

## GERMAN BIOLOGY.

By P. A. TAVERNER.

It may seem out of place to use the pages of a scientific journal for the expression of international recrimination, especially during the heat and prejudice of war; but one phase of the Hun's hunnishness is a direct challenge to modern biology and should have a biological answer.

The position of the German scientist is something as follows: Nature evolves to higher planes through struggles between competing forms and the consequent triumph of the strong through the relentless elimination of the less fit. Man is an animal and war is as much a biological necessity for his development as it is for that of the lower creation. Therefore, for the future benefit of the human race, weak powers must give way to more virile expanding ones, permitting them to sow the earth with the seed of a superior race and culture. Political might is thus right, weakness the greatest wrong, and forbearance towards the weak enervating sentimentality and the betrayal of the human race.

The reasoning is characteristically Teutonic in its blind confidence in its own logic. Other schools of thought on reaching so monstrous a conclusion would pause and retrace their mental steps to see where they had departed from the direct path of truth to land in this unthinkable quagmire. Not so the German. To him the laws are immutable and if the result shocks our senses it is our standards that require revision. They point to their premises and to the conclusion, never doubting for a moment the reasoning between.

The deductions are admirably direct and clear to the German intellect but here as elsewhere the Teuton neglected to consider the human element. He can handle ohms and watts and foot-pounds admirably, but whenever he has attempted to estimate the strictly human equation he has lamentably failed. In this case he failed to perceive that biological laws apply only to the biological (the physical) side of man; that man is of dual nature and moral development is as necessary to his well being as is his body. Man may be an animal but he has developed something that no other animal possesses. He has a moral sense and whether you call this "soul" or merely "community instinct" it is an absolute necessity to his communal existence. Without it, civilization, and the power over nature obtained through mutual assistance and confidence,

could not persist. Biological evolution of the physical body may produce the super-beast, never the super-man; that can only be the result of a concurrent and equal development of the moral being, and the two are diametrically opposed to each other, one being the result of absolute selfishness, the other of unselfishness.

It would thus seem that we have only discovered the pathway to advancement to find that we cannot use the knowledge to our own improvement and the way is barred against us. There are many truths we can see without being able to consciously profit by them. It is undeniably better that one should suffer rather than many, yet we cannot allow any justification for cannibalism. Old age is a drag upon the body politic. It consumes and can not produce, but we cannot therefore advocate the killing of our grand-parents. These things are against public policy and however apparent their advantage in certain directions, they would cause incalculably greater racial harm through the consequent deadening of sensibilities and destruction of mutual confidence.

These are the things that German science failed to perceive. That however admirable natural laws are in themselves there are certain of them that we cannot consciously take advantage of. The great compensation to this, however, is the fact that biological laws work in spite of us. We have not developed our physical being consciously so far, nor need we in the future; Nature will take care of that without our assistance. Our moral development on the contrary is in our own keeping, if we look after that side of our nature, Nature will do her duty with the rest. In our bolstering up the weak and caring for the dependent it may appear that we are working at cross purposes with our own physical good, but

"Though the mills of the gods grind slow  
they grind exceeding fine"

and the evolution of the morally as well as the physically fit is continuing. War at times is a good thing, but only after every possible effort to avoid it. It is eliminating the morally unfit now that their pernicious doctrines may not contaminate the world and cause devolution, in place of evolution.

Nov. 5, 1918.