

contrast favourably with the Roman Catholic missionaries, who have favoured us with hardly a scrap of the mythology of their heathen converts.

The readers of the Talks must have become aware by this time of the fact that discussion is not shunned in these pages. Therefore, as the editor says he can stand more copy, I proceed to notice Dr. H. W. Mitchell's *Evolution of Life*. The doctor is an American, as his portrait on the frontispiece denotes. This handsome volume, published by Putnam & Sons of New York, and Williamson & Co. of Toronto, numbering 460 pages, and containing 130 illustrations, shows how the earth and all its tribes, vegetable and animal, came into existence by itself, entirely independent of such a being as God. The gorilla is our hairy parent, but Dr. Mitchell does not know the *Eozoon Canadense*. What is the use of a man like that pretending to know *Prozoic* natural history? Yet he is a good biologist, and writes very pleasantly, and very plausibly ignores all breaks in the chain of life, as he leads us on from homogeneous matter up to our own noble selves. Here is the way he cuts Gordian knots: "A great and immensely important question at once confronts us:

What is life?

We answer, it is a form of chemical energy or force acting on organic substances."

I am not aware that there ever was an organic substance that was not once alive. However, to let that pass, it is clear that Dr. Mitchell, with all his knowledge, knows no infinite, and therefore solves what philosophers and theologians call the problem of it by chemistry. Life makes chemical changes no doubt, just as emotion raises a blush and starts a tear, but emotion is not the tear nor the blush, neither is the chemical energy life. Tennyson's

"Little flower in the crannied wall,
Peeping out of the crannies,"

is worth all Dr. Mitchell's elaborate reasoning, plates included, to put God out of the universe, to resolve Him in whom was life into a chemical energy, and to deduce our race from a Simian line of immediate ancestors—he is behind the age. It is too late for that sort of atheistical vain imagining. The world, with the exception of its fools, knows that there is a God; even the devils knew better than Dr. Mitchell pretends.

The next man is not quite so bad. He believes in God in a general deistical sort of way, but sees no good in worship. His name is E. Colbert, M.A., ex-superintendent of the Dearborn Observatory, and ex-officio professor of Astronomy in the old University of Chicago. His volume of over 400 octavo pages is published, in their usual neat style, by the Open Court Publishing Company of that city, and is entitled *Humanity in its Origin and*