

Doctor! Doctor!

The Ph.D.'s, the LL.D.'s, the D.D.'s, and the Sc.D.'s and the Litt.D.'s are having a hard week of it, if we can believe the papers.

I.

The hesperopitheous tooth of the American Museum of Natural History, vulgarly called the "million dollar" tooth, has turned out to be not a hesperopitheous at all but a prosthengopheous, and Dr. William K. Gregory and Dr. G. Elliott Smith and other distinguished scientists are having a back-track. This is the tooth that was brought forth to prove that sub-human or near-human apes lived in Nebraska millions of years ago. A few years ago the American Museum asserted that no tooth had ever been subjected to such severe scientific cross-examination. But now after six years of vicarious glory, the tooth is shown to be an imposter: it was never the tooth of a sub-human or near-human, but the tooth of a wild pig. Someone else has been digging in the ancient Nebraska river bed where it was found, and has brought in the rest of the remains of the pig. And thus passes another pretty missing link, and we are no closer to ape-ancestry than we were before the tooth was found.

From now on watch the papers to see how often that farce repeats itself. Someone in Patagonia or the Gobi Desert raises a hullabaloo about finding evidence of man's residence of this earth some millions of years ago -- and presently the balloon is punctured. The reason they do it is this: their theory of the evolution of man from lower animals requires the postulation of millions of years for the process; and they always will keep up their search for the evidence that seems not to exist. When men go proud God lets them make fools of themselves.

II.

Dr. Glenn Frank, President of the University of Wisconsin, the great free-speech advocate at the freespeech university, explains that free speech has its limits, and refuses a free-speech auditorium and a mixed audience for Mrs. Bertrand Russell's lecture on free love -- before and after marriage. He says that Mrs. Russell's lecture is "an enterprise that good taste and a sense of propriety suggest should be staged elsewhere than before a mixed audience in a coeducational institution." In answer to the charge that this is a violation of free speech he says: "A certain observance of good table manners is not an infringement on the freedom of eating." (One of his professors, we are told, is not so sure of this: it is asserted that he is raising his children as behaviorists, and that guests at his home have to fight for what they get to eat.) We are glad that Dr. Frank takes the stand in the name of decency, but we find it hard to believe that decency is more important than principle; we find it difficult to see any essential difference between decency and indecency, between right and wrong, for people who insist that there is no God and no soul and no free will.

III.

Dr. Clarence Little, President of the University of Michigan (whose free speech within that state, we are told, has been somewhat restricted by the Board of Trustees, finds hope for the future in youth's refusal to bow blindly to authority. Four years ago his lamented predecessor, Dr. Burton, railed against the vices of modern youth but refused to accept objective morality (the Ten Commandments) as a guide. A few weeks after his third speech in this tenor two of his graduates murdered a little boy whom they had kidnapped. When they were caught one of them insisted that his action was no more wrong than impaling a beetle on a needle, an expression he might well have learned from his professors, as our materialistic philosophers are always insisting that man is only a biological specimen.