

According to a passage of Lucian, it is not improbable that the well-known Pythagorean prohibition of the use of beans as an article of food was called forth by the fact that, on cooked beans which were let stand, bloody drops were occasionally observed. Nor is it impossible that the Jewish custom of covering all foods on four particular days of the year, in order, as they said, to prevent drops of blood coming from heaven from falling upon them, may be referred to an actual observation of some of these phenomena. That the red corpuscles of the *Monas prodigiosa*, and the red microscopic plants and animals in general, should lend to water such a striking similarity to blood, must be considered all the less remarkable when we remember that even blood is, in itself, a liquid clear as water, and that it receives its coloring from an innumerable multitude of microscopic red balls which float within it, the so-called blood-corpuscles.

In this way has science succeeded in establishing as simple, every-day natural phenomena, all those marvellous appearances by means of which dim-eyed superstition and darker fanaticism in former times pursued their bloody work.

Thereby has science removed the wonder in which these phenomena were formerly wrapt. But, in its stead, the closer investigation of that invisible world has unveiled to us numberless and truly wonderful secrets. Here reigns a boundless and manifold life; the most beautiful forms and most remarkable developments appear in every quarter and at every moment. In such incalculable numbers are these minute creatures generated that their remains have a great share in the formation of the earth's crust. They build whole mountain-ranges; and with slow and noiseless, yet all-availing assiduity, do they rear, on the deep foundations of the sea-bottom, structures which, for grandeur of scale, put to shame the most elaborate works of man. Thus has Natural Science revealed to us a more genuine wonder than the superstitious fancy of earlier ages, which attached itself to superficial resemblances, could ever comprehend.—*Translated from the German by W. J. Chisholm, B.A.*