

ality may be lost in the accidents which accompany, or qualify, or with which we may choose to clothe it. The fact is known to one; the hypotheses are dealt with by many who may not even know, or may have forgotten, the fact; for there is a quickness, as Count Rumford says, "in inventing reasons to save a theory from destruction, but a slowness to enquire whether those reasons are not merely the fine spun fancies of the brain." Much of so-called modern science would seem to be largely mixed with that egotism. Its leading maxim, says the erudite Dr. Marshall, appears to be this, that "whatever you believe, if you believe anything, you should, at all events, believe nothing that was ever believed by any body else;" while "unresolved questions of science, which cannot be weighed in the balance of experimentalists, must be dismissed to the regions of the unknowable."

At no period of the earth's history, I firmly believe, was there ever displayed so much mental conceit as at present. Wendell Phillips, in this city one evening last winter, styled it, as you may recollect, the arrogance of the nineteenth century. Especially is this mental arrogance observable among those who regard natural knowledge, as Mr. Huxley says, "as a sort of fairy godmother, ready to furnish her pets with shoes of swiftness, swords of sharpness, and Aladdin's lamp, so that they may have telegraphs to Saturn, and see the other side of the moon, and thank God they are better than their be-nighted ancestors." Is that conceit well founded? Humboldt thought not, and in his *Cosmos* ridicules, to use his own words, the "superficial omniscience," the "pretended conquests," the "superficial half-knowledge" of our age. How much more cause for this complaint would he have, had his life been prolonged till now, when system quickly usurps system, and when we become, without knowing it, blind followers of one system, and blindly hostile to other systems, without, perhaps, being quite logical in either course. Fortunately, for true science, the crowd of confiding worshippers, who fall down before the new idols (whether the name, let us say, of a Darwin, a Tyndall, a Huxley, a Hubboch, or a Spencer, be engraved on the pedestal)" are constantly shifting from one idol to another and the cry: "Vive le Roi" (of science be it understood,) awaits not the announcement: "Le Roi est mort."

The first-named—Darwin—whose work on the "Origin of species" has effected "as complete a revolution in biological science as the Principia did in astronomy;" because, as its eulogist says, "it con-

tains an essentially new creative thought," is the head and front of this crusade. Yet, the equally learned Mons. Flourens, and with him the whole school of French physiologists, with some reason ridicule both his doctrine and his language. M. Vial—no mean authority in science—ridicules "les gasconades de Monsieur Darwin et le Darwinisme." Monsieur de Quatrefages denies to Darwin's theory what ever it may be worth—the merit of originality; and asserts that it was put forth by Monsieur Naudin prior to its publication in England. Professor Owen—and I mention the name with profound respect and admiration, as that of one who displays a wide knowledge of the laws and relations of things—says of Darwin's hypothetical transmuting influences: "past experience of the chance aims of human fancy, unchecked and unguided by observed facts, shows how widely they have ever glanced away from the gold centre of truth." But a newer name—that of Mr. Huxley—and a newer philosophy—Huxleyism doctrine of the protoplasm, receive their share of worshippers. A newer philosophy still—that of Mr. Herbert Spencer—that "great system of scientific thought," as it is termed—the "most original and most important mental undertaking of the age" as the reviewer has it. A system which differs from *all* predecessors—says the book-seller—in being solidly based on the science of observation and induction; (Simeon-like, how grateful we should be!) in representing the order and course of nature, says another; in bringing nature and man, life, mind and society under one great law of action, says a third; a system whose author is styled by Masson "the one who has formed to himself the largest *new* (everything must be new, or it wont do) scheme of a systematic philosophy;" "one of the acutest metaphysicians of modern times," according to Stuart Mill; "one of our deepest thinkers," according to Joseph Hooker. I might multiply at pleasure, these adulatory effusions. Surely, gentlemen, we might now say with the old song: "if there's peace (intellectual, of course) to be found in this world, a heart that is humble might hope for it here." But while the philosophy of evolution has its admirers, and they are not a few, it fully satisfies not many beyond those who admire it for its ingenuity, and for its beauty and elegance of style. Alas! the physiological units are the theme of ridicule by the Comtists and others, while Darwin—the great Darwin—object of Huxley's veneration, disputes the terrain with Spencer. The osmosis of the former will not be allowed to yield to the physiological units of the latter; and the world of scientists is lodged