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The Origin of Life.

The latest scientific discussion has arisen in England over the old question of the origin of life. It is another phase of the war that raged a few years ago concerning spontaneous generation.

The argument was started by Dr. Edward Schaefer of the University of Edinburgh in his presidential address before the British association. Dr. Schaefer adduced no new facts, but gave it as his opinion that so called inanimate crystals multiply in ways similar to those followed by the lower forms of living beings and that the production of living cells may be due to chemical reactions. This is nothing new, as the assertion that crystals multiply has been made before. Likewise other scientists have given as their personal opinion that cells may be produced chemically. However, no scientist ever has produced a living cell chemically, and neither has Dr. Schaefer. So the whole question remains, as before, one of speculation.

The chief fact referred to by the president of the British association is the now famous artificial fertilization of sea urchins' eggs by Professor Jacques Loeb. It will be recalled by most readers that Dr. Loeb claimed to have fertilized the eggs by adding salt solutions to sea water, a not very conclusive experiment at best.

The address of Dr. Schaefer brought a sharp reply from Professor Alfred Russel Wallace, who shares with Charles Darwin the credit for discovering the law of evolution. Professor Wallace says that the views promulgated by Dr. Schaefer are only personal and therefore have no value from a scientific standpoint, and he adds as his own opinion that no progress will ever be made toward discovering the origin of life along the materialistic lines thus laid down.

No scientist has ever proved that there is such a thing as spontaneous generation. Even granting that Dr. Loeb did artificially fertilize eggs, no scientist has ever produced the germ of an egg or generated life from inanimate material. Neither has any scientist shown that there is the least connection between the multiplication of crystals, if it be established that there is such multiplication, and the reproduction of living beings. The gulf between animate and inanimate matter is yet unbridged.

What is wanted in this sort of discussion is fact and not opinion; but, if we must have opinion, then give us Herbert Spencer's idea of the "great first cause." J. A. EDGERTON.

The Ownership of Monticello.

Mount Vernon, the home of Washington, Andrew Jackson's Hermitage and Lincoln's home in Springfield, also his birthplace, are either owned by the public or by patriotic societies that hold them open to the public. A movement is now on foot to have the government acquire Thomas Jefferson's home at Monticello. During the last session of congress the senate passed a resolution favoring the project, which was acted on favorably by the rules committee of the house and is to come up the first week in December.

The active spirit behind this movement is Mrs. Martin W. Littleton, wife of the congressman from Colonel Roosevelt's district on Long Island. Mrs. Littleton was aroused to take up the matter by a visit to Monticello when she was subjected to the rule that allows visitors only twenty minutes in the grounds unless they have a card from Mr. Levy, the owner. The rule also forbids such visitors from entering the house at all, even though they may have crossed the continent to see the home of the "Sage of Monticello."

There is a popular idea in some sections that Jefferson M. Levy, the present owner of the estate, is a grandson of the third president. This is a mistake. Mr. Levy is in no way related to Thomas Jefferson. The manner of his coming into possession of the estate need not be entered into here. In fact, those favoring the public ownership of the Jefferson home hope that Mr. Levy himself will be patriotic enough to sell it to the government so that it may become a perpetual shrine for Mr. Jefferson's admirers. There is little doubt that the house will pass the resolution and that in a few years Monticello will be restored to the state in which Jefferson left it and will be thrown open to the public.

It was recently reported that G. Bernard Shaw was in New York Incog, there being so many egotists and bugs in New York that his presence was not noticed.

Speaking of "filthy lucre," how about the thousands of dollars that have been traced to the bank accounts of New York's police grafters?

Prehistoric flat has been found in New Mexico, but the explorers failed to say whether it contained a janitor.

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W. O. W.

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H. E. Boak, Secretary

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Phil Pearson, Secretary W. E. Craine, W. M.

Eastern Star

OCCIDENTAL CHAPTER, No. 45, O. E. S., meets Saturday evening before and after stated communication of Masonic Lodge Visiting members cordially invited to attend.
Louise M. Boyle, W. M. Merta Mehl, Secretary.

I. O. O. F.

BANDON LODGE, No. 133, I. O. O. F. meets every Wednesday evening. Visiting brothers in good standing cordially invited.
A. Knopp, N. G. Harry Armstrong, Sec.

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