

seek to justify national greed and rapacity by claiming for it the scientific sanction of evolution. "Evolution" is a much abused word, and the climax of its absurdity is reached when its authority is invoked in the case of such international calamities as the overthrow of the two South African republics by Great Britain. The writer in the Westminster has no difficulty in showing that acts of war on the part of civilized nations derive no support from the teachings of evolutionist philosophers, and he quotes largely from the writings of Herbert Spencer in support of his position. Although Mr. Spencer has not been on all questions a perfect model of consistency, it is satisfactory to find that his teachings as contained in his works dealing with social evolution, touching the question of wars in general, and his latest specific utterances on the question of the Boer war in particular, are in complete accord. Yet there are many fireside philosophers and pothouse jingoes in Great Britain and America, of the retail order, who pervert the elastic phraseology of Spencer and Darwin so as to cover all sorts of moral failings, individual and national. For example: A big nation makes war upon two little nations, all professing the same religion and on nearly the same plane of civilization. The big one, with an army and resources ten times as great as the small ones, ultimately destroys them after a gallant struggle and a great deal of slaughter. The verdict of these self-approving philosophers is something like this: "All very well, you know, this national independence idea, but it must go; it can't be helped; nature's law must take its course—survival of the fittest." Or again: A thief robs a safe. A policeman attempts to arrest him. The thief shoots the policeman and escapes. Verdict: Survival of the fittest. The astonished philosopher may well exclaim: "To what vile uses may we not return" on seeing how his doctrine has come to be applied.

Now, evolution is either a physical

law, like gravitation, or it is nothing. If it is a physical law it cannot be, at the same time, a criterion of ethics. Evolution teaches that there is a constant struggle for life going on throughout all nature, mankind included. It does not say by what means the struggle shall be carried on; all it stipulates is that there shall be a struggle. Evolution, when it comes to deal with man, finds barriers which limit its severity and determine its course. These barriers are supplied by the moral law. Every "thou shalt not" of the decalogue is an interference with the severity of the evolutionary struggle; it is not a stoppage of the stream, but merely an alteration of its direction. Evolution under moral law takes the shape of competition in right-doing. Under the physical law it takes the shape of brute force. The extent to which a nation obeys the moral law in preference to the physical law is the measure of its civilization. What then is a war between two civilized nations? It is an appeal from the moral law to brute force; it is a temporary retracement of the steps by which it ascended the ladder of civilization. In the one case as in the other it is the fittest that survives, but the meaning of the word "fittest" undergoes an alteration. Under the moral law it means the most righteous, but under the physical law it means the strongest. The meaning of the word alters with the conditions under which the struggle is carried on. To attach a fixed meaning to the word so as to make it conformable to one's policy is to bring bad logic to the rescue of bad morality.

The weekly country newspaper has not as a rule much improved in its editorial department upon the country newspaper of half a century ago. In wealth of personal gossip, known as local news, there has been a notable advance. Few things happen now within the field of a country weekly's circulation, from the mirroring of a farmer's heifer in a slough to the marriage of his daughter and

the birth of his grandchild, without being reported by the indefatigable village correspondent. But most country editors are hopelessly weak when it comes to editorials. This is not because they cannot write. It is because they dare not think. We recall an exception in a country paper recently published at Waukegan by James H. Malcolm. Mr. Malcolm's disposition to think was equal to his ability to write, and he made a paper worth reading. As the paper did not last, however, country editors might reason that thinking does not pay in country journalism. Possibly they are right. But it is also true that thinking, if it happen to be unpopular, does not pay anywhere. What must be borne in mind is that vigorous thinking, even if unpopular, does pay in the long run. It is to be hoped that this idea will be cherished by the editor of the Sumner Herald, of Pierce county, Washington. For with the single exception of Mr. Malcolm's paper, it has never been our fortune to come across a country paper so strong in its editorial department. There is everywhere a field for local papers of the high order of the Sumner Herald. Though their merits may not be at once recognized, country weeklies that treat their subscribers as thoughtful men and women, instead of mere gossips, are certain in time to make themselves genuine organs of local opinion.

An Oregon reader asks "what relation the national bank circulation bears to the government in its bond security; and whether the bonds are secured by a pledge of money held, or are dependent upon the government's credit." He further asks "in what way this security of the bonds is superior to that which could be placed behind greenbacks of full legal tender," and "why such greenbacks cannot be made to take the place of bank notes and save the people bond interest?" The first of these questions may be answered by reference to the