

The Religion of the Future

IN an article "Brave New World Planning" in the *Quarterly Review* of April, W. J. Blyton stresses the importance of such values as freedom with discipline, personal character, room for spontaneity and the spiritual as a basis for a new world order. Character and not mechanisms must come first, and only a better and stronger religion will overthrow the passionate and evil religions which at present menace the world. Without that, democracy will not be enough, and Mr. Blyton argues that the League of Nations failed because its foundations were legalist, secular and without spiritual appeal, moral authority, or imaginative hold on the stormy wills of men. No future order, he urges, will last unless it is viewed as sacred by a vast majority who have to live under it. It must be loved and valued as England (or other *patria*) now is; as one's religion is; or one's family, personality and liberty. A wave of moral conviction and spiritual vision must pass over many nations, and the comprehensive order will grow out of close, friendly but not firmly defined relations. The entire mundane political business hinges on virtue, which can be analysed into conscientiousness, sympathy, self-discipline and moral insight, and great and good achievements are not officially inspired by law, resolution, or orders. Education in the limited materialist, utilitarian sense of the word is nought. To roll back the tide of Belial and Moloch we must oppose a true religion, instinct with love, works of mercy, the new life, the inescapable mysteries of life and death.

Culture, Diet and Teeth

WHILE the excellence of the teeth of primitive peoples, in the sense of an absence of caries, even though the teeth may be much worn by rough or coarse food, has been a subject of frequent reference by travellers and anthropologists, it is infrequent that direct evidence is available of the relation of diet and state of the teeth to which this character in the people is referred, usually in quite general terms. Yet obviously the question is one of considerable importance in evaluating the sum total of the effects of changes in culture which have recently taken place and are continuing among peoples of backward civilization in their contacts with Europeans.

A valuable observation of the mechanism of dental deterioration through cultural change is afforded by the field observations of Dr. Helen Mellanby of the University Field Laboratories, Sheffield, on the teeth of a number of Finnish Lapp children, reference to which is made on p. 978. Among these children a remarkable degree of dental hypoplasia appears and, as was to be anticipated, this was accompanied by an equally high percentage of carious affection. The interest and significance of the observations, however, was enhanced by a fortunate opportunity for comparing a part of this material with teeth from skulls from the same group of Lapps, dating back from fifty to two hundred years, in the Helsinki Museum. As compared with the teeth from this source, the teeth of the modern children showed a marked deteriora-

tion in structure, and a similar impression was conveyed by the teeth of the adult skulls, as compared with the teeth of the modern adult population, though no exact observations were made.

It has been shown that the structure of the teeth is dependent to a large extent on diet, and in attempting to account for this very evident deterioration in the structure of the teeth of modern Inari Lapp children, Dr. Mellanby puts forward the suggestion that while Inari Lapp culture has suffered less change than that among any other body of Lapps, their diet, which formerly was based upon a reindeer cultural economy and was almost entirely carnivorous without bread, has now become one based on mixed farming with reindeer keeping, in which the diet depends upon 'civilized' substitutes with large quantities of cereals. Comparative figures from Greenland quoted by Dr. Mellanby may be interpreted in like manner as emphasizing the effect of cultural change in an alteration of diet as affecting the character and health of the teeth. While the teeth of the children of the remote parts of East Greenland are probably the least carious of any (excluding the tropics), those of West Greenlanders, who are 'civilized', are slightly worse than those of children of the Danish elementary schools, among whom defects of 31 per cent for deciduous and 34 per cent for permanent teeth have been recorded.

Plant Foods of Australian Aborigines

IN a reference to a publication made some time ago by Mrs. I. W. Dadswell (*Austral. J. Exp. Biol. and Med. Sci.*, 12, 13 (1934)), Sir James Barrett points out that all the useful plants and animals now established in Australia were imported. The criticism that the aborigines never cultivated a plant nor domesticated an animal as a source of food is equally applicable to Europeans, in so far as the indigenous flora and fauna are concerned. Yet the aborigines, whom we are accustomed to regard as an uncivilized vestige of the Stone Age, have adapted themselves to their environment so as to be able to live and thrive where Europeans would starve. Thus, Governor Phillip had to ration the first settlement at Sydney Cove in 1788; and white men lost in the bush have usually perished unless helped by aborigines.

Mrs. Dadswell, working in the Department of Biochemistry of the University of Melbourne, found that certain vegetable foods eaten by the natives of Central Australia, and collected near Mt. Liebig in the Alice Springs region, do not differ greatly from corresponding cultivated foods in their organic composition, and that the necessary inorganic constituents, with the exception of phosphorus, are plentifully supplied in these foods. Thus, the fruit of *Solanum ellipticum* is bracketed with the tomato, the root of *Portulaca oleracea* with the carrot, parsnip and turnip, the tuber of *Ipomoea* sp. with the sweet potato, and the leaves of *Celendrinia balonnensis* with cabbage, lettuce and spinach. The moisture content of the fresh native foods was lower than that of similar cultivated foods; the total ash was higher; calcium, magnesium and iron were abundant. In