

THE RIDDLE OF THE UNIVERSE

by a peculiar and elaborate nerve-structure, are the true and sole organs of thought and consciousness. Flechsig has recently pointed out that, in the case of man, very specific structures are found in one part of them; these structures are wanting in the other mammals, and they, therefore, afford an explanation of the superiority of man's mental powers.

The momentous announcement of modern physiology, that the cerebrum is the organ of consciousness and mental action in man and the higher mammals, is illustrated and confirmed by the pathological study of its diseases. When parts of the cortex are destroyed by disease their respective functions are affected, and thus we are enabled, to some extent, to localize the activities of the brain; when certain parts of the area are diseased, that portion of thought and consciousness disappears which depends on those particular sections. Pathological experiment yields the same result; the decay of some known area (for instance, the centre of speech) extinguishes its function (speech). In fact, there is proof enough in the most familiar phenomena of consciousness of their complete dependence on chemical changes in the substance of the brain. Many beverages (such as coffee and tea) stimulate our powers of thought; others (such as wine and beer) intensify feeling; musk and camphor reanimate the fainting consciousness; ether and chloroform deaden it, and so forth. How would that be possible if consciousness were an immaterial entity, independent of these anatomical organs? And what becomes of the consciousness of the "immortal soul" when it no longer has the use of these organs?

These and other familiar facts prove that man's consciousness — and that of the nearest mammals — is