

"Dona nobis pacem," wrote Mr. Riley in the Visitors Book of one of the Monasteries upon Mount Athos.

We shall probably get peace with the return of the Progressives. We shall probably not get peace if Mr. Riley is successful.

E. M. HARRINGTON.

## Science Notes.

### BABIES AND MONKEYS.

IN an article bearing the above title, in the *Nineteenth Century*, Mr. (?) Buckman has traced the evidences to be found in the baby's physical proportions and actions of his descent from monkey-like ancestors. In some cases one hardly knows whether to take Mr. Buckman seriously or not; to some readers his conclusions may appear "far-fetched," which, indeed, from the nature of the case they must be, whether they are worthy of acceptance or not.

The generic name of the Orang-utan is *Simia*, which signifies "flat-nosed" or "snub-nosed." No one will deny that this characteristic, so marked in the monkey as to have given it a name, is shared by the human infant.

Of all monkeys the Chimpanzee is generally considered to most nearly resemble man both in appearance and intelligence, but Mr. Buckman points out one striking difference. The large upper lip of the Chimpanzee shows no trace of division into two, whereas the upper lip of man has a central furrow, more conspicuous in the infant than in the adult, and showing his descent from an animal with a cleft upper lip, such as is conspicuous in the lemurs, and also in the lower animals, such as cats, dogs, hares, etc.

Mr. Buckman calls attention to the greater scientific value of photographs which are full-face or profile than of the three-quarter pictures "faked up by the photographer's art," and exhorts us, if we wish our descendants to preserve our portraits, to make them of value as scientific records as they will probably never be valued from feelings of reverence or affection.

If when adult, we had features like our babies, we should have a countenance of a negroid type. As example of prognathism, compare the profiles of the cat, the monkey, the baby, and the adult man and you will see prognathism undergoing reduction in four stages.

In its first attempts at grasping, the baby shows its descent from arboreal animals. In taking a cup or glass by the edge, the baby often puts its four fingers inside the vessel and so holds it against the palm, making no use whatever of the thumb. Among the Chimpanzees and Orang-utans it is noticeable that the thumb is very small and little used, whereas the great toe is powerful and opposed to the remaining toes. A remnant of this free movement of the great toe is often seen in infants, though of course it is not opposable; and, says Mr. Buckman, this separation of the toe is not a relic of sandal-wearing times, and a special provision of the Deity for the patriarchs to strap on their sandals, as Churchmen would have us believe.

Sandals, according to the writer, are preferable to boots, but, except in extreme climatic conditions, nothing at all is preferable to sandals. "Boots are a curse to civilisation."

Mothers will hardly agree that because infantile stair-climbing is an instinct derived from the very remote past, it should therefore be respected and not interfered with. "Remain on the level and crawl about the rooms the child will not; it must make for the nearest stairs to climb with loud crows of delight. Tumbles and consequent bruises have no effect on the child's climbing instinct. Mothers, unfortunately, do not always possess enough scientific calmness to watch an infant climb upstairs with every chance of a tumble, so they are apt to cut short such experiments. But if left alone—and that is the best plan—it is remarkable how soon the child learns not to tumble; and then the mother need have no more fear."

It is said "even a fall down the whole flight of stairs only checks the climbing mania temporarily, in order that the infant may loudly express its disapprobation of its own clumsiness." We are inclined to think that at the moment the infant is perhaps expressing its disapprobation rather of the effects of its clumsiness.

Another "animal" relic attributed to children is an instinctive desire for stealing, even for stealing hard and unripe fruit. This is considered to point to the time when every animal was dependent on its own exertions for what food it got, and when the readiest method of obtaining such food was to appropriate without question whatever it might come across.

The efficacy which rocking is found to possess in getting babies to sleep is also explained by their inheritance from arboreal ancestry. Their forefathers were rocked to sleep by the motion of branches in the wind. Mr. Buckman even goes so far as to account, in this manner, for the rhyme—

"Lullaby baby on the tree top;  
When the wind blows the cradle shall rock."

Does he suppose this rhyme is a lineal descendent of some such song as that of the Baudar-log in Rudyard Kipling's "Jungle Book"?

Mr. Buckman quotes as another instance of relationship to monkeys the fear of women for snakes. If he means poisonous snakes, it would be natural enough without the possession of a monkey ancestry. As a matter of personal experience, we may remark that of instinctive aversion to the harmless English grass snake, we have found far more remarkable instances among men than among women.

The fondness of children for carrying food to bed with them is (according to Mr. Buckman) a "dragging-food-into-the-lair idea." Their fondness for picking at any attractive substance, such as a piece of loose wall-paper, he connects with the monkey's habit of picking away bark to get at the hidden insects, or even picking in his companion's coat for yet other hidden insects. As irritation arising from parasites is relieved by scratching, so by association of ideas one may seek to relieve mental anxiety or perplexity by scratching the head, a habit which persists among some persons "above suspicion" in the matter of unwelcome tenants.

"Sucking," of course, is the act of childhood—it is one of the most important incidents connected therewith. The baby sucks to satisfy hunger; and associated with sucking are the feelings of warmth, sleep, and comfort. But hunger means distress; and sucking to satisfy hunger means sucking to alleviate a particular distress; consequently, it has developed into sucking to alleviate any distress or pain generally.

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