

see in it, with Professor Tyndall, the "promise and potency of all terrestrial life," while a great biologist like Haeckel holds "that consciousness, like sensation and volition, like all other soul-activities, is a function of the organism, a mechanical activity of the cells; and, as such, is referable to chemical and physical processes." If, as evolution teaches, the connection and order of our ideas tends to become identical with the connection and order of things, it is evident that we must come to a mode of conceiving the universe radically inconsistent with the old theology. We may seek to retain something of the old belief by using its phrases emptied of all meaning, and in the Pantheism of the "God-intoxicated" Spinoza many persons have fancied a real reconciliation between theology and science could be effected, but the God of Spinoza is a pure being, and thus used the term "God" connotes none of those ethical ideas which attach to the personal God of popular theology. In this sense an orthodox critic has not unfairly said that with "Pantheism everything is God except God himself." Monism, soberly regarding the universe, entirely fails to see any sign of personality in it except as the outcome of a long and complex process of evolution culminating in man. Moreover, as Haeckel says, "the cruel and merciless struggle for existence which rages throughout living nature, and in the course of nature *must* rage, this unceasing and inexorable competition of all living creatures, is an incontestable fact"—a fact utterly incompatible with the existence of a benevolent deity, such as any scheme of modern supernaturalism must postulate before its dogmas can be either credible or credited. Belief in the supernatural, depending mainly upon sentiment and emotion, it may be safely affirmed that belief in the existence of a malevolent personal God will never arise among civilised mankind, and if personality is admitted it is to such a belief only that the facts of the universe point. In this respect at least, the most orthodox writers are in complete accord with the most pronounced Agnostics and Atheists of the present day. Newman's "Apologia" contains a more terrible indictment against nature for cruelty than do Mill's Essays on Religion, and Bishop Magee in his "Discourses" seems to gloat over the fact in the interests of Christianity "that there are no laws so merciless—so utterly unforgiving, as the laws of nature—aye, and so utterly regardless of the circumstance whether a man has transgressed ignorantly or purposely: he who transgresses ignorantly and he who transgresses wilfully is alike beaten with many stripes. The great machinery of the world will not arrest its revolutions, for the cry of a human creature who by a very innocent error, by the mistaken action of his free-thought, is being ground to pieces beneath them." In other words nature is essentially impersonal and immoral, not as it were incidentally, but in its innermost processes and methods by which sentience is gradually developed into consciousness, and is profoundly indifferent to the suffering caused by the inverse operation till the unconscious and non-sentient stage is again reached. That it is reached at last is perhaps the best that can be said in favour of nature's benevolence. As is the work so must be the author, and the complaisant optimism of the theologians is dashed to pieces against the hard facts of the universe. Regarding consciousness, with its enormous capacity for pain, and its limited capacity for pleasure, as the result of an extremely complex play of forces culminating in the still greater complexity of the social organism, it is easy to see how readily the mistake is made of attributing to the more general relations of things what exists only in very special relations. Such ethical ideas as benevolence, right, and justice, imply personal relations which have no meaning when applied to the impersonal. Existence, order in time and in place, causation or resemblance, may be truly asserted of any facts, but the more special the facts the more special must be the propositions we can make concerning them. To talk of impersonal nature as cruel or unjust is like speaking of an angry triangle or a wicked colour. To attribute personality to nature or to attribute nature to a personal cause without the strongest evidence, is to introduce needless moral

and intellectual difficulties, and to add a new horror to the universe which theology vainly endeavours to hide under vague phrases which appeal to the feelings but cannot blind the intellect. On the other hand, to know that we have only to deal with the fixed order of things and that in some respects we can "rule by obeying nature's powers," while in the life of humanity we hope to find that continual approach to an ideal perfection to which each of us may contribute materially and morally, is to accept a theory which agrees with facts and furnishes a motive for action. It is true that this motive is mainly altruistic, and so may seem to have but little force compared to the egoistic sentiments to which theology appeals, but hopes and fears which are purely personal react on character, and worldliness and "other worldliness," including in the term the craven worship of mere power not felt to be justly exercised, tends to produce a character in which human sympathy is deficient and intellectual perception is perverted. Regarding character and morality as products of the social factor, it does not seem probable that either can be improved by believing in a moral governor of the world who was either unable or unwilling to prevent his subjects from being wicked, or in a creator who punishes men for being what he has made them, and revenges rather than reforms, and all without proportion or justice. On the contrary, the proverb, "tell me the company you keep and I'll tell you what you are," applies to ideas as much as to persons. As are the gods so are the people. It is only those nations which have broken the chains of their primitive beliefs that are really progressive. Monism gives free scope to that moral and intellectual evolution which bases conduct and knowledge upon experience. Regarding nature and human nature as equally the subject of law, the outcome of inscrutable and impersonal power, mankind will learn to limit their hopes and fears by their experience, and cease to trouble themselves about problems which cannot even be intelligibly stated much less solved. The questions still asked about morality will be more easily answered because confined to their proper sphere—the special relations of the social organism to its environment, and of its parts to the whole. As Mr. John Morley eloquently says in his "Voltaire," it is "monstrous to suppose that because a man does not accept your synthesis, he is therefore a being without a positive creed or a coherent body of belief capable of guiding and inspiring conduct. There are new solutions for him, if the old are fallen dumb. If he no longer believes death to be a stroke from the sword of God's justice, but the leaden footfall of an inflexible law of matter, the humility of his awe is deepened, and the tenderness of his pity made holier, that creatures who can love so much should have their days so shut round with a wall of darkness. The purifying anguish of remorse will be stronger, not weaker, when he has trained himself to look upon every wrong in thought, every duty omitted from act, each infringement of the inner spiritual law which humanity is constantly perfecting for its own guidance and advantage, less as a breach of the decrees of an unseen tribunal, than as an ungrateful infection, weakening and corrupting the future of his brothers; and he will be less effectually raised from inmost prostration of soul by a doubtful subjective reconciliation, so meanly comfortable to his own individuality, than by hearing full in the ear the sound of the cry of humanity craving sleepless succour from her children. That swelling consciousness of height and freedom with which the old legends of an omnipotent divine majesty fill the breast, may still remain; for how shall the universe ever cease to be a sovereign wonder of overwhelming power and superhuman fixedness of law. And a man will be already in no mean paradise, if at the hour of sunset a good hope can fall upon him like harmonies of music, that the earth shall still be fair, and the happiness of every feeling creature still receive a constant augmentation, and each good cause yet find worthy defenders, when the memory of his own poor name and personality has long been blotted out of the brief recollection of men for ever.