

DIVERGING THEORIES OF LIFE

Question of Chance and Evolution Apparently Will Long Be Matter of Discussion.

Writing on the work of Jacques Loeb, the famous exponent of the mechanical theory of life, in Harper's Magazine, Paul H. De Kruif said: "It is constantly remarked by lay people of intelligence and by many biologists that the apparently wonderful way in which animals are adapted to their environment is the best evidence of some purpose and design in nature. To Loeb, with his detached vision and his freedom from anthropomorphism, it is just as conceivable that nature is accidental and a pure matter of chance. It is possible that those survive who have the equipment—they did not acquire the equipment under the influence of environment. . . . It is possible for forms with moderate disharmonies to survive, those with gross disharmonies do not exist, and we are not reminded of their possible existence." Nature, the master points out, is enormously wasteful. There are, for instance, a hundred million possible crosses of marine bony fish. Of these only ten thousand, or one hundredth of 1 per cent, actually exist. Every one will admit that this fact is a much better argument for planlessness than for design. For out of an almost infinite number of combinations it would be strange if chance did not bring about the existence of a small number of forms capable of survival.

NATION'S DEBT TO FRANKLIN

Outstanding Figure of the Revolution Should Never Be Forgotten by Any American.

If a hundred professors of American history were asked what man, next to Washington, did most to launch the American republic as an independent, self-moving nation, 99 of the answers would name Benjamin Franklin. But it is to be feared that the average student of history does not appreciate so well what this country owes to the memory of the author, statesman and philosopher who was born in Boston 217 years ago.

For such, the best course is not to plunge into historical discussion, but to get acquainted with Franklin, the man. The task, fortunately, is at once easy and delightful. His autobiography, with its shrewd wisdom, incisive wit, kindly humor and amazing frankness and insight, is one of the most readable books in the English language. Let the doubter read that, and a proper appraisal of Franklin is almost certain to follow. We do not underrate our friends, and there is something wrong with the person who does not count Franklin a friend after perusing that memoir.—Chicago Journal.

Oldtime Beauty Hints.

Some strange recipes for beauty are given by oldtime writers. "The eyes of pike powdered are wonderful in increasing beauty," naively suggests one author. In the South of England even today the eating of herrings' brains is thought to improve the appearance. The fat of the grayling mixed with honey and exposed for a day or two to the sun made a fine preparation for cleaning the skin. The fat of the lamprey, though this creature is otherwise considered unlucky, was efficacious in removing smallpox scars. Wolverine grease would cure all skin troubles. The Chinese have great faith in the medicinal properties of water in which cockles have been boiled and it is their favorite remedy for smallpox. One of the strangest remedies is attributed to the monks of the Tenth century who are said to have prescribed ashes of burnt flies for the complexion.

Ancient Citadel of Athens.

The Acropolis of Athens was the ancient citadel of Athens, sometimes called Cecropia, from its reputed founder, the mythical Cecrops. It was built upon a rock 500 feet above the Attic plain. This eminence was 1,150 feet in length from east to west and 500 feet in width from north to south, and was accessible on the west side only, through the Propylaea or "Entrances" built by Pericles. Upon its summit were the world famous Parthenon, sacred to Minerva, the Temple of Wingless Victory, the Erechtheum, and other structures.

Between the Parthenon and the Erechtheum stood the colossal figure of Minerva, the protectress of the city, 70 feet in height.

May Fast for Months.

Headed lizards live in dry places, hidden by day and become active in the evening, says the Detroit News. They lie asleep during the hottest part of the year. They eat frogs, worms, centipedes, ants and other insects, as well as the eggs of frogs, birds and other lizards.

In good times the extra nourishment is stored up as fat in the tail. When food is scarce this fat can be absorbed and carried to the hungry cells through the blood, and thus the gila monster may go without other food for several months.

The "Watchman" gives all the news while it is news.

GRANDEUR HARD TO PORTRAY

Visitor Asserts View From Summit of Andes Is Such as Almost to Defy Description.

The view from the summit is magnificent in whichever direction one turns, but it is rather more interesting and varied toward the Pacific. That ocean is not over a hundred miles in a straight line from the crest of the divide, but all sight of it is cut off by the intervening summits. The scenery in this, or any other part of the Andes, is on too vast and imposing a scale for a man to come to any adequate comprehension of it. Still more hopeless is the possibility of conveying any effective impression of it to others. You may think you can describe it until you try; then you find that you are but stringing meaningless adjectives and shopworn similes together.

At first you are inclined to be disappointed at your impotency; then you begin to feel small and ashamed that you should have presumed to attempt such a thing; finally, like a man covering up traces of guilt, you hasten to tear up and burn what you have written before some one comes and finds what you have been doing. There are some men who can draw better than others word-pictures of these great manifestations of nature, just as some men can paint better pictures on canvas than can others; but the best descriptions are only sounding brass and tinkling cymbal imitations of the unspeakable grandeur of the originals. Personally I throw up my hands and call myself off at the outset.—Lewis R. Freeman in the Cornhill Magazine.

PUTS NEW LIGHT ON HISTORY

Discovery in Sweden Proves That Arts of Civilization Are Older Than Has Been Thought.

A cloak of woolen cloth, believed to be 3,000 years old, has been found in a peat bog in Sweden. The slightly acid water of the peat formation acted as a preservative.

This is the oldest complete garment ever found in Europe, though the British museum has several bits of cloth that are considered still older. But 3,000 years is a fairly respectable age. When that cloth was woven, Homer's father or grandfather was a boy, playing in the streets of some Greek town. The Israelitish monarchy was not yet thought of—Saul, its first king, probably was not yet born. Egypt, rich but defenseless, was verging to decay; but the founding of Rome lay farther in the future than the landing of the Pilgrims now lies in the past. Through most of Europe, bronze, rather than iron, was the chosen metal.

Yet even in that mistily distant time, the northern barbarians either wore woolen cloaks for themselves or carried on trade enough to buy them from more advanced peoples.

A good many of the arts of civilization date farther back than our grandfathers dreamed, and were more widely diffused, too.

Transient Value.

Purpose-novels, like advertisements, belong in the temporary department. As certain goods and wares go out of date, and the often eloquent announcements that commended them suddenly disappear; even so the "burning questions" of the hour and age burn out, and the solutions of them presented in the form of fiction fall down with the other ashes. They have served their purpose, well or ill, and their transient importance is ended. What endures, if anything, is the human story vividly told, the human characters graphically depicted. These have a permanent value. These belong to literature. Here I would place "Adam Bede" and "Silas Marner" and "The Mill on the Floss" and "Middlemarch," because they deal with problems which never grow old; but not "Robert Elsmere," because it deals chiefly with a defunct controversy in Biblical criticism.—Henry Van Dyke, in "Companionable Books."

Elevator Operator Scores.

Elevator service at a Brooklyn gymnasium largely patronized by fat business men is not always what the members think it should be. On the way to their volley ball games or setting-up exercises they frequently have to wait several minutes before the overworked operator descends with the "lift" to carry them to the gymnasium floor.

The elevator operator thinks much of his patrons' criticism is uncalled for. So when he was berated the other day for being tardy in answering the lobby signals he told one of the grumblers:

"The gymnasium is on the third floor. You come here for exercise. Instead of waiting for the elevator why don't you walk up?"

Natural Mouse Trap.

In the East Indies there grows a plant that eats mice! This plant has a very strong sweet odor which attracts mice and moles to it. The little animals, attracted by the strong scent, run up the stalk of the plant right into the flower, from which there is no escape, as they are caught in a sticky substance, and are kept from backing out by down-pointing bristles which close around their victim.

Digestive juices, like those found in the stomachs of animals, exude and the rodent is slowly consumed. It is rumored that this flesh-eating plant may be put to use as a mouse trap, as it has an irresistible attraction for rodents.

OLD SONGS BRING MEMORIES

Forgotten Tunes Often Revive Thoughts of Yesterday That Are Reminiscent of Happiness.

Songs come and go—have their little moments of popularity and are then relegated to the dim recesses of memory. Occasionally one pops up its head as it were from the grave, and today it is not unusual to hear a medley of old songs played or sung to much applause in some cabaret. They bring their memories, these old songs—moonlit nights and palm shaded corners in dance rooms, an old romance.

The other night the sentimental man was entertaining a friend. He put on a record, an old song from "Maritana."

"Ah," he said, "what memories that brings back to me! Old days, old friends—"

His companion granted: "All I associate with that song," he said pleasantly, "is the bathroom and a dull razor. Always when I'm not getting a decent shave I somehow break into: 'The Heart Bowled Down.' It's the best bathroom song I know."

The sentimental one grinned sheepishly. "Come to think of it," he agreed "the first time I ever heard it was when I was a boy, and my father in the next room warbled it, too. I—I," and here he blushed, "I never heard the opera in my life."—New York Sun.

LEAVES FICTION FAR BEHIND

Action of Vigo Authorities in Dealing With Treasure Ships Is Almost Beyond Belief.

Perhaps the largest single treasure trove lies at the bottom of Vigo bay on the coast of Spain. Here 17 bullock carriers were sunk by the British and Dutch navies in the latter part of the Seventeenth century and scattered over the ocean's floor gold and silver estimated at \$100,000,000. So far it is all there.

The fleet of bullock carriers, conveyed by a slightly larger fleet of men of war, set out from the coast of Mexico to carry the treasure to the coffer of Spain and sought refuge in Vigo bay from the approach of the larger British and Dutch fleets. There they planned to unload the treasure.

But the customs officers had no instructions to receive it. They must communicate with their superiors. The admiral of the fleet argued, but the port officials were adamant. And while they debated the enemy ships sailed into the bay and settled the matter for all time by sinking the fleet.

And what has fiction half so strange as that?

How to Torture Your Wife.

A man whose wife was visiting relatives in another state was getting lonesome, but couldn't get her to cut short her visit and return home. He wrote her a letter almost every day, pleading he was sick, that he couldn't get any good food. She wouldn't budge. Then he had an inspiration, a hunch some would call it, says Capper's Weekly. Before the wife left home she had arranged to have two rooms papered, and had ordered the paper, but was unable to get a workman at the time she had to leave for the visit. The paper came while she was gone. Friend Husband wrote a long letter to his wife, telling her the paperhanger had arrived, but that he (the husband) didn't remember which paper was to go on which room. He had told the paperhanger to go ahead, however, to use such-and-such a paper (naming the dining room paper), on the front room, and the other paper (the front room paper), on the dining room. The missus reached home on the next train.

Seller Takes No Chances.

A guest at an up-state hotel recently, making a purchase at the cigar stand, noticed that the clerk before ringing up the cash register laid the bill on the keys of the machine, says the New York Sun. Then he pressed the correct button, made the change, handed it to the customer, and only then placed the bill in the proper compartment of the open drawer.

"I did it to avoid disputes and mistakes," he said. "As long as the money is still lying on top of the keys there's no chance of my giving the customer short change by mistake nor of his disputing the change he receives and perhaps putting one over on me."

Cliff-Dwellers Inhabit Plains.

Most of the mysterious cliff-dwellers of Arizona lived on the level ground, as we do, and not like swallows in a cliff. Dr. Harold Sellers Colton told the American Society of Ecologists in Boston recently. Four kinds of pottery, indicating four kinds of cliff-dwellers, he said, have been found in the region of the San Francisco mountains.

Whether these neighboring races lived at the same time and yet made such different pottery, or whether the four kinds of pottery represent different periods of time, is yet to be discovered. This pottery is apparently distributed in the horizontal plane, each kind of pottery having its particular region.

Thoughts During Danger.

For ages persons who have recovered from great dangers have claimed that in a second all their lives flashed before them. Scientists now prove that these persons have not told the truth. Truthful persons who have been in great danger say that their thoughts are entirely on the danger and their minds have no chance to flash unless on things before their eyes.

MEN IN CONFEDERATE ARMY

Destruction of Records Has Made It Impossible to Ascertain Definitely the Exact Number.

The estimate of 2,200,000 as the total of the Confederate army for the four years of the war does not seem excessive or unreasonable as representing the military strength of the 5,000,000 white population of the Confederate states, added by the 2,000,000 population of the sympathizing border states, and with an industrial army of 3,000,000 slaves. A. B. Casselman writes in Current History Magazine. The Southern estimate, or "legend," as it has been aptly termed, of 600,000, has always seemed disproportionate. This estimate is of uncertain origin, and is not derived from any official source. It did not originate during the war, but after the war had ended, when the Confederates had lost their records and were without official data on which to support their assertions. No official summary purporting to show the total number can be found in the official records. The captured rolls are incomplete and fragmentary. As an illustration, it has been ascertained that approximately 1,000 names are missing from the captured rolls of a single regiment, the Sixtieth North Carolina. Rev. Dr. McKim, an ex-Confederate officer and a writer on this subject, quotes a letter received by him from Col. Walter G. Taylor, General Lee's adjutant general, saying:

"I regret to have to say that I know of no reliable data in support of any precise number, and have always realized that it must ever be largely a matter of conjecture on our side."

In the absence of complete official records, the question still remains largely a matter of conjecture. Neither the Confederate idea of 600,000 nor any later estimate can be accepted as final or as even approximately accurate.

APPARENTLY QUITE IN ORDER

English Actor's Witty Introduction of Two New Acquaintances Placed Correctly.

Every book of reminiscences published nowadays which contains anything about the theater has at least one anecdote about the late Sir Herbert Tree. The author of "The Nineteen Hundreds," who writes under the pseudonym Reginald Anberon, recalls one of Sir Herbert's spontaneous flashes to carry on the tradition. Accompanied by Lady Tree, he had gone down to the Palace theater to rehearse a sketch. "As he wandered about the unfamiliar stage, feeling very bored and looking like a fish out of water, a couple of 'knockabout' comedians who had just finished their 'turn' approached him. 'Well met, Sir 'Erbe!' exclaimed the first one, slapping him heartily on the back. 'Glad to welcome you 'ere!' 'Oh, delighted!' murmured Tree, vaguely. 'This is my mate, 'Arry,' continued the other, beckoning to his partner. 'Pleased to meet you,' declared the second comedian, delivering an equally vigorous slap on Tree's shoulder. 'Welcome to the 'alls. The missus showing with you?' With a magnificent gesture, Tree signaled to his wife. 'Maud,' he said, 'allow me to introduce my new friends. Lady Tree—the Two Snacks!'"

Get Your Share of Fruit.

A great many persons regard fruit as a superfluity or a luxury; but, according to the New York state health commissioner, fruit should be part of our daily diet for several very good reasons. Many fruits contain certain salts of organic acids which have a stimulating effect upon the kidneys, and some others are decidedly laxative. Owing to their large content of water they are always cooling, and any digestive difficulties which may be encountered are generally due to eating too much or too fast, or eating unripe or overripe fruit. Bananas have a high food content and a low cost. Fruit eating is good exercise for the jaws and puts the teeth in good condition.

Early Wood Carving.

Wood carving was common in very early Egyptian sculpture. Some of the most realistic statues of the ancient empire were carved in wood, such as the so-called "Sheikh-el-beled" and his wife, and a number of others. Wood was a convenient ground for polychromatic decoration; that is, treating the carved figure with a thin coating of plaster upon which the artist has placed his colors. This was very popular among Egyptian artists.

In Greece wood carving probably was the earliest form of archaic sculpture. The late Greeks and Romans used it comparatively little, but among the most remarkable works of early Christian sculpture are the carved wooden doors of Santa Sabina, Rome.

Football Then and Now.

If you think that football is a rougher game now than it was in the past, read this paragraph written in 1582:

"As concerning football playing, it may be called rather a friendly fight than a play of recreation; a bloody, murdering practice than a fellyowly sport or pastime. For doth not every one lie in wait for his adversary, seeking to overthrow him and to pitch him on his nose, though it be upon hard stones, or what place soever it be he careth not, so be he have him down? And he that can serve the most in this fashion he is counted the only fellow, and who but he."—Boston Transcript.

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