

Echoes of Tennessee.

Evolution and Religion in Education: Polemics of the Fundamentalist Controversy of 1922 to 1926. By Prof. Henry Fairfield Osborn. Pp. xiv + 240. (New York and London: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1926.) 7s. 6d. net.

ECHOES of the Fundamentalist controversy continue to travel across the Atlantic. The present volume consists of a collection of articles and addresses by Prof. H. F. Osborn dealing with the situation created by this strange revival. It is a phenomenon very difficult to cope with, being a product of popular education and democratic government. The only cure is more education of the right sort, but the Fundamentalists are striving to capture the educational machine. Prof. Osborn is aware that a mental atmosphere prevails not very favourable to scientific truth. "I hold," he says, "that the press and the movies are by far the most potent influences upon conduct in America at the present time." He regards the sum of press influence as morally good but intellectually bad, "because it creates what I call the jazz mind and a disproportionate sense of relative values."

The trouble with people at a certain stage is not only that they cannot appreciate evidence, but rather that they have positively no sense of spiritual or religious values. To attach religious value to the historicity of the myths in Genesis is a mark not only of intellectual, but also of religious, myopia. At this stage, one is either a Fundamentalist or a Secularist; it does not greatly matter which, for the two are correlatives. The tragedy of the situation, as Prof. Osborn points out, is that this recrudescence of superstition has broken out just at a time when the conceptions of men of science have become anti-materialistic. He himself says (p. 91): "If I have made a single contribution to biology which I feel confident is permanent, it is the profession that living Nature is purposive."

One remark of Prof. Osborn's seems to us especially noteworthy: "In my opinion religion and science will unite to control the future of mankind. This will be a simplified religion and a reverent science" (p. 177). But what is a "simplified" religion? Apparently Prof. Osborn hopes to get people to agree upon "a simple, elemental, and more or less primeval teaching on which all men, except those who persuade themselves that they are atheists, agree." It would include the Ten Commandments, the Lord's Prayer, the Sermon on the Mount, and "passages from the teachings of St. Paul and other missionaries." But this is the eighteenth-century chimera of natural religion in a new dress. Prof. Osborn overlooks the fact that these

enshrinements of religious and moral teachings are based on a definite philosophical outlook, not always formulated, but capable of quite definite formulation.

This 'hang theology' attitude will not work—at least not for long. If the specific Christian view of God goes, the Christian value-scheme will follow, and carry along with it Christian ethics. This strikes us as a surrender. The strength of the Fundamentalist lies in his quite definite scheme of belief; and unless the Modernist or man of science can offer something equally definite and equally religious, he will neither win nor deserve to win. The future will be divided between the Fundamentalists and the Secularists, who alike know what they believe and why they believe it. There is no room for a vague religiosity, at least in a democratic country like America.

We have left ourselves very little space for estimating the more definitely scientific aspects of the book. Indeed, its excellence here should be beyond criticism. Prof. Osborn speaks throughout with the directness, lucidity, and easy freedom of the specialist and experienced teacher. Especially interesting is his exposure of the Fundamentalist misrepresentation of evolutionary teaching as deriving man's descent from apes. "The entire monkey-ape theory of human descent is a pure fiction," he says. The human line of descent is entirely independent of the apes; it is to a common ancestor that the two may be traced. This, perhaps, is all one to the Fundamentalist, in whose arguments caricature and invective take the place of facts and logic. We may hope that the perusal of this book may abate some Fundamentalist prejudices, at least in the case of those whose minds are still capable of reflection. We think that Prof. Osborn has done a public service to his countrymen in preparing and publishing it; it cannot always have been congenial work for a disinterested student of science who stands above the clamours of controversy.

J. C. H.

Prehistory in Britain.

Proceedings of the Speleological Society for 1925. No. 3, Vol. 2. (University of Bristol.) 3s.

WHEN the editor of NATURE asked me to review the above work, I was particularly pleased to do so. It has always been a source of satisfaction to me personally that I was partly instrumental in turning the attention of the Speleological Society of the University of Bristol, shortly after the War, towards prehistoric investigations. Previously, though the Society and its predecessor bore an honourable record for researches on underground water-ways, etc., little serious prehistoric work had been attempted. The