

when it was decided to again open the Library, during the winter season, on Sundays. MARK H. JUDGE,
Honorary Secretary of the Sunday Society
8, Park Place Villas, Paddington, W., November 17

A Pugnacious Frog

A SHORT time back, about 6 o'clock in the evening, just as it was getting dark, hearing a squeaking noise below my veranda, I got up to look, and saw a most amusing sight, viz. a fight between a frog and a bat. The latter was evidently getting the worst of it, but at last succeeded in getting away for a time from its opponent; the frog again attacked it, but this time *he* was glad to cry "quits," as the bat turned on him and beat him off, afterwards managing to hide somewhere so that we could not find it; the frog, however, was sorely bitten about the nose, and was in a sad plight. I do not know how the bat could have been on the ground, but it had probably fallen from its nest during the day, and was waiting for the evening, when the frog espied and attacked it with the bef re-mentioned result.

EDWIN H. EVANS

Margapala, Soemedang, Java, October 13

A DISEASE-GERM MYTH

WE are indebted to a correspondent for the following curious note from Fiji:—

You may have seen Wilfred Powell's "Wanderings in a Wild Country; or, Three Years among the Cannibals of New Britain." If you have not seen it, pray send for it, for, though falling far short of what it ought to be, it is not without interest. At p. 167 he tells a story of native magic which reminds me of something I have read before.

A native doctor being called in to a patient "looking wretchedly ill," performs a little "devil-devil" business, and then blows some burnt lime from the hollow of his hand against the patient's stomach; "then he began to scratch the man's navel with one finger," gradually approaching his mouth to the fellow's stomach, and drawing in his breath. Presently he places his mouth close to the man's navel, draws back suddenly, retches violently, and—throws up a worm. This the worthy doctor does twice.

Powell says, "I looked at the worms, they were *unlike anything I had seen before*, and appeared as if they certainly might have come from a man's body."

Now see Bates on the Amazons, cap. ix. :—"This (the illness) the Pagá pretends to extract, he blows on the seat of pain the smoke from a large cigar, . . . and then sucks the place, drawing from his mouth, when he has finished, what he pretends to be a worm. . . . Senhor John contrived to get possession of the supposed worm after the trick was performed in our presence, and it turned out to be a *long white air root* of some plant"!!

Wilfred Powell should have got that worm or another specimen, even if he had been compelled, in the interests of science, to explore the patient's stomach with a pickaxe.

When Macdonald, of the old surveying-ship *Herald*, was in these waters, he was daily searching for a specimen of the pearly Nautilus (*N. pompilius*), which is pretty common here. One day upon the reef at Nasamusovu he met a Fijian coming out of his canoe in which he had been fishing. He showed him the picture of a Nautilus, which the man recognised at once, and, in reply to a question put through an interpreter, said he had just eaten one. Macdonald got into a great rage at the loss of such a treasure, but suddenly checking his excitement and glancing rapidly over the native, he said to the interpreter, "Quick, ask him how long it is since he ate it."

But there was something in the eye and the tone of the doctor's voice that so startled the gentle child of Nature that, before the interpreter could open his mouth, he had

taken to his heels and put half a mile of reef between himself and the man of science.

What awful thought passed through Macdonald's mind has not been left on record.

THE BUDDHIST THEORY OF EVOLUTION

THE theory of evolution held by adepts in Buddhism is the outcome of the researches of an immense succession of investigators, believed to be qualified for their task by the possession of spiritual faculties and perceptions of a higher order than those belonging to ordinary humanity. In the course of ages the block of knowledge thus accumulated concerning the origin of the world and of man and the ultimate destinies of our race, checked and examined at every point, verified in all directions, and constantly under examination throughout, has come to be looked on as the absolute truth concerning the evolution, past and to come, of man and the planets he is destined to inhabit. The initiated members or "adepts" of the Buddhist cult claim to have attained, through intense self-absorption, a knowledge of physical laws of Nature not yet understood by Western science, investing them with extraordinary powers known as spiritualistic, such as clairvoyance and the disintegration and reconstruction of matter by a simple effort of will. They claim in fact to be in possession of potential faculties which will only be generally developed in future stages of evolution. This religion, which is wholly unaggressive and seeks no converts, attracts many on account of its claims to be in accord with all established scientific fact, and by its incorporation of so patent a truth as the doctrine of evolution as an integral part of its system.

A brief examination of these claims, and a glance at the past and future of man's evolution as thus elaborated, can hardly fail to be of interest, if it fails to carry conviction.

It is impossible, and unnecessary, to attempt to follow briefly the mystic subtleties of belief that have fascinated the Oriental mind, and been to it for ages what the pursuit of practical science has been to Western nations. Shortly stated, the Buddhist divides the human entity into seven principles, the higher of which have not yet reached their full development. The first three are of the earth, and done with at death. These are (1) the body; (2) vitality, or the life principle, an indestructible force which attaches itself to other objects after the decomposition of the body; (3) the astral body, "an ethereal duplicate of the physical body," which can under certain circumstances become disembodied and visible as a ghost; (4) the animal soul, or seat of all animal desires; (5) the human soul. The other two can be passed over, as they are still in embryo, and belong to a wholly superior and future condition of existence. The fifth and, later on, the sixth principles make up a man's continuous individuality through successive incarnations.

The solar system consists of seven planetary chains. The one with which man is concerned consists of seven planets, through each of which he has to pass seven times in order to accomplish his evolution. These are the Earth, Mars, which is in a state of entire obscurity or rest as regards the human life-wave, Mercury, just beginning to prepare for its next human period, and four other planets which are composed of an order of matter too ethereal for telescopes to take cognisance of. The system of worlds is compared to a system of towers standing on a plain, each of many stories, man's progress being a spiral round and round the series, passing through each tower as it again comes round to it, at a higher spiritual level than before. The impulse to the new evolution of higher forms is given by rushes, not a continual flow, of spiritual monads coming round the cycle in a state fit for the inhabitation of new forms, and those which for milleniums have gone on merely