

two years ago that he had thrown considerable light on the origin of life, were not quite so far-reaching as some people thought. The "Standard" says that Mr. W. A. Douglas Rudge has just published in the papers of the Royal Society the account of a series of most interesting experiments which he has made. Suspecting the cause to be purely chemical, Mr. Rudge subjected the gelatine to the action of the other metallic salts. Barium, which is, of course, a constant impurity in radium, gave the effect even better than radium itself. Though from the outset the majority of biologists refused to look on Mr. Burke's "radiobes" as being in any way connected with the origin of life, their refusal was based on purely biological considerations. They were quite unable to suggest any explanation of the phenomenon. Mr. Rudge, however, has settled the matter once for all. There can be no doubt that the "cells" are nothing else than the insoluble sulphates of certain metals which form about a core of gelatine. The limits of the precipitation of the sulphates vary according to the larger or smaller area through which the metallic salts are able to diffuse.

And so we get back, and ever and ever back, to the scientific truth, 'Every living thing comes from a living thing, every cell from a cell, every nucleus from a nucleus.' Upon this point, says Gerard in his 'Old Riddle' (1904); there is now complete agreement amongst scientific authorities, and (what is more remarkable) none are more strenuous in upholding the doctrine of Biogenesis (the derivation of life from life alone) than some of those who with equal vehemence proclaim the doctrine of Evolution for which the occurrence of spontaneous generation is a necessity. The 'missing links' between the organic and inorganic worlds, and between the anthropoid ape and man, have often been announced. But they have persistently refused to materialise and put themselves on exhibition.

THE FRENCH PERSECUTION

A NUN'S PATHETIC STORY

The aggressive atheists who are engaged in the task of 'hunting Christ' out of France are thorough-going in the callous inhumanity of the means which they employ. At one stroke, for instance, they deprive the parochial clergy of the slender budget allowance (averaging £36 per annum) which was not a salary in the ordinary acceptance of the term, but represented interest at the rate of one per cent. per annum on Church property seized and devoted to secular uses during the great Revolution. Having thus deprived the clergy of their slender living, the Christ-hunters drove them from their presbyteries at the point of the bayonet, confiscated all their belongings, down to the iron spoons and the poker and tongs. The parish clergy being thus rendered homeless and penniless, the Government actually began prosecutions against any of them whom its lynx-eyed agents succeeded in finding 'guilty' of the crime of soliciting or receiving voluntary offerings on any occasion whatever from the faithful for their necessary support. A similar course of action was followed under the Associations Law, in regard to the members of religious Orders. They, too, were driven from their homes at the point of the bayonet. Their property was seized, down to the last pot and kettle and ha'porth of pins. When driven out into the world, penniless and homeless—and many of them old and ill and feeble—they were compelled to separate. No two of them were allowed to live in any one house—they would, in that case, be treated as an illegal association. Those of them that had relatives to go to in France, or houses of their Order to emigrate to abroad, were fortunate indeed. Many, released by ecclesiastical authority from some or all of their vows, had to make a livelihood as best they could in the world. The distress caused by these wholesale evictions and plunderings may be estimated to some extent by the fact that about 160,000 persons were involved in that great dragnet of atheistic legislation. The New York 'Freeman's Journal' of February 16 gives a brief summary of the pathetic story of one 'suppressed' nun. Thousands of those poor, plundered religious must have passed through the ordeal of sorrow that is hinted at rather than told in the following review by our New York contemporary:—

'This New Year's publications in Paris included a work entitled

"The Diary of an Exiled Nun,"

which did not require a preface by one of France's most popular poets, namely Francois Coppee, to ensure it being widely read by the public. It is the work of a Sister who veils her personality from the public, and relates in detail those events which took place on the eve of the forcible entry by Governmental officials into the convent in order to eject the nuns. Father Suau, reviewing the work in the "Etudes" (Paris), admits that not even Matilda Serao's "Sister Paul of the Cross" has caused in him so much emotion as this simple journal. In it, the whole pathos of ejection, or eviction, is told with an absence of literary pretension which gives the work not only a distinct literary charm, but a vivid picture of the whole sordid story of governmental oppression. Here, for instance, is a passage which is typical of many and which fails not to convey the scene depicted in acute realism: 'The commissary came to the convent with his clerk, each striving to outdo the other in incivility and surliness, neither even taking off his hat, nor even rising when the Mother-Superior entered the parlor. At the expiration of a few moments, however, the commissary sent his clerk to the town hall to have some documents stamped. As soon as the clerk had left, the commissary quite changed his attitude, becoming studiously polite, amiable, and kind, apologising for the painful task which he had to perform, and further showing his regret. When his clerk returned, the commissary resumed his previous rigid demeanor, and both left the convent, without even a bow or a good-day.'

'The authoress of the "Diary" when thrown upon the world, having no dowry, and being

Entirely Without Means,

tried for a long time to find employment, subsisting on a few coins which the Mother-Superior divided between them before parting. Having some acquaintance with art, she endeavored to interest the superintendents of certain schools. Without avail, however; her great crime being that she had once been a nun! She also had a knowledge of china-painting and wore out her awkward shoes running round the stores day after day for employment. Most of them rejected her offers. With no knowledge of the world, she was satisfied to sell her work for something like the tenth of its real value, the result being that likely employers thought her work could be of no value whatever, and did not even give her a trial. Yet some were glad to get her work at the price she agreed to toil for; and once she obtained a large order which took her seventeen hours a day to complete in two weeks. At the end of that period she was paid a sum of money which did not suffice to meet her humble liabilities for the fortnight. A fellow-lodger in her house, an old workman, over seventy years old, took compassion on her helplessness and, as he possessed a knowledge of trade-painting, gave her a few lessons, which enabled her to weather the storm for some time. Another lady of the same Order was even less fortunate. Over sixty years old, she had formerly been rich, but had given her entire fortune in good works. With no surviving relatives, she was thrown upon the world. She became a

Servant in a Family,

being subsequently promoted to the position of nurse to an invalid, although almost an invalid herself, bent and growing rapidly into old age. Others, among the elderly nuns did not quite realise, even when the police were in the convent-halls, what was about to happen; some thought the Reverend Mother about to be arrested for heaven knows what delinquency—but as to themselves leaving the convent—the old home—the place they had chosen to live and die in—never! It was impossible. Many of the poor ladies stood staring at the blatant officials, not knowing where to turn, or what to do. Numbers had so little suspected the reality of the official warning, that they had not even prepared their little baggage. Most of them shrank back helplessly when the police entered and with no male protectors to help or advise them, presented a piteous spectacle which moved even their ejectors to tears. Here and there were shabby worn trunks lying about the hall containing clothes and little relics; baskets filled with food, young nuns tear-stained and mute, waiting for the last order from the Mother to leave, elderly lay Sisters, defiant some of them, others upbraiding the officials. And when the moment came for the Mother Superior to count her departing flock, one was found absent. Then there was a scurrying to and fro, through the familiar halls, along the well-loved corridors with their silent statues in their solemn little niches, up the stairs

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