

tion, first by disappointment and then in exultation at the thought that the actualities of science are higher, nobler, and better than the dreams of superstition, even if they were possible, and thus it appears that science comes to fulfil, not to destroy.

While the belief in, and the practice of, magic are not entirely absent in the civilization of Israel, we find that the leaders of orthodox thought had set their face against it, at least as it appeared in its crudest form, and went so far as to persecute sorcerers with fire and sword.

We read in the Bible that when the Lord "multiplied his signs" in Egypt, he sent Moses and Aaron to Pharaoh to turn their rods into serpents, that the Egyptian magicians vied with them in the performance, but that Aaron's rod swallowed up their rods, demonstrating thus Aaron's superiority. It is an interesting fact that the snake charmers of Egypt perform today a similar feat, which consists in paralyzing a snake so as to render it motionless. The snake then looks like a stick but is not rigid.

Exorcism is first replaced by prayer, and prayer together with other religious exercises (such as fasts, ecstasies, trances, visions, asceticism, with its various modes of self-mortification) are practiced for the purpose of attaining supernatural powers. A higher religion is not attained until the sphere of religion is discovered in practical morality and prayer is changed into vows. Then supplications of the deity to attain one's will are surrendered for the moral endeavor of self-control, disciplining the will to comply with the behests of the moral ought.

How tenacious the idea is that religion is and must be magic, appears from the fact that even Christianity shows traces of it. In fact, the early Christians (who, we must remember, recruited their ranks from the lowly in life) looked upon Christ as a kind of magician, and all his older pictures show him with a magician's wand in his hand. The resurrection of Lazarus, the change of water into wine, the miracle of the loaves and fishes, are according to the notions of those centuries performed after the fashion of sorcerers, and the main thing in early Christianity is Christ's alleged claim to the power of working miracles. The last injunction which Jesus gives to his disciples according to St. Mark (xvi., 15-18) is this:

"Go ye into all the world, and preach the Gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptised shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned. And these signs shall follow them that believe; in my name shall they cast out devils; they shall speak with new tongues; they shall take

up serpents; and if they drink any deadly thing it shall not hurt them; they shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover."

It is apparent that Christianity in the days when this was written bore a strong resemblance to what is now called "Christian Science," faith cure, or mental healing; for the author of the above-quoted passage, the importance of which in the New Testament canon cannot be underrated, implies that any Christianity in which "these signs" are absent must be regarded as spurious.

Traces of the religion of magic are still prevalent today, and it will take much patient work before the last remnants of it are swept away. The notions of magic still hold in bondage the minds of the uneducated and half-educated, and even the leaders of progress feel themselves now and then hampered by ghosts and superstitions. Thus Goethe makes Faust say at the end of his career:

"Not yet have I my liberty made good:  
So long as I can't banish magic's fell  
creations,  
And totally unlearn the incantations.  
Stood I, O Nature, as a man in thee,  
Then were it worth one's while a man  
to be.  
And such was I ere I with the occult  
conversed,  
And ere so wickedly the world I cursed."

To be a man in nature and to fight one's way to liberty is a much more dignified position than to go lobbying to the courts of the celestials and to beg of them favors. At the beginning of the drama Faust had turned agnostic and declared that we cannot know anything worth knowing, saying:

"That which we do not know is dearly  
needed;  
And what we need we do not know."

And in another place:

"I see that nothing can be known."

But now Faust is converted to science again, having found out that the study of nature is not a useless rummage in empty words. However, in the first and second decade of the nineteenth century the rationalism of the eighteenth waned, not to make room for a higher rationalism, but to suffer the old bugbears of ghosts and hobgoblins to reappear in a reactionary movement. Progress does not pursue a straight line, but moves in spirals or epicycles. Periods of daylight are followed by nights of superstition. Faust (expressing here Goethe's own ideas) continues:

"Now fills the air so many a haunting  
shape,  
That no one knows how best he may  
escape.  
What though the day with rational  
splendor beams,  
The night entangles us in webs of dreams.  
By superstition constantly ensnared,  
It spooks, gives warnings, is declared.  
Intimidated thus we stand alone.  
The portal jars, yet entrance is there  
none."

The aim of man is his liberty and independence. As soon as we understand that there are not occult powers or spooks that must be con-

ciliated by supplications and appeased, but that we stand in nature from which we have grown in constant interaction between our own aspirations and the natural forces regulated by law, we shall have confidence in our own faculties, which can be increased by investigation and a proper comprehension of conditions, and we shall no longer look beyond but around. Faust says:

"A fool who to the Beyond his eyes  
directeth  
And over the clouds a place of peers  
detecteth.  
Firm must man stand and look around  
him well,  
The world means something to the cap-  
able."

This manhood of man, to be gained by science through the conquest of all magic, is the ideal which the present age is striving to attain, and the ideal has plainly been recognized by leaders of human progress. The time has come for us "to put away childish things," and to relinquish the beliefs and practices of the medicine man.

But while magic as superstition and as fraud is doomed, magic as an art will not die. Science will take hold of it and permeate it with its own spirit changing it into scientific magic which is destitute of all mysticism, occultism, and superstition, and comes to us as a witty play for recreation and diversion.

It is an extraordinary help to a man to be acquainted with the tricks of prestidigitators, and we advise parents not to neglect this phase in the education of their children. The present age is laying the basis of a scientific world-conception, and it is perhaps not without good reasons that it has produced quite a literature on the subject of modern magic.

The old magic still continues to haunt the minds of the uncultured, and will resist all exposes and explanations, until it is replaced by modern magic. For this reason we believe that the spread of modern magic and its proper comprehension are an important sign of progress, and in this sense the feats of our Kellars and Hermanns are a work of religious significance. They are instrumental in dispelling the fogs of superstition by exhibiting to the public the astonishing but natural miracles of the art of legerdemain; and while they amuse and entertain they fortify the people in their conviction of the reliability of science.—[The Open Court.

A funny prosecution is reported from Belgrade. The editor of the local paper has been found guilty of insulting the ancient greek gods by satirizing Jove, Venus and Mercury in a poem. His sentence is 5 days' imprisonment. We did not think there was so much life left in those old deities. But you can never be sure of the species. It is a case in which the saying, "Let sleeping dogs lie", seems very applicable.—[Freethinker.

## Travels.

BY PEARL W. GEER.

Did I leave myself in Washington last time? Yes, I remember I was just about to describe my delightful visit at the home of Major Pechin, and I didn't have paper enough to do it justice. Now I have plenty of paper, but words fail me. Mr. and Mrs. Pechin, the two sons and one daughter, would make any home happy. I had the pleasure of staying one night at their home. Fifteen minutes on the car and a walk of equal duration, out through the suburbs, brought me to the place I visited last year, and I found the family seated on the front porch, enjoying the cool air that comes with twilight. I hadn't been there long before we were enjoying the cool ice-cream that comes with summer. Then we talked until time to retire, and of course, as usual, conversation postponed the bedtime. I don't know how the rest felt, but I was well paid for all the sleep I lost. In the morning I was sorry to leave for the city to fill other appointments.

I had a very pleasant visit with Miss White at her Stanton-Square home, and found her to be very much interested in Constructive or Positive Liberalism, and of course news of the work being done at Silverton was welcome. On short acquaintance I learned to admire Miss White for her common sense and goodness, and I know enough of human nature to know that one's opinion would not be changed by longer acquaintance.

The scientific men of Washington are nearly all Liberals and thoroughly educated in Liberalism. Maj. Powell, in the Bureau of Ethnology, and Carroll D. Wright, Labor Commissioner were both delighted to learn the particulars of the Liberal University, and promised our library the benefit of the publications from their departments. Dr. Tyndall, in the Health Department, is also one of the Torch of Reason family and very deeply interested in our work. I am very sorry I could not accept the kind invitation to visit at his home. It came too late.

Then there's Prof. Lester F. Ward, at the National Museum. If I mentioned him in my last letter, of which I am not sure, it doesn't matter, as he will stand two mentionings. I found him in his accustomed place and his usual good humor, ready to talk over matters philosophical and scientific and regarding our friend Wakeman and his work in Silverton. Miss Schmitt is in the same department with Prof. Ward. She used to be a Catholic, but her study of science and her association with Prof. Ward have caused her to lose all her superstition and she is now thoroughly Liberal. She is interested in petri-