

378,782
748
Incomplete
1875-76
Vol 4-5

HESPERIAN STUDENT.

VOL. 4.

University of Nebraska.

NO 1.

JANUARY,

Qui non Prosefit, Desseit.

1875.

Prof. Tyndall.

In a short paper last month we adverted to some of the conclusions of Prof. Tyndall's Belfast address, especially to that part in which he claims for matter the origin and potentiality of all forms of life, while at the same time he confesses, the whole subject lies beyond the boundary of experimental verification, and hence beyond the domain of science. Perhaps in this inconsistency it was intended to give a practical illustration of the possible "Uses of the Imagination in Science," an idea to which he has heretofore devoted a volume. One thing is certain, that while suggesting the possibilities of matter, he does not claim that it has been proved that the life which is manifested through matter, and the molecules of matter are the same. Nay, he plainly admits that the "cosmical life" is unknown and probably unknowable to us. But matter is known as subject to mechanical and chemical laws. Hence what is called "the potentiality" of matter may be, after all, nothing else than the "divine life" or "cosmic life," which is everywhere manifesting itself, as possessing intelligence and design.

1. The Professor would also have us greatly change our conception of matter. Matter, with him, is composed of atoms or molecules plus this cosmic life. This last assumption seems essential in order to maintain plausibly the doctrine of Evolution. For if there is no principle of life interspersed among the molecules, from them no life could be evolved. *Ex nihilo nihil fit.* Now that life may be incorporated with atoms of matter and may be displayed through them is an old, familiar idea; but force, life and attraction, are conceptions entirely different and distinct from atoms and molecules. Nor, when we think of atoms, do we necessarily include the ideas of force and life. In thought and philosophic investigation we always distinguish them. The one does not necessarily include the other. There is no living investigator in molecular physics, whose authority is greater than that of Prof. Clerk Maxwell of Aberdeen. He has made atoms or molecules a speciality, and his conclusions have been recently given to the public as follows: "No theory of Evolution," he says, "can be formed to account for the similarity of the molecules throughout all time, and throughout the whole region of the stellar universe; for Evolution necessarily implies continuous change, and the molecule is incapable of growth or decay, of generation or destruction." "None of the processes of nature, since the time nature began, have produced the slightest difference in the properties of any molecule. On the other hand, the exact equality of each molecule to all others of the same kind precludes the idea of its being eternal and self-existent. These molecules continue this day as they were created, perfect in number and measure, and weight."

These statements of this eminent phy-

sicist show conclusively, that matter as composed of atoms, has no potency to evolve life; and that life is something independent of and superadded to matter, whenever life is manifested. And speaking of this life force the Professor is candid enough to admit that it is absolutely inscrutable to science. Hence the postulate that is put forward by him, that atoms and life constitute matter, which has a potency to evolve all forms of life, is not supported by the scientific thought of the present day.

2. This newest phase of philosophy, of which Prof. Tyndall is an eminent apostle, admits there may be found innumerable instances of wonderful adaptations, but it denies that there is manifest anywhere evidences of design; and hence from a survey of nature we may not infer an intelligent designing, infinite mind that has ordained the variety, and harmony of the material and spiritual Universe. This source of thought lands in blank and cheerless atheism. All is relegated to the control of impersonal law, rigid, inflexible and inexorable; of whose origin and end we cannot obtain the slightest rational conception. This view when thus fairly stated is revolting to every sentiment of the soul, and is instinctively rejected.

If this question of design in the adaptations of nature could be settled by the authority of great names, an overwhelming preponderance of authority would be found in its favor. Since the time that Socrates confounded that "mikros kai atheos," Aristodemus by pointing out in detail the different parts of the eye, asking whether all those parts were thus made and disposed with or without a designing intelligence, the argument for design in nature, has been well-nigh irresistible. It is absolutely incredible that the purposes served by all nature, —animate and inanimate—in the mass and minute, the nice interdependences and correlations of matter to matter, and mind to matter, are all the result of chance or of a law working without a design. To maintain that there is no prescient will manifest in nature, to the average mind, is as absurd, as to believe that with sufficient letters of the alphabet in a box, there could be raked out of it the Iliad of Homer, the Paradise Lost of Milton, or the Principia of Newton.

And with respect to this idea of prescient design in the order of nature, it does not matter whether nature is the result of Evolution or of separate creative acts. For, in the words of Bishop Butler, in his Analogy of Religion to the Nature and Constitution of things, "an intelligent Author of Nature being supposed, it makes no alteration in the matter before us whether he acts in nature every moment, or at once contrived and executed his own part in the plan of the world." If creation by Evolution should ever become an established fact it could be held in entire harmony and good fellowship with the idea of a crea-

tion by an intelligent mind.

The high sounding phrases which some superficial or one sided scientists employ to upset the revered and soul-sustaining beliefs of the ages, are mere "*brutum fulmen*" and like other wonders of the hour will in time be upset by other moral philosophies. Let no one, therefore, be alarmed at the transcendental nonsense of rhythmic vibrations of the brain, protoplasmic energy or cosmic life as being likely to drive from the human soul the world wide beliefs of an intelligent Creator, Preserver, and Judge of the Universe. For with the Apostle may we say, which is also the highest generalization of Science, *of Him are all things, by Him are all things, and to Him are all things.* He is the source, the efficient agent, and the end for which all has been made.

A. R. B.

The Crisis.

A crisis is imminent. Just how long it will be before the decisive moment shall arrive in this country, I would not undertake to say. In Europe, it is at hand. In this article I shall not take either side, proposing simply to state facts, and the causes, as I understand them, that brought about the present condition of affairs.

About the year 1825, a warm discussion was had in the British Parliament on the question of admitting Catholics to a seat in that body. If they were compelled to obey the mandates of the Pope in moral and civil matters as well as religious, it was urged, they were incompetent to legislate for an independent people like the Britons. The result was, that certain leading Catholics of that country denied the infallibility of the Pope. How far the decrees of the Vatican should be obeyed, was very much a matter of discretion. Catholics were admitted, and in England, the great question was neglected or slumbered altogether for years. The next field of strife was between Prussia and Austria. How eagerly the Pope and his counsellors on one side, and the Protestants on the other, watched that struggle is beyond conjecture. The battles were fought between the armies of Prussia and Austria, but the contest was one more effort on the part of the Vatican to regain its lost prestige. With the overthrow of the Austrians in their last great battle was gained another victory for Bismarck—the inveterate enemy of the church. What was to be done? At the bidding of the Pope, seven hundred and thirty delegates assembled at Rome for the purpose of discussing measures tending to revive the waning influence of the church among the powers of Europe.

France was ever faithful and it is noticeable that the declaration of war against Prussia, and the ominous proclamation of the infallibility of the Pope, were heralded to the world almost simultaneously, and that both followed close upon the dissolution of the General Council. What the motives were that prompted Louis Napoleon to inaugurate the war that ended so disastrously to France, is a problem that

the wisest could not solve. I accept that which at this time looks to me most plausible: Bismarck must be overthrown. Who was to do it, and how was it to be done? It was not altogether certain that Napoleon could do it; but he must try. Napoleon was a usurper, and his throne was already tottering, liable at any moment to fall. It is not improbable, therefore, that frequent and urgent messages from Rome, and the hope that thereby his own cause would be strengthened, induced him to attempt the perilous undertaking. He tried it. Napoleon III was made prisoner, and with his fall at Sedan, the Pope was again forced to realize that the hated German statesman had triumphed. Thus, the last offensive move was a failure.

Now Bismarck was prepared to assume the offensive; and he is not the man to stop until either his enemy or himself is completely humbled, if not vanquished. The German Parliament henceforth became the scene of his operations. His notion was that if a man and woman were married in accordance with the laws of the state, they were man and wife, the rules of the church to the contrary notwithstanding. The clergy remonstrated. Remonstrances to nothing! What cared he for clerical remonstrances or paper bulls? Certain Catholic professors refused to accept some new dogma, which was followed by a summons for their expulsion from the universities, with which summons the state refused to comply. Here, then, the issue had been reached at last: Shall the state be supreme within its own domain, refusing all foreign ecclesiastical dictation, and preserving to every ecclesiastical body within its limits just and equal liberties; or shall papacy be permitted to exercise its sovereign will in the state, independently of the state. Bismarck declared that papacy could have nothing to do with ruling the German Empire.

A law was introduced leaving the inner life of all churches untouched, but stating in unmistakable language, that in *civil affairs the state is supreme.* With the above named policy, Bismarck was recently sustained in the German Parliament by a vote of 199 to 71.

There it stands. Bismarck is ahead, but his victory is not complete. His opponents are untiring, numerous, and constantly on the alert. While he lives, his party will, no doubt, hold its own, and more. But Bismarck is old. His life has been one of active service—of unremitting toil. He is not so old in years, but as the tall oak must bear the brunt of every storm, swayed backward and forward at the will of the storm-king, and at times, even selected as a target for the lightning; so Bismarck has for years borne the brunt of battle in a diplomatic and military war hardly equalled in either ancient or modern times; so has he been subject to the whirlwinds of popular passion, coming, first from one direction then from another, but received indifferently; and, finally, singled out as a target for the bullet of the assassin—held by an ignorant youth, but directed by opponents. Without his great energy and imperious