

ETHICAL.

YEAR after year the farmer sows his seed and patiently waits for the results of his labors. He knows that there is a principle of life within each seed which will cause it to put forth its rootlets and gather to itself all the elements which are necessary for its nourishment and growth. What that principle is, he knows not, but so constant, so regular is its action that he counts upon its operation without the slightest doubt. If he gives it any thought he concludes that it must be a principle implanted by some external power. The same power causes the sun to shine, and the rain to fall upon it, to quicken its life forces and supply the conditions requisite for its development.

He does not, like a child, go daily into the field and dig up the grain to see whether or not it is sprouting. In its own good time he is fully assured, that in its environment is such as nature demands, the seedling will put forth its native powers, and that ere long his fields will clothe themselves in their appointed green, and his garners will be filled with grain.

Science has been busy more especially during the last few decades, in observing, noting, arranging and classifying all the workings of these invisible agencies. Every discovery made but adds to the certainty that nature performs her functions in the physical world in unvarying obedience to some never-errings law-giver. Physiologists bear the same witness to the reign of law. But as we ascend from the vegetable and animal kingdoms to the realm of mind, we encounter man's free-will, and the response to higher law enacted by the same law-giver is not so immediate. Hence we lack faith in the ultimate triumph of those principles of morality and virtue which we would fain believe are destined to overcome the lower elements of man's nature. We have not faith to sow the seed and wait patiently for the development of the plant. In the region of morality we seem to fear that the hand which controls everything in other realms has lost its power; and instead of doing our part preparing the soil, sowing the seed, destroying the noxious weeds which spring up on every side, we find it far easier to transfer our individual responsibilities and duties to the State, and rely upon the flimsy arm of human law.

All laws for the suppression of vice have resulted from just this want of faith in the vitality of truth, this infidelity to our social obligations. We wonder then that they have failed, and not only failed but have brought about results diametrically opposed to those intended. Ill-considered "laws in favour of religion," says Buckle, "have increased hypocrisy. Laws to secure truth by requiring a multifariousness of oaths have encouraged perjury; usual

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