

in mental life it as just as necessary and just as beautiful. So beautiful is it that many are charmed by it into the reception of the grossest errors. A series of propositions may clash with all the great truths of the universe, yet if these propositions are themselves mutually consistent, there are many minds that will receive and cherish them as precious truths. A discourse may be false from beginning to end, yet if only from beginning to end its parts are all well hitched together; if it does not quarrel with itself; if all is harmonious and peaceful within; if it can live in the auditor's mind as a perfectly consistent whole, then there are those whom it will delight, and who will believe it and fight for it. Get up any theory you like; if it is conceivable, it is believable and sure to find disciples.

Illustrations are not wanting. The first is taken from the experience of a kind of natural born nominalists who never discerned any difference between words and thoughts. It has never occurred to them but that words grew on thoughts, just like maple bark on maple trees, and if you should peel off the words the thought would die. Anyway, to them, for words to fit together is just as good as the concatenation of thoughts or the causal connection of events. If words can be made to rhyme, no matter how grotesque the lines, there is an argument at once.

"Cut thistles in June, they'll grow again soon." This pastoral has become an oracle. If in any way you should spoil the rhyme, you would cast a shade of doubt upon its sacred truth. "Wind in the West, trout bite the best." That settles the question, and Alexander starts off with his alder pole. These two lines seem to be made for each other and give proof of a connection between a westerly breeze and a hungry trout that to him is perfectly satisfactory. It may be said that experience has proved the truth of this statement, and that is why he believes it. But prior to any such testing experience, and the very first time the boy hears the melodic lines, he listens to them and sees how true they are.

"Wind in the East,
"Trout bite the least"—

true as preaching.

There is a shallow system of theology extant to-day whose abettors believe it away down in their honest hearts. They think if everybody would only step in with them, light and peace would shine all around.

It is a wrested interpretation of a few lines of scripture; but it makes such a pretty, easy little system—that, though it is so distressingly out of harmony with the general tenor of scripture, it is treasured by some men with an unyielding grasp. Would it not be well for men to put away childish things? The secret of all this mischief may be this:—So many are *contented* with such a small conception of the world; so many are satisfied to look only on one side; so many seem loathe to hold much of what they do know in their minds at one time. Here, too, perhaps, is one explanation of the power and frequent mischief of reasoning by analogy. What our peculiar kind of conceptualist needs is not to repudiate his former love of consistency—not by any means—but he needs to be led out into a larger field—into a broader view—in order that there lifting up his eyes upon a wider, more wonderful correspondence, and listening to a grander harmony, it may dawn upon him that his old pet theories, so consistent in themselves, are very *inconsistent* with the great truths of the universe to which he has hitherto been shutting his eyes. When he lifts up his head, the same principle that led him into error will lead him out again.

OUR FRESH PEOPLE.

THEY are half a hundred and a motley lot. Big and little, noisy and quiet, fresh and salt; great brain capacity, and large feet extension, loved and beloved, and never love again, youths who have donned long pants and left home as somebody's darling, to wend their way through a stormy world. It is a grand moment in a man's life, when first he finds himself under a whole gown and cap. The future is hidden in uncertainty, but the present is glowing with promise, while the past is all conquered. What a prospect opens before you Freshmen! Here you are, the largest class that ever entered the Institution, fifty years after its opening, having greater advantages, larger improvements, more extensive resources than it ever possessed, and what is there to prevent your coming out the largest numerically, morally and intellectually? You see, therefore, the responsibility which rests upon you; the world is viewing you; it is saying: We look to these young men as our coming leaders, our ministers, lawyers, doctors, with the