

further than this. He claims that a common postulate underlies not only theism and natural science, but our whole mental life. His position may best be elucidated by this passage from the preface: "Kant pointed out that the ontological argument properly proves nothing, and that the cosmological and design arguments depend on the ontological. The argument, then, is not demonstrative, and rests finally on the assumed existence of a perfect being. In a different form I have maintained the same position; but, so far from concluding that theistic faith is baseless, I have sought to show that essentially the same postulate underlies our entire mental life. There is an element of faith and volition latent in all our theorizing. Where we cannot prove, we believe. Where we cannot demonstrate we choose sides. This element of faith cannot be escaped in any field of thought, and without it the truth is helpless and dumb."

Professor Bowne starts with the very evident fact that man is religious. He points out that we may properly inquire as to the source of religion, as to its history, and as to its foundation. Merely pausing to aim a shaft at that sensationalistic philosophy which would trace religion to some non-religious sources, the author sets aside the first two questions as beyond his province, and addresses himself to the third. In an analysis of the data of the religious consciousness, it is conceivable that one of these results might be reached. Either the theistic idea might be found to be (1) contradictory or absurd; (2) an implication of the religious sentiment only, and without any significance for pure intellect; or (3) a demand of our entire nature, intellectual, moral, æsthetic, and religious. To establish the last alternative is Professor Bowne's aim in this volume. He paves the way for his constructive argument by pointing out the unnaturalness of subjective idealism and the irrationality of chronic scepticism. It is not possible for us to follow the author's elaborate argument. He aims to establish on the principle noted above, the unity of the world-ground and then its intelligence and personality. Its metaphysical attributes, its ethical nature, and its relation to the world, form the subjects of subsequent chapters. The influence of Lotze, so strongly marked in the author's work on metaphysics, is still seen here, and particularly in his treatment of interaction. A brief concluding chapter passes from the intellectual to the practical applications of the theistic implication. The steps in the closely reasoned argument can hardly be indicated without doing them an injustice. We therefore refrain from making the attempt, and earnestly commend Professor Bowne's book to all philosophical students. Even where it fails to convince, it will stimulate and enlighten.

NOTES AND NEWS.

THE death has been announced of Gustav Robert Kirchhoff, the famous physicist. He was born March 24, 1824, and became lecturer of physics at the University of Berlin in 1847. In 1850 he was appointed professor in Breslau, and in 1854 in Heidelberg. It was here that he and Bunsen made their famous optical researches which led to the discovery of spectral analysis. The results of these investigations were published in Berlin in 1861, under the title 'Untersuchungen über das Sonnenspectrum und die Spectren der chemischen Elemente.' It is well known that these discoveries were the foundation of astrophysics, and that they led to numerous unexpected discoveries in chemistry. But this is only one of Kirchhoff's important works, which covered all parts of mathematical physics, particularly the theories of electricity, galvanism, and elasticity. In 1875 he accepted the professorship of physics at the University of Berlin.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR.

Romantic Love and Personal Beauty.

YOUR correspondent of Oct. 14 might have observed a feature in this book which would have explained and justified the repulsion she felt in reading it. The author cannot resist the temptation to be funny. He may be coarse, or refined; but he must be witty. He cannot carry us along in an uninterrupted narrative of sober and well-digested facts. He must stop to make us laugh, or suffuse his pages with ill-disguised humor that constantly divides our interest between fact and fancy. This is hardly tolerable in what aims to be in many respects a scientific discussion. It spoils both

its science and its wit. The instance quoted, "Did Herbert Spencer ever kiss a girl?" is not a solitary one. French and German girls simulating horror of some men whom "they secretly consider a darling creature," he says, have a "spring-chicken coyness." Of a certain class he says, "It would be absurd to include in this statement people of refinement, who through misfortune have been plunged into abject poverty. They do not belong to the '*Great Unwashed*' (οἱ πολλοί)." Again: "The modern ideal of woman is exclusively feminine, i.e., devoid of hackles, spurs, cock-a-doodle-doo, and pugnacity." "As for those old maids who are neither ugly nor masculine, some of them are quondam coquettes, who practised their arts just one season too long, and '*got left*' in consequence." "There is one difference between undervalued men of genius and old maids: the men of genius admit that they are in advance of their age, and are proud of it; the old maids never, at least *hardly ever*." Then, in the passage about woman's universal tendency to fall in love with officers, he says it is not because of their valor: "for they have perhaps never yet been opposite the '*business end*' of a rifle." If you want to win a woman's love, "put brass buttons on your coat, have it dyed blue, and wear epaulettes and a waxed mustache. This love charm *has never been known to fail*." "What is fat? It is an accumulation of unburnt *body-fuse*." Then this generalization of woman's love: "O Arthur! how happy I would be alone with you on a quiet island in the distant ocean!" — "Have you any other desire, dearest Ella?" — "Oh, yes! do get me a season-ticket for the opera." "As a rule, the preliminaries to animal marriages are doubtless brief. If a healthy, vigorous male comes across a mature, healthy female, it is usually a case of mutual *veni, vidi, vici*." We might go on with pp. 5, 6, 9, 11, 22, 38, 103, 114, 122, 123, 164, 196, and no doubt to the end of the book, with numerous instances of just such coarse humor in a scientific work. We have referred only to the most striking, and his pages everywhere abound in the use of some word or phrase that takes all the color of seriousness out of the narrative. Nor is the trait of which we complain confined to this book. In a letter to the *Nation* of Oct. 20, the same author, speaking of Oregon, which he says is called "Boomland," could not resist adding, "As I write, I hear a mother scolding her baby for putting a handful of dirt in her mouth. Real estate is too valuable hereabouts to be thus squandered in luxurious living."

Such a man cannot write science. He cannot state rightly a plain fact: he can only see fun, and that of the coarsest kind too frequently. It is provokingly offensive in such a mass of facts as this book collects, because there is such a mixture of things which we have to consider seriously, along with the absurd. But at the same time you cannot take it so seriously as to condemn his theories: for you may be criticising an exhibition of wit or a joke. On the other hand, too many of his facts are collected from poetry, newspapers, and the by-paths of literature, to possess either psychological value or scientific interest. It is only his pedantic references to evolution, sexual selection, etc., which every one must take seriously to-day, and some pertinent moral reflections on customs and manners, that can give any flavor of scientific earnestness at all to the book. The encyclopedic collection of facts and quotations makes it seem pretentiously scientific, and no doubt much of it is intended to be; but the flippant tone everywhere visible, and its humorous levity so frequent, ought to disarm all serious censure except for bad taste. His use of evolution is not dangerous, because he has only a dilettante's knowledge of it. The book needs 'editing.'

J. H. H.

Answers.

15. IS THE TRUMPET-CREEPER POISONOUS?—While I was in south-west Missouri during 1879, I found a general belief that the trumpet-vine (*Tecoma radicans*) was poison to the touch, like *Rhus toxicodendron*. Upon investigation, however, I found that most people were in the habit of confounding the two, *Rhus toxicodendron* there climbing to the tops of tall trees, often having stems three or four inches in diameter, the external characteristics of the two vines being somewhat alike. I could not learn that the idea had any other foundation than this failure to distinguish between the two species, and am satisfied that *Tecoma* is never poisonous in any case.

WILLIAM F. FLINT.

Winchester, N.H., Oct. 24.