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of thought devised by use of wit or man, must not be debased; its dignity and power must be preserved on the stage so as to counteract the slipshod usage and vulgar slang of everyday life. Blank verse might not be fitting for the man in the street, but for exalted characters like Hamlet, Lear, Macbeth, Othello, it was eminently appropriate. Then there was the scenery; this was merely an adjunct to heighten the effect, not an end in itself and should be as simple as possible. The object and function of drama was not imitation and reproduction, but suggestion and revelation of the profoundest moods, experience, and ideas of life. Art for art's sake was an erroneous doctrine, and led to various aberrations, many of which they had seen in their own day. Art for life's sake was the only sane view. The dramatist was a revealer, not a moralist or preacher; he should remain in the background, and the actor should as much as possible do the same, for "the play's the thing." The dramatist certainly should hold the mirror up to Nature, but only so long as he had a magic mirror; for no one wanted to see on the stage exactly what he saw in actual life—the latter might be seen for nothing. The theatre was not a hospital, or a dissecting room, or a Police Court, or a gutter. To witness the sordid, the ugly, or the horrible had a pernicious effect on the mind of the spectator. They needed, rather, a healthy environment for developing their personality; for realizing their highest self. Let them, therefore, eliminate from the world of art, as from the world of life, all that was evil, false, and ugly. Let them cultivate the good, the true, and the beautiful. Let them realize that those three aspects of life were inseparable; for goodness, truth, and beauty were, as Tennyson says, "three sisters that cannot be sundered without tears." The lecturer interspersed his remarks with apt quotations and illustrations in support of his clear and forcible arguments for a worthy outlook upon the stage in its association with real life. Some of his excerpts were intensely amusing, particularly those relating to melodrama, and served to strengthen the bases of his clever and cultured appeal to regard the theatre as an educational force. The professor was accorded an ovation at the conclusion.

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ELDER SCHOLARSHIP ROYAL COLLEGE OF MUSIC.

A cablegram has been received stating that two scholarships open to South Australian music students will be offered at the end of the present year. The examination will probably be held early in December, but full particulars will be advertised in due course. Further information may be obtained at the University.

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ELDER SCHOLARSHIPS.

The director of the Conservatorium (Dr. Harold Davies) has received a cable message from Sir Hugh Allen, director of the Royal College of Music, London, announcing that this year two Elder (oversea) scholarships will be offered for competition in South Australia. The additional exhibition is being awarded in lieu of the Elder scholarship won by Miss Erica Chaplin in 1919 not being taken up. It will be remembered that after she was awarded the scholarship Miss Chaplin was taken ill and was unable to go to England, and eventually notified the authorities that she would have to relinquish the award. The examination will probably be held early in December.

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First Chair of Medical Physiology in Australia

A long step forward in the cause of medical science in Australia (our Brisbane correspondent telegraphed on Thursday) was marked to-day by the arrival in Brisbane of Dr. J. Lawson to fill the newly founded Chair of Research in Medical Psychology at the Queensland University. This is the first chair of its kind in Australia. A Chair of Psychiatry has been founded at the Sydney University, but there is considerable difference, as the Sydney chair is a teaching chair which deals mainly with brain diseases, whereas the chair at the Queensland University is to be a research chair, the idea being to have some one here for research work. Dr. Howson has come straight from Cambridge, where he has been working in the psychological laboratory ever since the war.

THE INTERPRETATION OF LIFE.

MIND AND ITS MECHANISM.

"A Student of Philosophy" writes:

Professor Brailford Robertson's metaphysical theory does not seem to come to grips with the old problem of the relation between mind and its mechanism. No theory has yet succeeded in unifying them in one formula, so no blame attaches to Professor Robertson. He would seem to retain the independence of consciousness by leaving it as a spectator, and looks forward to the day when all that really happens can be explained in terms of mechanism. This theory is open to the objection that it denies the truth of experience for the sake of an a priori assumption. Did the spiritual entity known as Shakespeare really write his plays or did he only watch his machinery writing them? Consciousness does not merely know itself as existing. It knows itself as creative activity using matter as its medium of self-expression. Its workings are conditioned in a thousand ways by the vastly complicated mechanism it uses. A steersman's conscious purpose is frustrated if any one link of the thousand in his organism or in the bowels of the ship should break. But he feels that his act of will is a true initiating cause, and that nervous and physical processes are directed and ordered by it to determine the rudder's action. His decision is led up to by a series of mental events, his knowledge of weather, soundings, &c., but his act of will is a new factor, and is given form in the nervous and mechanical changes it effects. It may be conceded that the nervous processes have a relative independence. Our degree of control over them varies infinitely. A great painter or a champion tennis player has his nervous mechanism under control, so that his finest shades of purpose may be accurately and precisely served by it. But he feels that his creative mind, his consciousness is the non-material initiative in a material process. No experimental knowledge will ever remove that sense of freedom from our actions. No conceivable degree of knowledge of the mechanism is competent to contradict it, for as Professor Robertson points out the analysis of material process stops short with material process. Once given the reality of purpose as a vera causa of material change it would seem necessary to admit that conscious purpose perfects and to some extent can create its own machinery.

A man after he has learnt to ride a bicycle has altered the structure of his muscular nervous system to a certain extent. Here the hypothesis of vitalism begins, and it did not seem to me that Professor Robertson's grounds for rejecting this theory, so ably expounded by Professor Wood Jones two years ago, were quite so final as they appeared to him. First, he asserted that there cannot be room for another life force other than the energy we can measure at work in the animal, because the animal gets all, or very nearly all, its energy from its fuel, and the energy therefore is contained in this fuel it consumes. But I do not think vitalism describes the life force as another physical energy. It is a non-physical "spiritual" factor, "sentiment interieur," as Lamarck called it. This "spirit" is capable of bringing about, in many generations maybe, some alteration in structure that a special form of life needs to enable it to earn a better living. So a mole, or the animal which eventually becomes a mole, can produce in many generations a sheath for its eyes, and, at the same time, work out an accompanying group of favorable characteristics in a manner Darwinism could not account for. Professor Robertson thinks that the coup de grace is administered to this theory by the modern discovery that characteristics are transmitted through the chromosomes that go to produce the original cell of life. But characteristics drop out as generation follows generation, and new ones emerge. This process is not to be explained in terms of mere rearrangement of a mosaic, of which all the tiles exist already. Surely the theory of transmission of characteristics through the chromosomes is not incompatible with the general idea of vitalism, or the transmission of acquired characteristics. An individual's activities in his lifetime may well react on the chromosomes from which come his progeny. That modification is caused by some effort of his to develop some quality which his race needs, and may be succeeded by similar efforts in his children. The reaction of the individual activities on his chromosome in each case may be quite immeasurable in the case of the individual cell, but make a change very appreciable in the study of a thousand generations of the species. Perhaps that is one reason why the professor concerned with the chemical action of cells rejects the theory held by the professor concerned in evolutionary anatomy.

The points raised are far from being of merely academic interest. A theory such as vitalism, which links man's conscious and creative processes with the dim control which life seems to exert over its own destiny lower down in the animal kingdom, considerably strengthens man's confidence in the testimony of his consciousness as to his power to create. Neo-Darwinism seemed to take that power away. We seemed the creatures of inter-necine conflict, doomed to go on struggling among ourselves. To that theory Bernard Shaw attributes most of our modern ills, including our industrial bitterness, and the late war. It destroyed men's confidence and made them feel their sense of moral personality was an illusion. Then, following Kropotkin, came the recognition that co-operation was as important a factor as struggle in the evolution of higher animal life. Following that, it was recognised that there is little inter-necine struggle in nature between individuals of the same species. War among men would seem to be a comparatively modern invention. Huxley denied the applicability of the struggle for survival to human conduct. He held that man's power of forming purposes and creating his world in accordance with them removed man from the dominance of the law of struggle with his kind, and he believed that man's future progress depended on his contradicting his history, and creating a moral order in which the morally best would be the best fitted to survive. A. J. Thompson also tells us that the analogy between the behaviour of animals and men is more frequently misleading than useful. Self-consciousness makes the difference. Vitalism removes the contradiction which Huxley felt between Neo-Darwinism and belief in free moral energy as a factor in progress. Meanwhile Darwinism itself has been falling into disfavor as not being able to account for the emergence of groups of favorable variations at the same time. Here vitalism stepped in with the conception of life controlling its own destiny, able to produce what variations it needed. Man's conscious purposes no longer look as if they contradicted the process which produced him, but as if their constant elements were those processes aware of themselves. These post-Darwinian ideas, when they filter down to the mind of the man in the street, should make far more widespread belief in free, creative moral personality. For these ideas amount to this—that so far from a condition of selfish struggle being a "natural" one, it is a modern departure from an evolutionary history, in which co-operation and the efficient adaptation of our activities to the environment (good work) have been the chief factor of progress.

The Scholastic Philosophy.

The Rev. R. P. Denny, Hamley Bridge, writes:—

Professor Brailford Robertson set out to give an interpretation of life. In his first lecture he asked his hearers not to jump at conclusions, but to wait until all the phenomena had been presented to them, presumably at the termination of the lectures. But his last lecture pleads for "inexhaustible patience" till the mechanists have finished their work. What are we to do in the meantime? Are we to stumble on without any adequate understanding of life? I fear the professor, though an able professor of biology, is not a clear thinker. In his otherwise admirable lectures he constantly confuses two distinct orders of things—the physical, material, and natural on the one hand, with the metaphysical, spiritual, and supernatural on the other. If he had presented his case and his experiments with their legitimate inferences as an exposition of biological science the effect would have been excellent. But in the guise of a biologist he enlarges on some mysterious entity "outside our material universe," and touches lightly but unmistakably on free-will—a highly metaphysical topic, on which biology throws no light whatever. Again, though the Mechanists, the Vitalists, and the Animists have their respective relations with biology, they are each, as a school, philosophers. Biology deals with living things, their action and interaction, and so forth, as vital but material phenomena; but no branch of physical science has ever thrown the tiniest gleam of light on the real nature of life, its origin or its future. No scientific man can say from his researches how life first appeared on this planet, nor can he tell us what life is. If the professor had made these points clear the effect might have been better. I have followed the lectures with keen interest, but am bound to say that as an interpretation of life they do not satisfy me. I enjoyed the lectures just so far as they dealt with the physical basis of life; but once the professor strayed into the philosophical arena I found difficulty. I gleaned the impression that he was endeavoring in a clandestine sort of way to account for the intellectual and spiritual faculties of man without departing from the physical and natural order of things.

One might gather from the lectures that for the present there was no fully satisfactory interpretation of life anywhere to be found, in spite of the three schools whose views were expounded. But there is, despite the professor's pessimism, an interpretation that gives complete satisfaction to men of science and philosophy of the highest calibre, and that is the scholastic interpretation. Paster, Fabre, Newman, Mercier, to name a very few, found it perfectly satisfactory, and each of these in his own line stands in the front rank. The whole trouble is over the human soul. Even Professor Brailford Robertson is unwilling to give it a name. The scholastic philosophy, the school of Thomas Aquinas, teaches that man is composed of body and soul. Each of these is a real substantial thing, but united they compose one substance—man. The soul is a spiritual being. Its proper sphere is in its union with the body, but it can exist apart from the body. The human soul is endowed with rational intellect, intellectual (and sensuous) memory, and free-will. The scholastics do not fall back on faith to establish these points, but prove them from experience and right reason. This is a philosophy that has stood the test of centuries and meets all the demands of contemporary thought. It is the philosophy of the man in the street to-day, though he may not advert to it, and satisfies the highest intellects at the same time. My object in writing this is to indicate that the interpretation of life is not so difficult and abstruse as the professor would make it appear. There are other points, but your space is limited. I do not agree with the inference drawn from the decapitated frog experiment, which, by the way, is scarcely a "modern instance." Substantially the same experiment was described by Maudsley over 50 years ago. I should like to know if Professor Robertson holds that man has a substantial, spiritual soul, endowed with intellect and free-will. If he does not, then his lectures attack the very basis on which Christianity rests, and this is a fact that should be recognised. Some of my parishioners, young students at the University, may have to attend his lectures, so the matter is of vital interest to them and to me. If he does believe in the human soul as indicated, why does he not say so plainly when he professes to give the public an authoritative interpretation of life? I do not dispute the professor's right to his own view, but, under the circumstances, I feel that we are entitled to know exactly what they are on this fundamental point raised by himself.

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THE INTERPRETATION OF LIFE.

From "A. L."—The ideal basis of Christianity in recent years has to me seemed to mean unselfishness. "In another's happiness you shall find your own." Does not this lesson the stress upon the importance of the individual soul, whether it be "material," as most of the Early Christian Fathers taught, or "substantial and yet spiritual"—terms which smack (to me) of the occult—if not contradictory. Father Denny affirms that he can by experience and reason alone prove the existence of the individual soul, spiritual and with rational intellect, memory, and free-will. I courteously invite that proof, as something I shall be devoutly glad to accept, if I possibly can do so. Hitherto the difficulty with myself is this:—Assuming an anthropomorphic God (as we, conceited creatures, are almost driven to do), and, further, that He is omniscient, then the future lies open to Him as a scroll. How, then, can there be free-will? Also, to hold that He does not so know smacks of impiety, for it almost makes some of His powers less than our own.

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THE INTERPRETATION OF LIFE.

From "CITIZEN":—The contest between those who love truth better than dogma and those who place dogma before truth will probably continue as long as there are dogmatics, but when the latter descend to covert threats they show how weak is their case. The Rev. R. P. Denny demands that Professor Brailford Robertson shall state his belief in a "substantial, spiritual soul," and if he does not make a declaration satisfactory to the rev. gentleman there is an implied threat that students will be withdrawn from his class; in fact, that "theological hatred" will be brought into play.