

ing the music and elocution pupils, between twenty and twenty-five students, and our building will be so full before winter is over that we will be obliged to use some of the lower rooms for study rooms.

Be not deceived; no human work is perfect, but our school contains the elements of success—it will succeed, and the boomerangs of these little Bushmen will only return and wound their little mental legs.

An Open Letter.

Silverton, Oregon, }
Oct. 10, 1898 After Christ. }

DEAR CHRISTIAN:—

You said in yours of the 1st inst. that you do not believe in witches, and you ridiculed the idea, but do you not know that the unholy book you call the holy bible is the only one in use in civilized countries that teaches that there are such beings, and also commands that people shall not suffer a witch to live. Think of the terrible mental and physical suffering that this one unholy statement from your dream book of witches and ghosts has caused.

You say you believe in angels. Well, perhaps the belief in angels does less harm than the belief in witches, but it does great harm, nevertheless. It is a great, black lie. There are no such things as angels, and besides the great harm that all such superstitious ideas do, it has the tendency of keeping people from investigating the real causes of things.

You believe that angels have wings. Now think hard for a few minutes. If they have wings they must be attached to a body and this body must be in the shape of a human being, for of course it would be absurd to think of them attached to nothing, or to any other than a human body—such as a dog, or a cat, or a monkey. This body must be dressed or undressed, and either way you take it it is very absurd; an angel (other than a purely human one without wings) in pants, bloomers or petticoats is enough to drive an artist wild, and one without any clothing is enough to shock even a methodist preacher.

Then think of the wings. Are they attached to the body with a ball-and-socket joint? Have the wings the humerus, the ulna, the radius and phalanges the same as a bird's wing? Have they veins, and would they bleed if punctured? Have these wings feathers, or are they like bats' wings? I think I hear you say, "I don't know". No, you do not know, because there is no such animal in existence, except in the minds of the ignorant. Yes, ignorant. You may be informed on some subjects, but if you believe in angels you are as ignorant of the truth as that old Irish Catholic lady we met over on the coast who still believes in witches and ghosts.

It is not your fault, but now your attention has been called to it you will act wisely to drive all the spooks out of your mind and be free. We are your friends and will help you all we can, and when you are free, we want you to help us drive all the witches and angels and ghosts from the minds of men and women and innocent children. Science is calling. It says, "Come, learn of me". It will teach you to say, "Depart from me, ye accursed of our fathers, into everlasting darkness to a place prepared by Secularism for the devil and his angels."

Good bye. We hope you will take no offense at what we have said, for it is our honest opinion.

Yours for Progress,
SECULAR JOHN,
THE DEVIL-HATER.

Heredity.

Selected and revised for the Torch of Reason.

"A man finds room in the few square inches of his face for all the traits of his ancestors."—Emerson.

"Every birth is a hygienic regeneration. The constitutional defects which degenerate parents transmit to their offspring are modified by the bequest of an older world."—Oswald.

"Ye cannot gather grapes from thorns nor figs from thistles," said a wise and observant man long ago. A correct interpretation of nature will prove that like begets like. We should have as great a variety of fruits as we have of human beings if we as constantly grafted new scions upon young trees that were as diverse in character as the men and women who intermarry. The law of inherited quality and character is perhaps the most difficult and complex part of propagation to investigate and prove. Stock-breeding on scientific principles, as it has been and is now being practiced on an extended and intelligent scale, will go far toward enlightening us as to the methods employed and the laws observed in improving the various races of animals which are under cultivation.

These same laws put in operation will produce similar results in mankind, for man is an animal not many degrees removed from the next lower mammal; and when humanity is sufficiently developed in wisdom, justice, and true religion, we shall be able to improve the race upon scientific principles, and create higher types of men and women on a basis which shall bring forth more perfect specimens, and more satisfactory, than are now produced under the instinctive method, which is the only one employed by man and animals, except in those cases where men use their reason in the selection of animals for the purpose of improving them by a judicious mingling of forms and faculties.

The inherited nature of man is a

more potent factor in his life than all the education he can possibly receive. If an individual is born of a long line of ancestors who were moral and intelligent on both sides, the probabilities are that he will partake of their nature. If a child is born of a race who have lived by lying and thieving, the chances are that he will lie and steal with facility and ingenuity. Parents often wonder why their children are like neither of them, thinking that all children must resemble one or the other of their parents. This ignorance is a proof of how little they have thought on the reproduction of the race, and shows also that they do not understand the simple law or principle in connection therewith. While a man will make efforts to trace the pedigree of a horse which he is about to purchase, and insist that it shall be free from vices and bad blood, he will at the same time take a woman in marriage without even inquiring whether her parents or grandparents were insane, scrofulous, epileptic, consumptive or idiotic. If the results of his marriage should prove disastrous, and a family of foolish, scrofulous or vicious make their appearance, he will, if he be a religious man, attribute this dire calamity to the will of his god, and state that for a "wise and inscrutable purpose" he has been pleased to visit him with this affliction, never for a moment endeavoring to trace these effects to their cause. Not so would this same man reason if the horse turned out contrary to expectations. He would accuse the dealer of dishonesty, and would know that the pedigree of the horse was not represented, and that its parentage was vicious and of bad blood. So blinded by superstition and ignorance are many men that they cannot understand the laws of scientific breeding in regard to the rearing of children, yet are willing to admit their influence in the breeding of cattle.

Ignorance and selfishness are constantly reproducing their own types, and to that extent do these two traits enter into marriage that I am surprised at the number of decent people there are in existence. Ignorance is in some sort an excuse, but in these days of general scientific knowledge some individuals are responsible for the miserable failures in the form of children which one finds in every community. Selfishness must be the ruling motive, since men knowingly perpetuate vicious and sickly types, simply to gratify themselves in the possession of a certain woman, or for mercenary motives. I am informed that a certain honorable senator of one of our western states had born to him several children by an insane wife after she had been pronounced incurable. I fail to see the will of a god in such

conduct. It is a defiance of nature's laws. It is an outrage upon the innocent victims of man's selfishness, and on a community, which, if it were sufficiently imbued with a knowledge of natural law, ordinary kindness, or proper sense of justice, would make laws preventing improper types from perpetuating their abnormal organisms, thus protecting the state from expense in building hospitals, jails and court-houses, which have to be used in a large measure for the care of the moral monstrosities born of such abnormal parentage. Instead of making reproduction a subject of scientific investigation and preparation, it is left to instinctive action, as with the beasts of the field, or, worse still, to the abnormal operation of the physically depraved organisms with which society abounds. An enlightened and conscientious person would endeavor to select for a companion one whose qualities of mind and body (in combination with his own) would assist in the elevation and perfection of the race, thus obviating the necessity of maintaining the vast armies of professional tinkers which abound in every community. Is a child born diseased in his physical nature?—straightway a medical tinker is hired to endeavor to patch up the defect. Is one born mentally weak?—he is given in charge of a teacher of imbeciles. Is he born mentally unbalanced?—then a theological tinker is called upon to try to remedy by "regeneration" the "sins of the fathers which are visited upon the children to the third and fourth generations".

Such a state of depravity ought not in the present general diffusion of knowledge to exist. Society as now constructed is on the most expensive and self-destructive plan that it is possible to conceive, because cultivated and inherited selfishness is the basis of it; and this trait is fostered and increased by the vicious public opinion which teaches virtually that a man is better in proportion to the amount of money he can get, and this leads men and women to marry for money without regard to their fitness for parentage. It leads also to dense ignorance; for, all the powers of mind and body being bent to acquisition, the mind is drawn away from the study of the natural sciences, and men and women are hence very ignorant of themselves and of the laws which govern their being. This knowledge is the very first step toward a righteous life, for no one can do right while ignorant of the laws of mind and body, and of those other matters which influence greatly mental and physical well-being. The majority of people are far more ignorant of their own physiques than they are of the nature and laws of commerce or of fashionable amusements.