

Individualists, Socialists and Spiritualists All Afloat.

Instead of going into the mystery business, as is generally supposed, Nature seems ready to open up everything to those who court her lovingly. Did you think, when reading the last three numbers of the Torch, that there was anything dark, confused or mysterious in Dr. Topinard's explanation of the origin, nature and co-operation of life cells, and their gradual working out into ganglia co-ordinated under central ganglia whose action is the Ego or soul?

Well, Professor Haeckel has found Nature explaining and unfolding this whole process as clear as daylight in the loosely organized colonial Medusa (sea nettles). The interplay of the individual cells and ganglia in an organism was never more beautifully illustrated. The individualist and socialist cells are seen to represent and to perform functions quite indispensable to each other. Whether they will or no, they are parts of one integrative whole; and they learn to help each other, though both are "all at sea" and do it unconsciously.

Then Dr. Carus takes up the story in his "Soul of Man" (published by the Open Court Publishing Co., Chicago, price \$2), pp. 238-248, and shows us how Nature explains easily the often so-called "spiritual phenomena of consciousness". When the actions of these unconscious or semi-conscious ganglia are brought into communication with the central or ego-ganglia, often unexpectedly, we did not know till Science told us, whence they came. "They haunt us like spirits from the distant beyond." Instead of "I think," we have to say "it thinks", "it comes to me". But that "it", after all, is found to be a part of ourselves, of our own nerve processes flashing into consciousness. We see all this in the nerve processes of the said Medusa, which are thus shown to be a floating, living lot of individualists, socialists and spiritualists in embryo, working out and expanded by Nature to enable us to see ourselves as we really are.

For what are the higher animals, and even man himself, but similar tissues, organs, ganglia and functions, rearranged and folded by, and in order to meet, the new conditions of a land life? "They find their parallels in the well known and common facts of mental activity—in facts that every one can verify in his own experience,"—parallels which throw a flood of light upon all of the problems and "mysteries" of so-called abnormal soul-life, as well as the vital processes of the lower animal life!

But this is not all, for the sciences of Biology and Sociology thus become commentaries upon, and the best means of illustrating and explaining each other. In fact, neither of them can be understood without the other. No sociologist knows what he is about until he has mastered Hobbs' Leviathan and

Herbert Spencer's Essay on the resemblances of physiological and social growths and processes. When those resemblances are thought of, after reading this wondrous history of the Medusa, we can only say, "De te fabula narratur",—Of man this story is told,—of man not only as an individual, but as a society, the "GRAND MAN". The grand social functions of co-operation and progress are seen to be impossible without INDIVIDUAL activity under SOCIAL purposes, inspiration and guidance; in which the "unconscious cerebrations" of the more independent ganglia (the "voices", etc., from the "spirit world", as the unscientific spiritualist calls them) are not only heard, but duly regarded.

Science, therefore, by the Medusa plainly tells these wrangling and contending ganglionic organs, functions and partisans, when they evolve ashore, as individualists, socialists and spiritualists, to give up their free fight, and to cheerfully cultivate a co-operation of "integrative differentials" for the benefit of themselves and "the rest of mankind". Why not?

The Medusa may well stand for the "plant," the great teacher, in Goethe's famous saying:

"The greatest, the highest
Wouldst thou seek?
"The Medusa" can teach it thee;
What she unconsciously is,
Consciously be thou,
That is all!"

"Suchst Du das Höchste, das Grösste?
Die Pflanze kann es Dich lehren;
Was sie willenlos ist,
Sei du es wollend,
Das ist's."

T. B. W.

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