.—I wish you all to understand that I disapprove of these attempts to undermine morality. I believe them to be injurious to the best interests of the race.

FARMER.—It may be as well for you to know whither Agnosticism is tending, and the consequences which some are drawing from Evolution. We are come to a time in which we have to examine the foundations of morality as well as of religion.

EV.—I certainly wish to retain the morality, but to separate it from religion, which I also wish to retain, but in a higher form.

FAR.—But you must be aware that those who have undermined the religion have, in the very act, shaken the morality. You will have to consider whether the principles of an evolution without a religion, without a God, and without a fixed moral law, will not lead, logically and practically, to the low and loose morality which our friend has been recommending, and which you are condemning. These discussions as to religion and morality will require those who are not to abandon both to build up from the very foundation, when they may find that the same deep principles which bear up morality are guaranteeing the fundamental truths of religion. You know that the great body of Evolutionists and all Agnostics regard conscience as developed, and the product of circumstances, and therefore having no absolute claim on obedience. What foundation have you left for morality? I am afraid that, like our Moralist here, you will have to advertise for a new ethics, as well as a new religion.

EV.—I have always held that we should all promote the general welfare. I admit the difficulty of the great body of mankind being able or willing to find what that welfare is or requires. But all men have kind social instincts and a hereditary conscience, and our aim should be to create such a public sentiment as to incline men to what is good.

FAR.—But, in the case of many, all these may be counteracted and thwarted by selfishness, by lusts, and passions, which need a positive law to lay a restraint on them. I fear that your philosophy tends to weaken these sentiments—which are, after all, mere aids to virtue—as showing that they have no foundation; and you will find it difficult on your principles to create, or even keep up, a public feeling ready to stand by a high and severe morality. What think you of those renowned writers, male and female, more than once referred to in these articles, who lived as husband or wife with those to whom they were not married?

EV.—I regret their conduct. I believe in marriage and monogamy. Have you had no such illicit intercourse among professing Christians, who managed to keep their acts concealed?

FAR.—Yes; but we have a moral law which condemns them, and which has created a public sentiment which also condemns them. Remove the law, and the sentiment will evaporate and disappear, and the practice will become general—like the keeping of mistresses by kings two hundred years ago—because there is nothing to restrain it. Such conduct on the part of professing Christians is censured severely, and no one is tempted to copy it. But many feel as if your evolutionary ethics utters no such condemnation, and many may be led to imitate the persons to whom we have referred, because of their genius. It is surely very unwise to separate religion and morality.

The moral law in the heart seems to point to a law-giver, and religion gives a motive power to humanity. The great German metaphysician, Kant, showed that the moral reason, whose law he described as the categorical imperative, implied responsibility, a judgment-day, and God as judge; and these are the great truths of natural religion.

EV.—I suppose you give up the argument from design.

FAR.—I do not. As our moral nature demands a law-giver, so our rational nature demands that there be a designer, the cause of the adaptation or design we see everywhere. There is design in the eye, though it is liable to defects. Helmholtz has made the statement already quoted, but has also said emphatically that if the eye were so constructed as not to be so liable, it would not be fit for the ordinary uses of life. A penknife cannot cut down an American forest, but may, notwithstanding, be admirably adapted to its own end.

EV.—Do not understand that I am opposed to religion. I do not wish to deprive you, my young friend, of your faith. I should not like my lovely adopted daughter to give up her prayers and attendance at public worship. But I confess I am not satisfied with any existing religion.

FAR.—I believe the answers to your advertisement for a new religion have convinced you that there is no hope of your getting a new religion capable of standing a moment's scrutiny.

EV.—I was sincere in my advertisement. I did wish to have a satisfactory religion. I have usually attended the Unitarian Church, because there is nothing to offend me, while there was nothing, I confess, to meet my felt wants. It still professes to cling to Scripture, with which it is evidently not consistent. As I cannot live in a vacuum, I am becoming wearied of it. There is evidence that man is everywhere predisposed toward religion.

FAR.—The evolutionists explain this by heredity. I explain it by the felt needs of man and his rational nature, handed down, it may be, from ancestors. You proceed upon the fact that man has a capacity of judging and deciding; and, acting on it, you condemn the heathen superstitions. On like grounds I argue that man has a moral and spiritual, or rather that these are part of his essential, nature.

EV.—But what am I to believe? I am not satisfied with your Scriptures. There are some things in the earlier books which, as Mr. Mill says, are barbarous; such are the cruel wars and the gross immoralities practised by persons who are recommended to us as exemplars. I cannot believe in their inspiration.

FAR.—Better leave the question of plenary inspiration aside till we ascertain whether there is not something superhuman in them. When we have determined this, on good evidence, we may discover some means of accounting for what is evidently human being allowed to remain. The Scriptures often narrate events and picture characters in dark enough colors. But they show us a clear advance, and they give us enough to lift us above the rudeness and vice prevalent in the barbarous ages. Their precepts, sanctioned by God, such as the decalogue, the moral maxims of the prophets, the discourses of Christ, and the epistles of Paul, Peter, and John, have been the main means of promoting thought, science, and civilization in modern Europe and in America.

EV.—I observe with interest that Mr. Froude, in his lately published work on Bunyan, has taken the same position as I have. With a great admiration of this greatest (except one other) speaker in parables he maintains that with the light now shed abroad by science it is not possible for any educated man to believe as he did.

FAR.—I have been reading the work to which you

refer. I have a high opinion of Mr. Froude's pictorial power in narrative, but not of his good sense or accuracy. Once a clergyman of the Church of England, he still longs, in a plaintive tone, for a religion, but acknowledges that he does not know whether it will ever come or whence it can come. Meanwhile, having lost his own faith, he would deprive our young men of theirs, by assuming that Christianity cannot stand in the light of modern science. In science I prefer listening to Prof. Tait, that big-headed man, deep in quaternions and physics. I do not know that the professor is a religious man, but it does one good to hear him indignantly denouncing those who affirm that science has set aside religion. He defies them to prove that any settled doctrine of science is opposed to our faith. I affirm that there are more people in our day believing in Bunyan's doctrine of sin and salvation than there were in his own day when educated men despised the tinker. Many abler men than Mr. Froude have submitted to the Cross and found it to be to their stability and comfort.

EV.—There are doctrines which I cannot swallow. I do not refer to such high dogmas as Predestination and the Trinity, to which so many of my Unitarian friends object. For the great body of philosophers, including Mr. Mill, have held a doctrine of necessity, a more forbidding doctrine than fore-ordination, which implies something of will in man, and a wise God who governs. If there be a God, which I do not deny, though I am in perplexity on the whole subject, His nature must be so high and mysterious that I can conceive there should be in it a Trinity, or threefold distinction, as well as an essential unity. But the doctrine of a blood-atonement I cannot stand; it seems to me so unworthy of God.

FAR.—Many profound thinkers have felt this to be the grand reconciling doctrine of God's government in a world

in which God, represented by His law, is holy, and man is an acknowledged breaker of that law, in which there are both good and evil, both optimism and pessimism. No one knows better than the evolutionist that the world has been a scene of contest from the beginning—first a struggle for existence in the animal ages, and now a contest between the evil and the good. In the atonement God is just, and yet the justifier of the ungodly, while the heart of the sinner is won by the manifestation of love.

EV.—There is much in Christianity that commends itself to me. In particular, the character of Jesus is so unique; so perfect in purity, in heavenliness, in love, in tenderness and sympathy, that I am obliged to acknowledge that I cannot understand how a Jew, a Galilean, a Nazarene could have conceived, much less fashioned, such a character.

FAR.—If you only yield to the attractive power of Christ, all will come right with you: you will have a body of consistent and comforting truth to establish you, and a motive to live and labor, to be good and to do good.

By this time the light was failing, and we passed into the house, where we found the evening meal prepared for us. My mother asked me to say grace, and as I did so, the Agnostic gazed into the air, looking on the grace and the air as equally phenomenal; the Moralist, being hungry, fixed his eyes on the food; and the Evolutionist bowed his head reverently and was pained because he could not say amen. Shortly after we parted, each one following his own thoughts, to bear him I know not whither; but as our controversialists are possessed by an irresistible *cacoethes scribendi* we will doubtless hear from them. It is as well that people should know that these men under various names and in various guises are the chief contributors to certain liberal organs of the periodical

press; and we should now be able to detect their style even when they do not attach their signatures. Each is constantly throwing in a new element into the caldron—

“ Eye of newt, and toe of frog,
Wool of bat, and tongue of dog,
Adder's fork, and blindworm's sting,
Lizard's leg, and owlet's wing ”—

which will continue to seethe and ferment till it sinks into an offensive malarial residuum, from which all men turn away. For myself, I was humbled because I had not done justice to the cause which I had tried to sustain, but sure that I was in a more satisfactory state of mind, than those abler men who are seeking for truth without finding it. I mean to continue to pester these college youths who affect (there is a great deal of affectation in the whole thing) to believe in nothing, while each one has a firm conviction that he is a “ somebody ” of no mean importance. I observe that while the wounds, like those of Valhalla, are bloodless, yet when I strike hard they are annoyed. They do not know when they are defeated, but after we have pierced them through and through, take, as beseemeth ghosts, very much the same shape. But for my own amusement I mean to continue to poke into them that I may notice how they revel and writhe. I notice that when they marry and have several mouths to feed, they give up Nihilism.

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