

that many other forms of monstrosities are explained upon the principle of retarded development, and that those parts which are the last completed, present the greater number of deviations from the ordinary or natural rules. Among the ancients, monstrosities were considered as mere experiments on the part of atoms to produce some other species, or race

HUMAN STIRPICULTURE.

The discussion raised by the proposal to bring back the famous racehorse Ormonde to this country for stud purposes is, to use a favourite expression of Thomas Carlyle's, "significant of much." It is a striking proof of the relative value which is placed on animal and on human stock that whilst a horse is judged unworthy to beget issue because he is a "roarer," many owners of such an animal would not object to let their own offspring marry into families in which tubercle or nerve disease is handed down from one generation to another as an inalienable heirloom. Indeed, a diseased inheritance is sometimes—as in the case of gout—actually boasted of as a mark of blue blood. As for the moral intellectual and family history of "eligible" young men, the parents of marriageable girls are for the most part utterly careless, or think any little deficiencies in these points more than covered by wealth or title. The results of this indifference are already writ large in the individual and in the race. Under existing social conditions it is vain to hope for any great or general improvement in these respects, though a family doctor gifted with the necessary tact can often use his influence advantageously in this direction. If only a fraction of the care that is exercised in the breeding of horses were used in the propagation of the species, there would be a hope that the perfectibility of the race might be something better than a Utopian dream. Of course the Socialists will tell us that when their kingdom is accomplished everything will be for the best in the best of all possible worlds; and no doubt under a dispensation in which individual rights and interests are subordinated to the good of the community, it might be possible to cultivate men and women as gardeners do orchids and tulips. Some tentative efforts in this direction have already been made, though hardly, perhaps, under the most favourable conditions. At the meeting of the American Association for the

Advancement of Science, held at Washington last August, Mrs. A. N. McGee gave an account of an extensive and systematic experiment in "human stirpiculture" which was carried out in Central New York between 1868 and 1879. In the Oneida Community, founded by J. H. Noyes, community not only of goods but of persons was practised. At first the birth-rate was carefully limited, but, in 1868, the membership having increased to 250 and the financial position of the Community being extremely prosperous, the experiment in stirpiculture was begun. Its object was primarily the increase of sanctity in succeeding generations, the physical and intellectual perfection of the progeny being regarded as secondary considerations. The method used was in-and-in breeding, with a judicious infusion of fresh blood from the outer world from time to time, and careful selection of individuals. Between 1869 and 1880 many children were born as the result of the experiment, which promised to be very successful till it was suddenly interrupted by the breaking up of the Community in 1879. The chief reason assigned for the failure of the scheme is that the monogamous spirit proved at last too strong for the scientifically regulated promiscuity necessary for stirpicultural purposes; in other words, human nature—that factor so often neglected by would be reformers of society—became restive and kicked over the traces. The results of the experiment appear to be that five of the children born to the Oneida Community died at birth, one was acknowledged to be a failure physically, one has since died, and the others—whose ages now range from 11 to 22 years—are pronounced to be "on the whole somewhat above the outside average in physique and intellect." Even in point of sanctity, the particular "strain" aimed at in the stirpicultural experiment, the outcome can scarcely be called encouraging, since only one of the children is a follower of the prophet of the cult, Mr. Noyes; and of the rest, it is sad to hear, but few are regular church members. On the whole, human stirpiculture as practised by the Oneida Community must be pronounced a failure.—*Brit. Med. Journ.*

THE Kick-a-poo Medicine Co. is favouring the Maritime Provinces with their philanthropy. The name has, no doubt, been carefully chosen with the idea that it will draw well, and we suppose it will.