

THE Spiritual Magazine.

APRIL, 1870.

ON THE POSSIBILITY OF LONG-CONTINUED ABSTINENCE FROM FOOD.

By W. M. WILKINSON.

PART III.

LETTER FROM DR. GARTH WILKINSON.

In commenting on the case of Elizabeth Squirrell, in 1852, he says:—

I have marked the account of the young lady in the papers, and I could see that her case was in the hands of the cruel.

I discard the question of, What is possible? having no measure of the possible. I can better judge of what is fact. God lets us know the latter, but not the former; save, indeed, on the back parts, or through facts. Similar cases of *inedia* and *asitia* are facts, as well established as the existence of the jurors in this girl's case. They are fact in trances innumerable: in the Fakirs, buried in India, and in all hybernating animals. Life can stand as well as go on; and a single function can stand while the rest go on. So says Fact. What M.D.'s say passes; but what facts say, is, and lasts.

The physiologists know so little of man's body, except as either dead, or else as a mere guzzling machine, that they cannot conceive of any abstinence, or any spiritual compensation for meals. They comprehend the good of a full trough; and I advise you and Miss Squirrell to leave them as much as possible to that repast.

I am afraid that you and the committee are engaged in a hopeless attempt. No means that you can devise will alter a blind and cruel public opinion. If it is convinced of the facts, it will still conclude against you. *There are no impartial medical*

men whose verdict would be accepted. Neither is it a case *primarily* for medical men.

LETTER FROM MR. WILLIAM HOWITT.

My dear Mr. Wilkinson,—I am glad that you are taking up the case of this poor murdered girl. I was sure the doctors would finish her when they got her into their hands. They are, and so wilfully, profoundly ignorant of all the finer forces that effect and maintain the existence of the physical system, that they were sure to kill her in quick time. To a poor invalid, whose life had for two years hung by a mere thread; who had fits several times a day, and whom the mere barking of a dog would send off into one; the sudden plunging of her into the new atmosphere and adverse magnetic influences of a posse of doctors and nurses, the majority of whom were filled with suspicion of her and hostility to her,—these, and the continual getting up and changing, dressing and putting down again, and the sudden fall of a hot-water bottle startling her again into a fit, were far more than enough to snap the mere gossamer film of such a life, and the only wonder is that she lived so long. It was to her like being plunged and kept down in an atmosphere of carbonic acid gas.

As to her taking food, I don't see a single atom of proof in all that has come out from this committee. It is contrary to common sense to suppose that the parents, if they knew that she really took food, would agree to a watch which must end in exposure or destruction. It is contrary to common sense to believe that the child, if she were in the habit of eating, should not, when the ravenous pangs of hunger came on, cry out for food; but both parents and child persisted to the last calmly in their statements of her fasting, made at all times during the last two years. As to the hard fæces in the bowels, the doctors know very well that proves nothing. In a person so feeble, and so paralyzed on one side, this might have lain for years. The doctors, in fact, have made a grand mistake. If they had by kind persuasions prevailed on the child to take some food, the case would have been absolutely decided in their favour. As it is, they have proved nothing but that she died under circumstances enough to kill such a person ten times over.

As to their assertion that a human being cannot live above a fortnight without food—their own medical annals confute them. There are numbers of such cases recorded in medical journals and journals of physical science, besides instances of them in other quarters. As to instances of this kind, see *Human Nature*, June 1, 1869, for a case of a girl at Belfast,

who took no food for five years. This is the statement:—" Mr. Joseph Wallace, of 20, College Square East, Belfast, says, that when he was young he many times saw a girl who got a shock from hearing of two brothers being drowned, and became demented, then idiotic and stupid. She slept much, and ultimately could not be aroused at all, and in that unconscious state she lay for five years, taking no food. Her body became cold, when they considered that she was dead, and buried her. When Mr. Wallace visited her she was warm and plastic. She was also seen by doctors, clergymen and others, but nothing was done to resuscitate her. This case occurred at Portaferry, 25 years ago."

You won't forget the Fakir buried for months in India; and the case watched and authenticated by British officers. Captain Osborne, who, with other officers at the court of Runjeet Singh at Lahore in 1837, saw the man thus closed up in the Rajah's tomb, and the lock and seal of the Rajah put on it; and Sir Claude Wade, who saw the opening of the tomb in the presence of the Rajah; General Fantura, and many others, who saw the opening of the tomb, on which the seal had not been broken, nor the lock forced, nor the mortar with which the door up to the lock was covered over, disturbed; who saw the chest opened, and the stiff, emaciated body of the man resuscitated after six weeks' apparent death. This was done by a peculiar process, described in the accounts of eye-witnesses; and may be found in the *Calcutta Journal of Medicine*, 1838, and in the Hon. W. G. Osborne's *Court and Camp of Runjeet Singh*, London, 1840.

The Fakir's name was Haridas. The account is also given by Dr. Macgregor, and in Honigberger's *Fruchte aus dem Morgenlande*, Vienna, 1850, p. 137.

In 1838 the Fakir was summoned again to undergo another burying in presence of Captain Osborne, and the officers of the late Sir William Mc Naghten's mission. The man had agreed, but the violent scepticism expressed by some of the officers disgusted the Fakir, and Sir William Mc Naghten and others saying that in case the man did not survive, they might be indicted for murder, the trial fell through. The Fakir had been buried several times before that of 1837 witnessed by the British officers, once for three months.—Yours faithfully,

WILLIAM HOWITT.

LETTER FROM MR. NEWTON CROSSLAND.

To the Editor of the "Standard."

Sir,—I cannot allow the case of the Welsh Fasting Girl to be disposed of without saying a few words for the parents. Their

story is one which ought to be received with respect, as it may be true, and with caution, as it may be false. From my long experience of mesmeric and biological phenomena, I have no hesitation in stating that in some very rare and exceptional states of abnormal humanity it is possible to support life for some indefinite period without ordinary food. This result may be attained by the exercise of mesmeric agency consciously or unconsciously exerted, but the elucidation of this subject would lead me into a discussion for which the world is not yet ripe. Those who have devoted much attention to this study will understand me when I say that I attribute the immediate cause of the child's death to mesmeric violence. The treatment actually adopted was the very reverse of curative, and was characterised throughout by the most astounding ignorance of biological experience. The coroner must excuse me if I tell him that he spoke more nonsense than the father uttered in his evidence; in fact, the father appears to me to be the only person about the child who had any right glimmer of her condition. His great error was in calling in a committee of investigation, and handing his child over to the tender mercies of metropolitan doctors. Her speedy death was then inevitable.

I remain, Sir, your obedient Servant,
 Blackheath, Dec. 24th. NEWTON CROSSLAND.

OPINION OF DR. DOHERTY.

Paris, January 24th, 1870.

My dear Wilkinson,—I have no observations to make on the case of the Welsh Fasting Girl; but I will explain to you some of the known facts with regard to abnormal physiological phenomena.

Physiological vitality and physical activity are quite distinct, although intimately correlated phenomena of animal life and nutrition, not to be confounded in dealing with questions of food and sustenance. Animal life may be sustained for a long time on comparatively little food, in many cases, with very sluggish respiration, circulation, and nutrition; but where physical activity is continuous and energetic, comparatively large quantities of food must be consumed, with active respiration, circulation, and nutrition, to accumulate as much latent physical force as is required to be converted into *animal heat* and mechanical work or locomotion. How much mechanical work or physical activity was accomplished by the Fasting Girl during her cataleptic states, or in the intervals of conscious bodily or mental activity? That will in some measure determine the amount of sustenance to be obtained from digestive and inhalatory supplies

of air and vapour, food and drink, to accumulate a sufficient amount of physical force in the body to sustain torpid physiological vitality, and a certain low degree of physical activity, or bodily movement.

Where there is no physical activity at all, as in the case of trees (subject to motion, however, by violent gusts of wind), *physiological vitality* is sustained during the winter months without any perceptible respiration, circulation, or nutrition. During the winter sleep of cold-blooded animals, respiration, circulation, and nutrition are almost, if not quite, as dormant as in hibernating trees. In warm-blooded hibernating animals, such as the marmot, physiological vitality is maintained during a long winter sleep with almost no perceptible signs of respiration, circulation, or nutrition. Semi-hibernating animals, such as bears, for instance, in frigid regions, live through the winter in a torpid state, on little or no food, although not entirely unconscious all the time or with intervals of semi-wakefulness. Physiological vitality, therefore, with *little or no physical activity*, in the highest orders of hibernating animal organisms, may be sustained or partially suspended during many months without food of any kind, and almost or quite without any perceptible respiration, circulation, or nutrition; and the hysterical or cataleptic temperaments of human beings are somewhat analogous to those of semi-hibernating animals.

In Doctor Carpenter's *Physiology*, chapter on "Hunger, Thirst, and Starvation," there is a fact, well authenticated, or a non-hibernating animal, a fat pig, which was buried in its sty for 160 days, under 30 feet of the chalk of Dover cliff, and was dug out alive at the end of that time, but much reduced in weight. In Berard's *Physiology* (French), numerous cases of prolonged abstinence (many months and even several years) in the human species are given as well authenticated by eminent physiologists, some of them recorded in the *Philosophical Transactions of England*.

From what I read in your pamphlet, it seems to me that the coroner and the medical men who have given their opinions with regard to the supposed "impossibility of prolonged abstinence," have not sufficiently considered the natural distinction between the requirements of mere *physiological activity* in abnormal cases, and those of *physical force and vitality* in normal cases.

It seems to me probable the Welsh Fasting Girl would not have lived very much longer in so very abnormal a state, if she had not been more than usually excited by visitors and watchers; but being suspected of imposture, and watched as a dishonest hypocrite, cannot have failed to hasten the death of so frail a creature.

It may also be observed that semi-hybernating bears are exposed to the cold external air during their winter sleep ; whereas human beings in these abnormal cases of prolonged abstinence are kept warm in bed, washed and dressed regularly, and sometimes take a little food or drink besides what may be acquired by respiration in the lungs and slight degrees of absorption in the skin.

You can print this letter if you like, though it can hardly be necessary to remind medical men of the distinctions made between extremely low physiological vitality and energetic physical activity.

Yours very sincerely,

H. DOHERTY, M.D.

TOADS IN ROCKS, ETC.

Mr. Howitt has favoured me with the following cases, which have a bearing on this subject of a very intimate kind. They are in addition to a very large number of well-attested cases given in a recent work of his own. I believe there are actually many of the "laws of nature" gentlemen, who have the hardihood to deny the whole of such cases, on the antecedent-impossibility theory, and because of the silly miracle notions to which they attribute everything they cannot understand. These and similar cases will now acquire the greater importance, because the doctors have by their conduct prevented human cases from being made public. No father will now dare to face a trial for manslaughter, and the patients may have to be murdered by having food thrust upon them, in order to satisfy the laws of "exact science."

From a note in *Gilbert White's Natural History of Selborne*, by the editor, Captain Browne, I find that Herissant made experiments on toads, enclosing them in sealed boxes in plaster long before M. Seguin did the same thing in Paris. Herissant enclosed three toads in sealed boxes in plaster in 1777. They were deposited in the Academy of Sciences, were opened at the end of 18 months, and two out of the three were found alive. Violent opposition was made to this result by the scientific. They contended that air must have got to these toads through some crevice. In 1817 Dr. Edwards made fresh experiments. The toads lived in the plaster, but died when the plaster was put under water. This was thought quite conclusive—that, shutting out the air effectually, toads could not live ; but these learned physiologists did not consider that living excluded from air is a very different thing to living under water. This water most probably filtered through the plaster and then drowned the toads, or chilled them to death. At all events, this changing

the conditions during the process of the experiment put an end to the fairness of the experiment.

Dr. Buckland made fresh experiments in 1825. He took two blocks of stone, one of porous oolite limestone, and one of a compact silicious limestone. In each of these twelve cells were cut, five inches wide and six inches deep. Into each of these cells a toad was put, having been individually accurately weighed before being put in. Over these cells plates of glass were laid, over each plate a slate, and the stones were then buried three feet under the earth in Dr. Buckland's garden. At the end of a year they were taken up, in December, 1826. All the toads in the compact limestone were dead, and so much decayed as to prove that they had been dead for some months. The greater number of the toads in the porous limestone were alive, but much emaciated, except two which had actually increased in weight. The live toads were again enclosed and buried, and at the end of the second year all were found dead. This Dr. Buckland thought a convincing proof that toads cannot live long enclosed even in porous stone; and hence we have the secret of the faith of the Doctor's son, Mr. Frank Buckland, in the same fact.

But it requires no great knowledge of physics to understand the total failure of the whole experiment, which was one of the most clumsy ones ever made. Instead of the toads dying from the total exclusion of the air, they died from its partial admission. In nature, all toads, frogs, or lizards found alive in the heart of solid rocks, are uniformly enclosed in cells exactly or very nearly only of their own size; and they are almost always, if not always, enveloped in a black and thick viscous matter, which must more perfectly prevent the admission of air. They are not in cells of five inches wide and six inches deep. In such cells they must have a quantity of air buried with them; and this air being breathed and exhausted of the vital principle by them, must become poison to them, and thus sooner or later inevitably destroy them. It appears clear that the 12 toads in the porous limestone only escaped the first year, such as did escape, by the evaporation of this poisonous atmosphere through the porous stone. Nature does not make her experiments in this clumsy manner. She encloses them compactly in the substance of the rock, probably fluid at the time, when they probably immediately fall into the torpid state in which they exist in winter, in the mud at the bottoms of waters or sunk into the earth. Neither does nature go, ever and anon, and peep at these prisoners, as we are informed Dr. Buckland and his scientific friends did; like children pulling up the plants in their gardens, from time to time, to see how they

grow ! The Doctor admits that, deprived effectually of food and air, the toad might fall into the state of torpor, or suspended animation, to which certain animals are subject in winter ; but how long it might continue to live in this state is uncertain. Nature, in a thousand cases, has answered this doubt of the Doctor, by showing that toads, frogs, and lizards do exist for thousands of years in the heart of the most solid and unporous rock, scores of feet below the surface of the earth, and where no food or crack in the stone can be found.

The Doctor mentions also four toads enclosed in cavities cut in the trunk of an apple tree, and closed by plugs so tightly as to exclude insects, and apparently the air ; yet they were found dead at the end of the year. If in this experiment, the cavities were such as the Doctor made in his stones—large enough to enclose a quantity of air with them—they would, of course, die of poison ; that is of the de-oxygenized air. Unless you can make your experiments as perfectly as nature does, you cannot expect the same results. Besides excluding absolutely the air, it is probably necessary to the continuance of the existence of these creatures that they should be so enclosed, when they are already torpid naturally in winter, in which case their torpid condition is not produced, but only continued. Again, we do not know how many perished under the process of nature in proportion to those which have survived, so that had all those experimented upon by our philosophers died, the fact would be in no degree conclusive as to this singular phenomenon ; any more than that nature does not make carbon into diamonds, or does not crystallize silica, because our greatest chemists cannot in all their repeated and most ably conducted experiments achieve the same result.

LIVE TOAD FOUND IN A COAL-FIELD.

A miner, while working in Lochtyside Coal-pit, on the Balgonie estate, exhumed a live toad which was embedded in the coal at a depth of 60 fathoms from the surface. The animal lived a considerable time after being liberated.

AN EXTRAORDINARY TOAD.

During the excavations which are being carried out under the superintendence of Mr. James Yeal, of Dyke House Quay, in connection with the Hartlepool Waterworks, the workmen yesterday morning found a toad, embedded in a block of magnesium limestone, at a depth of 25 feet from the surface of the earth, and eight feet from any spring-water vein. The

block of stone had been cut by a wedge, and was being reduced by workmen, when a pick split open the cavity in which the toad had been incarcerated. The cavity was no larger than its body, and presented the appearance of being a cast of it. The toad's eye shone with unusual brilliancy, and it was full of vivacity on its liberation. It appeared when first discovered desirous to perform the process of respiration, but evidently experienced some difficulty, and the only sign of success consisted of a "barking" noise, which it continues invariably to make at present on being touched. The toad is in the possession of Mr. S. Horner, the president of the Natural History Society, and continues in as lively a state as when found. On a minute examination, its mouth is found to be completely closed, and the barking noise it makes proceeds from its nostrils. The claws of its fore feet are turned inwards, and its hind ones are of extraordinary length, and unlike the present English toad. The Rev. R. Taylor, incumbent of St. Hilda's Church, Hartlepool, who is an eminent local geologist, gives it as his opinion that the animal must be at least 6,000 years old. The wonderful toad is to be placed in its primary habitation, and will be added to the collection in the Hartlepool Museum. The toad when first released was of pale colour, and not readily distinguished from the stone, but shortly after its colour grew darker, until it became a fine olive brown.—*Leeds Mercury*, April 8.

FROM "SMITH AND ELDER'S MONTHLY CIRCULAR."

The well-known marvellous stories of the toad are of the same character. It is next to impossible to doubt that toads have been found in the centre of large stones, and in the trunks of trees, where they must necessarily have been embedded for a long period of time. Dr. Buckland's experiments proved that they could live for many months immured in cells, made to resemble those in which they are said to have been found. Similar facts are recorded of bats, and had we space at our command several curious relations of this kind might be cited from the pages of natural history.

STRANGE DISCOVERY.

On Friday a piece of iron ore was dug out of the bottom of the shaft, which is 74 feet deep, at Mr. Brown's iron mine near Brixham, Devon, and on breaking it there crept out a lizard, six inches long, the belly yellow and the back of a brownish colour.—*Times*, Aug. 11, 1868.

REMARKABLE DISCOVERY.

A short time ago, two lizards, one five and a quarter inches long and the other three and a quarter inches, were discovered in an iron mine at Brixham, Devon. They were found in a fragile earthy substance, close to limestone, at depths of 80 feet and 60 feet from the surface. The mine is about 800 yards from the sea. For several days the lizards were preserved in a small box, partly filled with soft mine *débris*, and afterwards placed in a globe of water. Both now appear to be well. The colour on the back is black with small white spots; the belly is of rich gold colour with black stripes.—*Times*, Oct. 15, 1868.

TOAD IN A QUARRY IN GERMANY.

The discovery of a large toad in a solid stone found in a quarry at Pedarburg, in the district of Manseldt, has lately attracted the attention of the Royal Academy of Berlin. Discoveries of the like kind are frequent in Great Britain.—*Gentleman's Magazine*, vol. lv., p. 640, A.D. 1785.

TOADS, ETC., IN STONE.

The *Gentleman's Magazine*, vol. xxvi., p. 74, gives the writer's account of the toad formerly said to be found in the stone of a mantel-piece at Chillingham Castle, Northumberland, seat of Lord Tankerville. He tells us that several writers have told us of a live toad found on sawing asunder a block of marble for a chimney-piece. He says that the chimney-piece was not marble, but freestone, and when he saw it, the hole was in the transverse piece forming the top of the chimney-piece, and corresponded with the figure of some animal. It was about seven inches by eight, and was lined with some dark brown substance of close texture that was perfectly smooth and even polished. There was at Harton Castle another stone with a hole, the counterpart of this, but that both have been destroyed by the removal of these fire-places. Thus these hollows in the stones, connected with the accounts of former writers, sufficiently prove the story. The black and polished nature of the surface of the hole in which the toad had lain is exactly such as has been seen in other cases of this kind.

In another paper in the same volume of the *Gentleman's Magazine*, p. 180, a Mr. Whiston, of Ramsay, wonders at the writer of the account of the toad at Chillingham not being satisfied, when the fact was not only attested by several former writers, but, according to his own account, over the mantel-piece still hung a coat of arms with a toad in it, and a Latin in-

scription referring to it. He then adds a fact of this kind from his own knowledge. He states that, living at Wisbeach, in the Isle of Ely, about the year 1743, a Mr. Charlton, a stone-cutter who lived at the bottom of his yard, called him to see something curious. They had sawn a block of marble asunder, and in the centre of it was a live toad, in a cavity something larger than the animal itself. The marble was perfectly solid all round it. The toad was well and healthy.

Another account on the same page is furnished by a Mr. John Malpas, of Great Yarmouth. He says that on the 14th of June, 1755, he sawed a solid block of freestone asunder that came from Rutlandshire. When he had sawn the stone asunder he found a hole and discovered a toad in it. He drew it forth with his compass, and did not observe that he in any way hurt it. When on the ground it hopped about, but died in less than an hour. There was a yellow tint on the back, which changed its colour soon after the toad died. The hole was about three inches long, and almost as deep. It was smoothed and looked as if polished; he could discern no flaw or crack about the stone. One Peter Hurford, mason, adds, "I was present and saw the toad alive. Witness my hand."

At page 279 of the same volume of the Magazine, the following accounts are given. The first fact of this kind was communicated by Don Antonio de Ulloa, one of the Spanish gentlemen who accompanied the French Academicians in their late voyage to the Equator, and Fellow of the Royal Society of London. He saw at Madrid two worms found by the King of Spain's statuary in the midst of a block of marble.

The second fact was communicated by M. le Prince, statuary to the Academy at Rhovan, who saw at Ecretteville a small toad lodged in the centre of a very hard stone four feet in length and two feet thick which he had employed some masons to saw asunder.

Misson, in his *Voyage to Italy* speaks of a living crayfish, found in the midst of a piece of marble near Tivoli.

M. Peyronnel, the king's physician at Guadaloupe, having caused a well to be sunk near his house, the workmen found living frogs in the petrified strata, and this gentleman, to avoid being imposed upon, went down into the well himself, and bored into the rock, whence he brought up green frogs alive, and in all respects like the common ones. Having related these and other things of the like kind, M. le Cat, Member of the Royal Academy of Sciences at Rhovan, and of the Royal Society of London, discussed the difficulties of the question of the existence of these animals in so extraordinary a manner. He rejected the idea that eggs of such creatures were floating in the fluid state

of these strata at the time of their condensing into rock. He contended that there would be no stimulus to life under such circumstances. The creature by some inconceivable means must be deposited there alive and full-formed; in fact, M. le Cat could throw no more light on the question than we can. All that he knows, and that we know, is, that they exist, and in great quantities.

In excavating for the Leeds and Selby Railway at Milford Hill, a large toad was found imbedded in a layer of clay, with a kind of angular stone roof close to its head, at a distance of 40 feet from the surface, and beneath thick beds of stone, which seemed never to have been disturbed since the original organization of the earth. The workmen foolishly killed it, but it was preserved, by some one who saw it, in spirits.—*Leeds Mercury*, October 9th, 1833.

Besides all these cases of toads, frogs, and lizards, attested in so many quarters by thoroughly trustworthy individuals—an overwhelming amount of evidence indeed—we find on the last page the discovery of a living crayfish in a piece of marble in Italy. This extends the species of animals capable of this singular retention of life to fish of the crab and lobster kind, a fact curiously confirmed by the following letter from a well-known American gentleman:—

“Newport, R.I., April 10, 1865.

“Dear Sir,—I was very much impressed by the insolence, so characteristic of scientific minds, mentioned, I think, in your *History of the Supernatural*, and intended long ago to have sent you one of the thousand proofs of it that can easily be produced here, and I presume in Great Britain also.

“A relation of mine many years ago had occasion to cut a cellar for a house in a *ledge* of granite, about 200 yards from the sea shore, at the southern extremity of this island. It could only be accomplished by blasting with gunpowder. In the process great numbers of what are familiarly known here as green crabs were liberated from matrix in solid rock. As if by instinct they immediately ran for the sea, which had probably tantalized them with its surge for a thousand centuries at least. On being caught they were found to be as light as empty birds' eggs. The gentleman, a doctor of medicine, and possessed of a strong, observing mind, gave one of them to my brother, which I have often seen. The incident occurred about the year 1825. This crab is usually a little less in size than a half-crown piece, though often larger. The individuals exhumed resembled the race now abundant on all our sea shores of this district;

but it is quite possible skilful ichthyologists would find characteristics of different species, or variety, between them.

“ I am, very respectfully yours,

“ JOS. P. HAZARD.

“ Mr. Wm. Howitt,

“ Highgate, London.”

It is scarcely possible to open any old newspaper or magazine without finding fully attested cases of this wonderful retention of animation by toads and frogs. Numbers of such cases might be collected from the *Gentleman's Magazine*. Opening the well-known Newcastle-on-Tyne publication, *Richardson's Local Historian's Table Book*, we find the following entries made from the local newspapers of the time:—

“ June, 1797.—This month, in working a slate quarry near Barnard Castle, a toad of great magnitude was discovered in a large stone, solid excepting the spot occupied by the incarcerated animal. The toad died immediately on being exposed to the air.”—Vol. ii., p. 302.

“ 1809.—On opening a gap in a wall near Bamborough, for the passage of carts, a toad, which had been incarcerated in the centre of the wall, was found alive and set at liberty. A mason named George Wilson, when building this wall 16 years before, had wantonly immured the animal in a close cavity formed of lime and stone, just sufficient to contain it, and which he plastered so closely as seemingly to prevent the admission of air. When discovered, at first, it seemed, as must naturally be supposed, in a very torpid state, but it soon recovered animation and activity, and, as if sensible of the blessings of freedom, made its way to a collection of stones and disappeared.”—Vol. ii., p. 392; see also *Mackenzie's History of Northumberland*.

“ 1862, November 18.—Some workmen employed in a quarry at Byker Hill, near Newcastle, on splitting a huge block of freestone, nearly three tons weight, found a living toad in the middle of it. The cavity that contained the animal, to which there was no passage, was the model of the figure, and was lined with a black substance suffused with moisture.”—Vol. iii., p. 92.

“ 1818, October 11.—As Joseph Madelin, a miner, employed in South Moor Colliery, in the County of Durham, was hewing a solid stratum of coal, about six feet in thickness, and 13 fathoms from the surface of the earth (78 feet), he found a frog enclosed in a solid mass, which immediately, on being liberated, began to exercise the functions of animal life. The recess in

the coal in which it was found was exactly fitted to its body, and had apparently no communication whatever with the surface of the rock. The animal was exactly the colour of the coal, but on being put into a vessel of water its sooty covering disappeared, and it appeared speckled like the rest of its species."—Vol. iii., p. 192.

"1828, July.—In removing the old battlements of Framwellgate Bridge, in the City of Durham, a large living toad was found in the very middle of the wall, where it must have been confined for a number of years. The bridge was built by Bishop Flambart, in the year 1120, but when the battlement containing the animal was built was not known."—Vol. iii., p. 382.

Sir Alexander Gordon Cumming wrote as follows:—

To the Editor of the "Times."

Sir,—A short time ago you quoted a letter written by me to the editor of the *Elgin Courier*, in which I mentioned the discovery of living toads in making a railway cutting through rocks near Altyre.

As many of my friends have questioned the authenticity of the signature, will you allow me to avow myself to be the writer, and in confirmation of my statements to forward the enclosed extract from the *Forres Gazette* of last week.

The ground under which these living toads are found consists of two feet of black soil; from six to twelve feet of water-worn gravel, and four to eight feet of hard sandstone, all resting on a bed of red conglomerate.

While inspecting the railway works, I have myself seen large numbers of living toads taken out of the conglomerate at depths of from 15 feet to 24 feet from the surface. An extensive, and seemingly unbroken bed of rock covers the stratum in which these living toads are found.

In sloping the sides of the cutting to one and a half in one, we may anticipate a further release of prisoners.

I shall be glad if any scientific person will account for the presence of living creatures in such a position.

I am, your obedient Servant,

ALEXANDER P. GORDON CUMMING.

7, Park Street,
May 18th, 1863.

A WELSH WOMAN IN 1812.

From my friend Baron Dirckinck-Holmfeld, of Pinneberg, in Holstein, I have received a letter in which he says:—

In a German book, I met with a quotation from an English author, who describes a case of abstinence from food in a period of 63 years happening in Wales, thus near at hand for the jury. The author is Royston; *Medical Topography of Great Britain*. I don't know whether the book is rightly quoted; but, if so, it will be found in the British Museum. The German book where I found the quotation, is: *Museum des Wundervollen, etc.*, von I. A. Bergk and F. G. Baumgartons, Leipzig, 1812; Vol. xi. No. 4, with the motto, "Facts are the way to truth."—Galiani.

The quotation is as follows:—

"In Wales lives still (in 1812) a woman, Mary Thomas, 84 years old, who, since 63 years, has been bedridden, neither eating nor drinking all the while. During ten years she was in an unconscious torpor, taking no food whatever. In 1807, all her food consisted in an ounce of bread and a glass of water every fortnight; but also this she regularly gave up again after a few minutes by vomiting. She is like a skeleton."—Royston; *Medical Topography of Great Britain*.

"Wales" is rather a wide direction, and 63 years is decidedly long, but there is the case for whatever it may be worth.

A WOMAN AT DELPH.

In Phillips's *Million of Facts*, at page 119, I find the following:—

A female who, in 1829, was 42 years of age and resided at Pynacre, near Delph, had from disease not eaten anything since 1818, nor drank anything since 1820. Total exhaustion was prevented by damp wrappers.

EFFECT OF MAGNETISM ON THE APPETITE.

I find in Townshend's *Facts in Mesmerism*, Longmans, 1840, page 152, an interesting and suggestive experiment:—

I mesmerised the same person near the hour of luncheon; he having previously observed that he was very hungry, and therefore hoped I should wake him soon, in order that he might eat his accustomed meal. When in mesmeric sleepwaking, he complained no more of hunger; and, indeed, assured me that he felt nothing whatever of the powerful appetite which had so recently tormented him. He had no desire to awake; and, as I was engaged in trying upon him some interesting experiments relating to vision, I did not think of demesmerising him till late in the day—about half an hour before dinner. The moment he was restored to the normal state, he declared that he was almost mad with hunger; and, when I told him how long he had been

in sleepwaking, was quite angry that I had not waked him sooner. Though told that dinner would soon be on the table, he begged to eat something immediately.

CASES STATED BY DR. BROWN-SEQUARD.

This eminent physiologist has been applied to in Paris by my friend Dr. Doherty, from whom I have received the following letter:—

Paris, February 12, 1870.

My dear Wilkinson,—I called on Dr. Brown-Sequard the other day, to ask if he had met with any cases of prolonged abstinence in his practice, and he informed me that some years ago, he was called in to see a bed-ridden patient (in a wealthy family somewhere beyond Bayswater), who was said to have lived two years on almost no tangible sustenance of any kind, but he does not know if she be still alive. This morning I received the following note from him, and have copied the letter to which he alludes. It is a very remarkable case, and I should think would be of use to open the mental eyes of some medical men, of very limited experience in such abnormal phenomena.

Yours very sincerely,

W. M. Wilkinson, Esq.

H. DOHERTY.

The letter of Dr Brown-Sequard is as follows:—

Paris, Jeudi, 12 Fev., 1870.

Cher ami,—Dans le *Bulletin de la Faculté de Medecine*, 1814, vol. iv., p. 151, on parle d'une jeune fille, qui pendant onze ans n'a pris aucun aliment solide.

À vous,

Dr. Doherty.

C. E. BROWN-SEQUARD.

THE CASE REFERRED TO BY DR. BROWN-SEQUARD.

“ *Extrait d'une Lettre de M. de Varennes, Maire de la Ville de Coulonniers, à M. le Professeur CHAUSSE, sur une fille qui a été près de onze ans sans prendre aucun aliment solide.*

“ En 1783, lorsque j'étais en garnison à Aire, j'entendis parler d'une fille nommée *Marie-Joseph Dalh*, native du village Disouguin, à une petite lieue de la ville, et qui, depuis plusieurs années, ne prenait aucun aliment solide. Comme ce cas me parut fort extraordinaire, je voulus m'en assurer moi-même, et en recueillir tous les détails. J'allai donc au village, et je trouvai cette malheureuse fille, alors âgée de quarante-un ans, couchée, ou pour parler plus exactement, accroupie, et en quelque sorte pelotonnée (rolled up in a lump) sur un petit lit de paille. Le tronc était courbé en avant, les membres fortement

fléchis, et la tête penchée appuyait sur un des genoux, comme j'ai représentée dans un dessin que je fis alors : une grande et grosse serviette étendue sur la paille lui servait de drap, et une autre de couverture, car elle n'avait aucun vêtement. La peau était assez blanche, et la maigreur extrême. On m'assura que depuis dix ans cette malheureuse fille était dans cet état d'immobilité ; qu'elle n'avait ni connaissance, ni sentiment, et que pendant tout ce temps elle n'avait pris d'autre nourriture que de l'eau légèrement miellée, que, dans le pays, on nomme *petit-lait*.

“ Lors de ma visite, on ne lui en donnait que quelques gouttes deux fois par jour, et si l'on y manquait, elle ne témoignait aucun besoin (a few drops twice a day, and when they forgot to give her any, she showed no signs of want). On ajouta que depuis deux ans, elle n'avait jamais changé d'elle-même, sa position, et n'avait donné de signe de vie que par une respiration presque insensible (almost imperceptible) et le mouvement de la déglutition ; et que si l'on cherchait à écarter un bras du corps, ou un genou de l'autre, on éprouvait la même résistance que celle d'une branche d'arbre proche du tronc, et que l'on voudrait en éloigner. La permanence de cet état m'a été attestée par quelques notables du lieu, et surtout par le Curé (parish priest), qui me parut un homme instruit et d'un bon esprit : moi-même je l'ai visitée trois fois, mettant dans mes visites trois jours d'intervalle, pour m'assurer s'il n'y aurait point quelque changement, et je n'en ai point remarqué.

“ Cet état est un effet d'un travail forcé et de l'amour. Cette fille était servante dans une ferme ; elle aimait et elle était aimée d'un des fils du fermier. Le père ne voulait point consentir au mariage, parce que la fille était pauvre. Cependant, un jour, au temps de la moisson (harvest) il lui dit, en plaisantant : *Marie, si d'ici à trois jours tu me coupe tout le bled (corn) de ce champ, sans te faire aider de personne, je te donnerai mon fils.* La pauvre fille le crut (believed him) se mit à l'ouvrage, travailla jour et nuit, et tomba dans une maladie qui eut cette triste fin.

“ Lors de mes visites, on ne donnait à cette pauvre fille, qu'environ deux cuillerées de *petit-lait* (sweetened water) le matin, autant le soir, encore s'en perdait-il une portion ; et j'ai remarqué que quelques minutes après avoir pris cette boisson, son visage se colorait un peu : par fois aussi, elle rendait par la voie ordinaire une matière jaunâtre un peu moins liquide que la nourriture qu'on lui donnait ; et comme les mâchoires étaient très-serrées (firmly closed) on lui avait cassé trois dents (broken three teeth) pour pouvoir lui introduire les boissons ; et dans cette opération, ainsi que dans l'application des vésicatoires, des ventouses (cupping and blistering) et autres moyens que l'on a employé, elle n'a jamais donné aucun signe de sensibilité.

“ J’étais dans mes trois visites accompagné de M. Gilet, chirurgien-major du regiment. Cette malheureuse fille est morte en 1784, un an apres mes visites, environ onze ans apres le commencement de la maladie qui a amené l’immobilité de tout le corps, et cette longue abstinence.” *

ABSTINENCE IN THE HORSE.

Professor Spooner, of the Royal Veterinary College, informs me that he has known many cases in which horses have lived as long as 12 days without food of any kind, and this is the more remarkable as occurring in an animal, which by nature requires almost constant feeding—so much so, as that it is said that the horse, when at pasture, will be eating for 20 hours out of the 24.

MECONIUM IN THE FÆTUS.

Professor Spooner also reminds me that in the larger intestines of the fœtus there are always found fæces (meconium) which are the excreta of the liver, and of the intestinal canal, and these often acquire a considerable hardness as they approach the end of the canal, and this at a period when no aliment can have been received through the stomach. Will “ Mr. James Thomas, the surgeon ” ever say again, that “ it is no more possible there can be excrement without food than ashes without fuel ? ” And yet his evidence goes down well with the public, and no other medical men say a word against it. Any old monthly nurse could have taught him better.

A SCOTCH BAILLIE.

A physician of Liverpool writes as follows :—

“ I attended a baillie in a Scotch town labouring under gout, who scarcely tasted food for one and a half years—no, not enough, in all that time, to keep a sparrow or a pigeon alive. The case is still more interesting as during all that time he suffered almost incessantly *unutterable agony*—agony such as I have never seen equalled—and he never slept above 15 minutes in succession, for all that time. This beats the Welsh Fasting Girl, and more, as it was never made public, nor was one penny ever made by exhibiting it as a show. The clergyman and others in the parish can swear to it. He died in 1857. Here there is scarcely an exception to the rule, that the profession pooh pooh the case and look upon it as a perfect swindle. It is needless to raise a voice. I should as soon think of thrusting my head into the open jaws of a Bengal tiger just before feeding time.”

* Copied from No. vii. of the *Bulletin de la Faculté de Médecine de Paris*, p. 151, Vol. IV., 1814.—H. DOHERTY.

Under such circumstances it is natural he should not wish his name to be known. What an illustration of the fight which truth has to make for recognition, and of the petty martyrdom one has to suffer for a little boldness. And see how important is a case like this, where a little food was taken occasionally—but “not enough to keep a pigeon alive!” If so infinitely little will suffice, why not none at all?

March 24, 1870.

FORTY CASES.

The Rev. William Mountford, of Boston, in the United States, writes me, that in a book published in England in 1808, entitled, *The Wonders of the Little World; or, a General History of Man*; by Nathaniel Wanley: a New Edition, 1808; 2 vols.—Vol. II., p. 374, Book vi., chap. 21, between 30 and 40 cases of fasting are narrated similar to that of the Welsh Girl. Miss D. J., a neighbour of the family, has also written a most interesting and valuable paper on the case, which I hope to see published in the *Cardiff Reporter*, which has ably advocated the scientific aspects of the case.

FASTING CASES FROM THE “PALL MALL GAZETTE.”

In 1854, there was a case of a girl at Heidelberg which caused so much wonder that the Count Palatine appointed a commission of five matrons to watch her, and they reported that her abstinence both from food and drink was complete, and in an account published in Frankfort in 1587 there is an advertisement to the effect that the girl still remained in the same state. A few years after, Jane Balon, the daughter of a locksmith in a village near Poitiers, became celebrated under the title of the “Maid of Confolans” or of “Poitou.” In her eleventh year, after a violent attack of vomiting, she remained speechless for nearly a month, and thenceforth, though she recovered all her faculties except the complete use of one hip, she could take neither meat nor drink, and even declined the sucking of sweetmeats, which the English narrator truly tells us are “agreeable to such young years.” At the time he tells the story she had fasted near three years, but in all other respects had returned to her ordinary occupations—sleeping, spinning, and marketing, and making herself in no way an object of compassion, although “sometimes from her eyes issues a few teares.” But a fuller and more interesting account is that of a boy named Godean, given by “Simon de Provencheres, Médecin du Roy,” of which we have before us the fourth edition, printed at Sens in 1616. It consists

of five discourses, going very elaborately into all the physical conditions of the case, including the autopsy of the youthful prodigy. We will not reproduce the scientific deductions of the worthy doctor, inasmuch as very few of his premises will stand the test of modern discovery ; but the facts respecting his patient are stated with simplicity, without any apparent credulity, and with no application to any especial theory. The state of abstinence from food and drink lasted four years and eleven months. The first essay was written before the child was taken to Fontainebleau to be shown to the king and queen, and had returned home much exhausted with the journey. At that time the doctor had only known the case by credible testimony, but he was then determined to judge for himself. Godean was brought to his house by his parents apparently without any difficulty, and fully examined to his satisfaction. A short time after he persuaded the father to leave the child alone with him for some days, and he gives the most complete details of its demeanour and condition. He was a pleasant, handsome little fellow, rather *farouche* at first, but soon adapting himself to a new life. He slept comfortably alone, said his prayers devoutly, was easily amused, and full of activity. The subject of food or drink was never mentioned, as it seemed to annoy him, but he made no difficulty in sitting at table with those who were eating, and would even say grace. The visit was repeated on two other occasions, and at last the doctor found him stronger and firmer on his legs, but not grown in height from the time he first saw him. All this time his tongue was red, his breath pure, and his teeth clean. About the end of the second year of his fast he lost the use of his legs, and was confined to his bed for three months, having before usually slept upon a palliasse with his clothes on ; at the end of that time he suddenly recovered his strength, and went about as before. A short time after he was attacked with small-pox, which he took lightly, and the pustules soon disappeared without injury to the skin. His usual occupation was that of watching in the fields, and he was very adroit in snaring and netting birds. One day having returned from Sens, and complaining of the heat, he asked his father to go and see a surgeon who had promised him a gun, and during his absence fell into a high fever. In this condition he put a pitcher of water to his lips and wetted them, but would not swallow a drop, though evidently enjoying the coolness on his face and hands. His father returning without the gun he seemed vexed, but soon said, "It would do me no good now," and, after two days' unconsciousness, expired. The dissection showed that the child died of inflammation of the lungs. The upper portion of the œsophagus was found

to be tightly compressed, but the lower part open and full of thick phlegm. There were several dead worms in the body, M. de Provencheres' theories on this prodigy excited much controversy and objection, but there does not seem to have arisen in any quarter any suspicion of imposture or collusion. In another account of the same child it is mentioned that Monsieur Siby, another doctor, going to see him, could not get him to take his hands from his face, which the mother explained by his terror lest food should be presented to him by any one. Instances are not wanting of these strange affections among the higher classes of society. A certain Marquess de Pizany, an Italian diplomatist, was never known to drink, and on a visit of the King and Queen of France to Blois in 1618, a gentleman from Provence was presented to them who had the peculiarity of living without food or drink, with the exception of sometimes rinsing his mouth with a little sugared water. He was apparently a man of condition, and attended by two servants—of fine person, lively conversation, and good manners. Under the pretence of not knowing where he came from, but no doubt for the purpose of testing his physical singularities, the magistrates kept him under arrest for a fortnight, but they could detect no fraud, and after having borne his imprisonment with much good humour, he was conducted back to his hostel, which he soon left to return home. Now, allowing every scope for exaggeration, and every probability of occasional deception, these stories assuredly indicate a most singular physical state of the human body in relation to its ordinary aliment. It will be well if the case under investigation at this moment could be so thoroughly examined that it could be known on how little nourishment this Welsh girl really subsisted, and what were the nervous conditions under which the abstinence became, as her mother expressed it, "her only pleasure." The case of the Derbyshire maiden, Martha Taylor—"Mirabile Pecci"—which was presented to the Royal Society towards the end of this same century, deserves a separate notice.

THE DOCTORS.

Since the above portion of the case was written, I hear that several of the doctors who put on the nurses are to answer for what they did before the law. "They digged a pit for others and are fallen into it themselves." They have been wonderfully quiet of late, and I have not even heard of their shewing any signs of trying to assist Evan Jacob out of his trouble. The last that was known of them was when the committee met for the last time to review their work, whilst the poor girl was lying

dead, and when they broke up with an unanimous vote of thanks to the chairman who had so ably, &c. They at all events are sure to have a fair hearing, and I wish them well through it. Their best defence is that they acted up to their light, and that they only wanted to put the "laws of nature" on their legs again. I hope the instances I have brought together, with the many others they could readily find in their own books, may be of service in showing it as probable that the poor girl did not after all die of hunger, but of the breakage of her sympathies. If so, there is so little known of such a cause of death, that it is not criminal to be ignorant of it, but it would be curious to find the doctors driven into such a corner for a defence, and still more so to find it successful in the midst of the prejudice which they have succeeded in raising.

March 5th, 1870.

THE DOCTORS DISCHARGED.

The magistrates, after many days' examination, have discharged the doctors and have committed the father and mother for manslaughter. Throughout the long investigation there is a plentiful lack of any evidence to shew the administration of food by the parents during the two years, and all goes on the assumption of the hypothesis that it must have been administered, because the girl lived. There is an entire ignoring of the recorded cases in medical books of similar instances in hysterical catalepsy, and the theory of the prosecution rests on that "Tower of Weakness" which will cause it ultimately to break down. It appears that Mr. Phillips, one of the surgeons who examined the body, used the microscope to the fæces, and recognized starch globules and some small pieces of bone, "either of small fish or small bird." I think little of this evidence, since no one can say for how long these fæces may not have been in the body. The magisterial examination has signally failed in showing any new facts or probabilities of imposture, but on the contrary, it brings out the perfect good faith of the parents in the fasting of their poor daughter, and it shews their religious belief in it as a miracle—which it clearly is not, any more than any other abnormal fact is a miracle, because it is out of the common. There is an excellent article in the *Law Times* on the legal bearings of the case, and now that it is to come before a jury, we must leave it to the just administration of the law, only suggesting that it would be much more satisfactory that it should be tried in London rather than before a Welsh jury, who, according to Mr. Fitzwilliam, the chairman of the magistrates, after forty years' experience of

them, are "a mockery, a delusion, and a snare." If this be so, the Home Office should take the necessary steps to remove the trial.

With the power and the money of the Government on the side of the prosecution, I venture to hope that some kindly souled persons will subscribe for the necessary expenses of the defence. I have received several offers, and small cheques, and one gentleman has authorized me to draw on him for £100, but I have no intention of taking so large a sum out of one pocket, where the duty lies on so many, to give Science a fair trial.

March 28, 1870.

SUPPLEMENTARY REMARKS, BY DR. GARTH WILKINSON.

76, Wimpole Street,
Cavendish Square, London, W.,
Feb. 1, 1870.

MY DEAR BROTHER,—From the first I took a deep interest in the case of the Welsh Fasting Girl, and saw the great issues which it involves. The first issue now is the trial of her father for manslaughter, and the verdict, whatever it be. I should feel it criminal to withhold any word of mine which could influence and bend that trial towards fairness to the accused.

No evidence can be conclusive against him excepting his own confession of having regularly administered food to her when he pretended that she took no food; or the sufficient proof to this effect of some other person or persons substantiated against him.

Medical evidence in the case is as idle as the winds. It is as irrelevant as the most common opinion; it is indeed but common opinion dressed with authority, animated awry by the clique spirit, and inflamed by love of dominion. The layman who asks the first medical acquaintance he meets, gets for answer, "Any medical man can tell you that human life cannot be supported without food for more than eight days. Sarah Jacobs, you see, dies punctually." There is no need here of the phrase "medical man," for the alleged piece of medical knowledge is known by everybody living, savage and civilized. Who is not painfully aware that a few days' starvation—a few days more or less—will terminate existence? This is the very *two and two are four* of bodily mundane sense; and doctors expose themselves when they call themselves in to stamp their names on this plain fact, and make it into "medical opinion."

Every "medical" man knows that night follows day; that breakfast is wanted after supper, that dinner is wanted after

breakfast, that tea is wanted after dinner, and supper after tea; and every medical man has a long string of knowledges of this order; but which nobody ever before thought were the *Materia Medica* of his brains; but now it seems that all this current fact, embracing bodily sense from the cradle to the grave, is a medical specialty, and the laity can only have it when it has been given in to the colleges, and comes back thence duly stamped in the medical mint. "Man must dine" is therefore now not a patent fact, excepting in so far as it is newly revealed in medical light.

It happens, however, that medical men know less about this matter than other people, for plain reasons. Every calling narrows its view in order to limit itself to its own field, and to be precise and perfect there. The field of medicine in diet, is, disease-diet, and disease-preventing diet. This is a small part of the whole subject of the food of mankind in health and disease; of the appetites of all men; of the various laws of appetite; of its highest developments and lowest depths; of its modifications by all the faculties and states of man; of its strangenesses and exceptions; and of the planetary roundness that constitutes, and the heavenly order that may preside over, the human table. Common men can well know a large part of all this; and especially big broad students, and best of all, men and women of faith, can get a glimpse of the whole, and see that feeding and food, resting on and made out of matter, and various in ages, climes, conditions, although firm and inflexible at the base in every-day life, are yet like subtle flame at the top, and there are spiritual, and abandoned to the wafts of the spirit, in the fingers of which all that doctors miscall laws of nature is mere plastic putty. Medical men are the last people, as they are at present penned in professions and cliques, who can find this larger diet-realm out. It even says much for their heads and hearts if they can help denying it. I therefore plead to the broad democracy of knowledge, that medical opinion, and most especially scientific medical opinion, is valueless, and should be purged out of court, on this man's trial.

I say advisedly, "scientific medical opinion;" for while an ordinary practitioner may preserve some humane largeness, a thoroughly scientific one too often lives in a house of impossibilities, the door of which is derision of what is out of his ken, and the windows face in upon the middle yard of his own organic apparatus, of which his personal fancy is the centre; the walls and pavement of that yard are his laws of nature, and the dust-hole there is for broken vessels of faith, and shards of the better imagination. He *has* an imagination, for imagination is the working eye of the heart in every moment of every power; but it is an imagination enthralled to sense, in a will

determined to deny whatever outlies the lowest average of his facts. Faith is his foe, his burglar, and his bugbear.

And yet, faith, my Brother, is the only condition upon which stock can be taken of all knowledge in "both worlds;" for this simple reason—that the doings and fruits and results and facts of faith itself have themselves to be recorded as knowledge; and the man who would deny them cannot count them. I appeal therefore to the twelve honest jurymen who are to try this man, to pray for faith, as well as to use the eyes of discernment, and to put on all the unsuspecting spectacles of scrutiny.

The Press has played an ignoble part in this affair, and has applauded to the echo the eight-day life axiom of the doctors. Popes of vulgar opinion living on doctors' pence! And truly they have led the opinion of their public, and girt about this poor man with a ring of infuriated law.

What then is the simple question for the jury? In the first place, can it be proved that food was given to Sarah Jacobs at intervals by this man, or other people, up to the period when he unwisely handed his daughter over to the Four Death-Watches of Guy's. If this can be proved in evidence, this case of fasting is a case of imposture, and the man awaits his sentence. But it must be proved by evidence, and not by science, for science has made up and given forth its own little mind already, and the jury knows what that is; but they have their awful work to do, of justice for and upon a brother man, and they must see and handle only his facts in his interest and that of their country.

All remark and all views are secondary to this one issue: Who saw Jacobs or any one else give Sarah Jacobs food? If no one saw it, Jacobs must be acquitted. Something grosser and harder than Materialism, even common Fact, must decide this man's fate.

To me, who see no impossibility in the maintenance of human life under unusual conditions for an indefinite period without ponderable food, the man's own allegation and tale before the coroner seems plain and straightforward; and there are few parts of it that I have not seen attested over and over again in my own practice and experience. I have seen sudden mental and emotional shocks followed by a sudden development of hysteria, which has involved in a kind of trance and suspension the whole body, and organ after organ, causing a peculiar apparent death of the functions; making tissue and its changes to stand still in the life, and rendering food comparatively unimportant to the distracted and emoved vitals. I have known *almost* no food consumed for a twelvemonth, and still a considerable plumpness remain to the frame. All the time, faecal excretion has been very considerable, and the excretion

of the kidneys also. The latter I have seen in a case where a teaspoonful of water any time during a twelvemonth would have caused terrible hydrophoboid convulsions.

These are familiar facts of hysteria and catalepsy, and no man can say to any fellow creature's prejudice, how intense they may be, or how long they may last. If an emotion can strike the bodily functions into apparent death, and the spiritual part be present and manifest with an unwonted life, you have here both the conditions for a very lasting stand in nature: you have a *minimum* of waste, and a fountain of vitality, regnant in the body at the same time. Such is the trance state, whether the waking trance state or the somnambulist trance state, in its nature. The reverse of the ordinary state, in which the greatest vitality is always accompanied in brain and body by the greatest waste of tissue.

I saw this exemplified 25 years ago at our dear Dr. Elliotson's. A girl catalepted stood on his floor, twisted almost out of her centre of gravity, motionless, without a tremble, stood for a good part of an hour, with a face like a marble Madonna,—and when awakened came out of the state with every fibre and all the eye exhilarated by the profound requiem of her trance. No strong man, even if he had had all Materialism to prove by the feat, could have braved out many minutes of that naturally-impossible calmness.

I forbear to dwell on the numerous and never disproved cases of prolonged fasting in all times and countries, also upon revelation; and upon the well-attested phenomena of human and animal hybernation; these things you have set forward as analogues and supports, as kindred facts, to fasting cases. But I have now to beseech the jury and all men to consider why the girl died punctually in eight days.

The Four Death-Watches from Guy's have established one rule of circumstance, if no law of nature; and I defy any one to deny it as an approximation to a general rule,—this to wit,—that a fasting girl of the make and build of Sarah Jacobs is likely, under the environment and circumpressure and suspicion and death-watch eyes and foregone hearts and minds and hospital instructions of Four Death-Watches from Guy's, to live about eight days of secular time. About so many ticks of four death-watches.

But what might she die of?

I know what I should die of under analogous circumstances, if God Almighty did not keep me alive for better things. If all my faiths, and the inner organism of my spirit, fed from within, and justified from above, could be sat round and circumvented by embodied Materialisms; if Professor Protoplasm could sit at

my vitals, and steadily negate me there, and call Beef-tea my Creator. If Tyndall could close up beside my prayers, and charge that they are the last conversions and drolleries of his motley cosmic mountebank, Force; if my hopes and visions of immortality could be squeezed and racked by Lewes and Spencer, and resolved in continual hearing into excitement and delusion,—clearly death would be a speedy and a happy release from these gentlemen; and they would have my corpse, mental and bodily, on hand, as a sure proof that matter and her ticklings are their unfailing residuum. I should die from the violation of every sympathy, and the denial of the whole structure and spirit of my being from my childhood to this very day.

And if Sarah Jacobs were a true case,—and no evidence has yet been taken adverse to that opinion, though such evidence may be forthcoming,—there is all reason why she should die under the rack of the Four Death-Watches from Guy's. For, gentlemen of the jury, you have a frailest girl, living on the very border, on the lid and skin of the precipice of this life, whom a puff of air, or of feeling, threw into convulsion; and her state had been maintained for aught that yet appears, on no mortal sustenance, but on spiritual incomings; on imponderable and atmospheric saturations, and on the love and the sympathy of her father and her mother and her home. It is a fabric all built up of influx from within, of cement from the kindly air, and of the magnetism of charity and affection. Disease is the quaking ground on which it stands or lies. The lease of her life is written on her honesty, and cancelled if her honesty be denied. Now the Four Death-Watches, unhappily sanctioned by the parents, with the first chairs they took around her, abolished every condition of her continuance, and broke the slender thread of states on which her life was hung. Their unmagnetic batteries of frames stopped the currents of her spirit, therewith twisted her organization from its own feeding, yet could give it no other food; gave that inmost lie, which, not suspicion, but foregone condemnation gives to everything of another's life, and walled her away in their dire *oubliette* from the sacred sustenance of a father's and a mother's love; stamped out her angels, her parents, and her breath, in one. If this, in such an organism, is not a sufficient cause of death, then Troppman's head is still on, and there is no blade that can cut it down. To such a state as hers, if it existed, the Four Death-Watches from Guy's were four conclusive executioners.

I will draw one corollary here, which may be useful for future guidance: If you have any abnormal event happen to you in this life, any spiritual or greatly exceptional fact, do not submit it to the investigation of any but its own tribunal, often

within your own breast, or in your own house. Do not try to corroborate it by getting it tested and investigated with a view to having it endorsed by the men of this world's science. If it is worth anything, by this process you will extinguish and lose it. "Go your way and tell no man," is common sense about it, attested by all good experience. Gradually it will accrete with other instances, and will substantiate itself as history, and be irremovable. But do not allow professional "exact science" to come near it in its early stages.

And a second corollary: Do not trust "exact science" or any science beyond its own facts. It is very easy to make a science exact; you have only to lop off all the leaves and branches to get a good definite trunk or stump from any tree; and if you want further exactitude, pull it up by the roots, and cut them off; and then you can see the whole butt of the case, and handle its simplicity. Take abstinence, for instance, or food and its privation, and let us make that "exact." In the first place, turn out of the subject the fasting of Christ; because you can't and won't believe it as a physical fact. Next turn out all histories of long fasting; they happened before exactitude was born, and when the Four Death-Watches had not been put together into a guillotine for imposture. Next turn out as irrelevant all the phenomena of animal permanence without food. Next, take an alderman and ask him how long he can last without dining: and if he declines to try how long, he will appeal to his physicians, and they will tell him eight days; and they will get this endorsed by the Royal Society, and lectured upon by its chiefs, who will charge the Universal Penny Press to inform all people without appeal that exact science has been attained, that superstition and imposture about fasting are dead, that open ears and investigation on that subject are henceforth signs of insanity, and that every properly death-watched faster dies in eight days, which was destined to be demonstrated.—Q. E. D. D.

This process is going on about, perhaps, every subject valuable to the human race; and it consists in nothing more recondite than acceptance of matter and denial of spirit all round. Nor is there any deeper bottom of it than that men cannot or will not believe; that faith is in great part dead. The negative spirit, held fanatically, is the ultimate fact in the controversy; or, on the other hand, the affirmative spirit. "I do not like thee, oh! spirit;" or, "I do like thee," are the hearts and minds of the two parties—of faith in Spirit, or faith in Materialism. It is important to bear this in mind, because it enables the two parties with the better grace to separate, and each work out its life on its own grounds. They will war here—

after; but at this present hour they may prepare their enginery in apparent peace.

I may conclude this by summing up that individual taste is the sole explainable basis of the difference, for instance, between various learned coroners and all death-watches and myself; and that all my tastes, and thereafter all my reasons, go with faith in what is spiritual and personal, and with the entertainment of every subject in its whole complex and compass, all round history and geography; all through honest allegation; down from every earnest faith; with revelation and its implicitness at the top, and with the commonest experience at the bottom; and, where the minister of the laboratory and the crucible is not overweening, with him also in his place. Exactitude is ultimately that of the whole in the parts, and of the parts in the whole; but I repugn any exactness of which leanness and lowness are the essentials. And I profoundly disbelieve all experiments on the high things of human nature which can be repeated by everybody. Such experiments are the mere pretexts of a denial which has long preceded them.

In conclusion, do not let the jury be influenced by the learned coroner's appeal to the laws of nature. "Crownor's quest laws" of nature is a tempting reminiscence and quotation. From the negative side no man knows any of the laws of nature. Because the learned coroner is "strict to the glebe," fixed to the ground, he does not know that Somebody who is not a coroner has not ascended into the skies, and there, on what is nothing to the learned coroner, sitteth. It is useless to pule of gravitation, excepting in his own case where it is needless to enforce it. Because the coroner must eat and drink four-hourly, he has no force to say that another, very unlike himself, may not have fasted for five times eight days. Because he is at his wits' end when he is at his matter's end, there may be those whose faculties go on and on where he has ceased to be, and who live and love most in those realms of fact for them of which he scouts the existence. Know then, that the capacity to grasp the laws of nature is twined beyond severance with the willingness and imagination instinct with faith to accept from the heart itself the realm and predominance of Spirit; and that, though the limiting of subjects is excellent, and appointed by God for definite success in knowledge, yet the limiting must be done by the spirit of use, and not by the spirit of negation. Wholeness of acceptance, and the modifications it produces, must come in later on; knowledge to be complete, even so far as this world is concerned, must be penetrated with faith, and organized and subordinated within itself, and then its parts may humbly tend to become the shadows of some laws of nature.

The Three False Witnesses, therefore, to be turned out of this case, are—1, "Medical Opinion," in which there is nothing medical;—2, "Exact Science," whose exactitude does not reach the case;—and 3, "Laws of Nature" made by coroners out of material furnished by Death-Watches.—And the sole point to be elicited is—Who saw Jacobs give his daughter food?

May God defend the right!

J. J. GARTH WILKINSON.

REMARKS ON MR. LECKY'S CHAPTERS ON THE SUPERNATURAL.

IN the discussions which from time to time arise concerning alleged miraculous occurrences, Mr. Lecky's *History of Rationalism* is commonly referred to as an exposition peculiarly able and lucid of the cause of decline of belief in the miraculous. It may be well, therefore, here, to examine the grounds on which that distinguished writer rests his conclusions on the subject. It is, Mr. Lecky asserts, very manifest that incredulity regarding the miraculous is no merely ephemeral movement of modern times, "that it is the direct product and measure of civilisation . . . the invariable concomitant of education." All history, he affirms, shews that in exact proportion as nations advance in civilisation, the accounts of miracles taking place among them become rarer and rarer, until at last they entirely cease. How far, I would ask, do these propositions accord with matter abounding in Mr. Lecky's own history? Do we not there find page after page setting forth the universality in ancient Greece and Rome of belief in the miraculous? Do we not find that the philosophers of all sects held it implicitly, that "at one period they were infatuated with the dreams of the Neo-Platonists, writing long books on the mysteries of Egypt, on the hierarchy of spirits, and their intercourse with man?" Do we not find accounts of the multiplicity of the magicians, and of their powerful influence during the Roman empire, of the ardent patronage bestowed on them by such princes as Marcus Aurelius, and Julian? Do we not find Mr. Lecky giving it as his opinion that "the philosophy of Plato, by aggrandising the sphere of the spiritual, did much to foster the belief, that whenever either before or after the Christian era, that philosophy has been in the ascendant, it has been accompanied by a tendency to magic?"

Then again in the Middle Ages, after learning had revived in the West, does he not shew that the intellectual progress which then began—though it gave rise to much perplexity and doubt concerning the leading doctrines of theological faith—though it gave rise even to some amount of absolute infidelity—had no tendency to diminish faith in the miraculous; and that neither at a later period was it affected by that intense movement of the human mind which resulted in the Reformation? In those countries, indeed, which became Protestant, jealousy of Rome led to rejection of the more recent miracles of the Church, but belief in witchcraft and apparitions remained entire. From all this, and much more to the like effect, it would surely appear that belief in the miraculous instead of invariably subsiding as nations advance in civilisation, has on the contrary up to the last 300 years constantly persisted—persisted all throughout the ancient civilisations, all throughout the first five centuries which followed the revival of learning, mingling with successive systems theological and philosophical, and as each of those perished, surviving with vitality unimpaired.

But, on the other hand, it cannot be denied that during the last 300 years decline of belief in the miraculous has been enormous. It is incontestible that at present all but a small minority of educated men “receive an account of a miracle taking place in their own day, with absolute and derisive incredulity;” not however as Mr. Lecky observes owing to defectiveness of testimony, for with respect to one form of the supernatural—witchcraft, he admits “that if we considered it probable, a hundredth part of the testimony we possess would have placed it beyond the region of doubt.” Disbelief in the miraculous is, he truly remarks, to be attributed “not to any series of definite arguments, but to gradual, insensible, yet profound modifications of the habits of thought prevailing in Europe,” and produced by science. Such being the fact, the principal portion of the groundwork of Mr. Lecky’s conclusion would, until a very recent period, have been with difficulty impugned; that the knowledge only of times previous to the systematic study of the phenomena of nature had had no tendency to diminish belief in the miraculous, would not have destroyed the force of his main argument, for what in their bearing on truth were the ideas of antiquity, what the mere speculations of its finest minds compared to views unfolded, conceptions flowing from co-ordination of the great facts of science? The productions of Athenian and Roman genius were stars which made the night beautiful; science is the rising orb of day.

But within the last 20 years, a change in men’s ideas with respect to the supernatural has begun to take place; had

Mr. Lecky studied his own times with the same care that he has bestowed on the past, he would not have overlooked a movement of opinion steadily gaining ground, a fact in the history of the human mind entirely at variance with his view—the fact that precisely during the last quarter of a century marked by unprecedented progress in science, belief in the supernatural (so called) has revived to no inconsiderable degree among the highly educated, and has adherents among the most distinguished members of the scientific world. At the same time he would not have failed to note the characteristics widely distinguishing contemporaneous from the earlier conceptions of the supernatural, and harmonising with the most advanced views of science—rejection alike of the idea of aberration from law in its manifestations, and of the idea that it must be according to its features, either Divine or diabolic—belief, on the contrary, that the invisible world is governed by law precisely as is the visible; that Divine power is no more directly manifested through supermundane, than through mundane phenomena. Thus might he perhaps have seen reason to suspect that modern incredulity is but a phase of opinion incidental to a certain stage of knowledge; a result of the assumption that the boundary of the natural is known; a reaction against the unexamining admission in former times of all alleged marvellous facts. It might have dawned on him, that, so far from being opposed to science, spiritual phenomena point to an immeasurable extension of its domain, affording the hope that through them the way key be found to problems perplexing alike to the philosopher and to the physiologist, and a flood of light be thrown on strange portions of the history of the human race.

Still decline so great of a belief once intense—without violence, without persecution—as when the spirit of scientific inquiry was down-trodden by mediæval bigotry—under the mere influence of the experimental philosophy in its infancy, might cause perplexity did history not shew that decline to be no solitary instance of semi-paralysis of one section of the human faculties through overpowering ascendancy of others? In ancient Greece, where the dominant faculties were those which turn to abstract speculation, to the pursuit of pure truth, of the ideal beautiful and the ideal good, what contempt was there not thrown by the schools on progress in the useful arts, how earnestly and with what effect did the leaders of thought rebuke the inventive genius of their countrymen, when applied to the promotion of physical well-being. The faculties which tend to arts and discoveries, which ameliorate the condition of the human race, were by Greek philosophy checked for ages in the same mode as in modern times has sensitiveness to the invisible been checked by science.

It must be admitted that in the records of the supernatural there is much to repel scientific inquiry; those records consist of certain facts overlaid with the interpretations and inferences of many ages; the facts depend on causes of the most recondite order, connected by no visible sequence with known principles; the interpretations and inferences are grossly superstitious. It is not therefore surprising that science at an early period should have rejected the whole. A grand preliminary task lay indeed before her, a vast field to be explored ere the region connecting earth with the spirit-world could be attained. There is even reason to suspect that the influence of science in numbing the sense of the spiritual has until the present day been on the whole beneficial, for until, through the progress of knowledge, manifestations from another sphere could be viewed free from the distorting medium of ignorant preconception, of wild fancies and dark fears, belief in them would probably have only multiplied the forms of superstition, and have retarded progress. But now that science has penetrated to some of the subtler and more occult powers of nature, there is ground to hope that she may become in time competent to deal with others more mysterious still, and that through her, links may be discovered connecting by a chain of unbroken law this sphere of existence with another, conterminous and above. The study of certain physiological phenomena which as yet baffle enquiry, may lead to revelation of that existing in man placing him physically as well as psychically in relation with a world to us, in our ordinary state, invisible, but material still. Then may no philosopher feel like an illustrious lately departed one—like Faraday, that in religious matters he must “prostrate his reason;” but that on the contrary he may bring the highest mental operations to bear on the highest quest of all.

J. H. D.

THE FIRE TEST.

INSTANCES of the Fire Test, attested by intelligent and unimpeachable witnesses from various quarters, are fast multiplying. In the recent volume of Viscount Adare and the Earl of Dunraven, detailing their own experiences in Spiritualism as well as those of a large circle of their friends, is a letter to Earl Dunraven by Mrs. Anna Maria Hall, which fully and circumstantially corroborates the statement made by her husband, Mr. S. C. Hall (*Spiritual Magazine*, p. 81, Vol. IV., N.S.) of

what occurred at a *séance* in their own drawing-room. Mrs. Hall writes:—

We were nine (a greater number than Mr. Home likes); we were seated round the table, as usual, in the small drawing-room, which communicates with a much larger room; the folding doors were pushed back into the wall, and the portières unclosed. I think there was one lamp burning over the table, and a very large fire was blazing away in the large room. I know that there was a great deal of light. The Master of Lindsay, Rev. Mr. Y. and his wife, Mr. Hall and myself, Mr. Home, and the Misses Bertojacci were present. We sat for some little time before the tremulous motion, that so frequently indicates stronger manifestations, commenced; but it was quickly followed by raps, not only on the table, but in different parts of the room; the table was moved up and down—lifted perfectly off the ground—made “light” and “heavy” at the request of one or two of the gentlemen present; and, after a lapse of, I suppose, nearly an hour, Mr. Home went into a trance. Presently he pushed his chair, or the chair was pushed, quite away from the table. He got up, walked about the room in his usual manner; went to the fire-place; half knelt on the fender stool; took up the poker and poked the fire, which was like a red-hot furnace, so as to increase the heat; held his hands over the fire for some time, and finally drew out of the fire with his hand a large lump of live burning coal, so large that he held it in both hands as he came from the fire place in the large room into the small room, where, seated round the table, we were all watching his movements. Mr. Hall was seated nearly opposite to where I sat; and I saw Mr. Home, after standing about half a minute at the back of Mr. Hall’s chair, deliberately place the lump of burning coal on his head! I have often wondered that I was not frightened, but I was not; I had perfect faith that he would not be injured. Some one said, “Is it not hot?” Mr. Hall answered, “warm but not hot.” Mr. Home had moved a little way, but returned, still in a trance; he smiled, and seemed quite pleased, and then proceeded to draw up Mr. Hall’s white hair over the red coal. The white hair had the appearance of silver thread over the red coal. Mr. Home drew the hair into a sort of pyramid, the coal, still red, showing beneath the hair; then, after, I think, four or five minutes, Mr. Home pushed the hair back, and, taking the coal off Mr. Hall’s head, he said (in the peculiar low voice in which, when in a trance, he always speaks), addressing Mrs. Y., “Will you have it?” She drew back, and I heard him murmur, “Little faith, little faith.”

Two or three attempted to touch it, but it burned their fingers. I said, “Daniel, bring it over to me; I do not fear to take it.” It was not red all over, as when Mr. Home put it on Mr. Hall’s head, but it was still red in parts. Mr. Home came and knelt by my side; I put out my right hand, but he murmured, “No, not that, the other hand.” He then placed it in my left hand, where it remained more than a minute. I felt it, as my husband had said, “warm,” yet, when I stooped down to examine the coal, my face felt the heat so much that I was obliged to withdraw it. After that, Mrs. Y. took it, and said she felt no inconvenience. When Mr. Hall brushed his hair at night he found a quantity of cinder dust. Mr. Home was elongated, and all the manifestations that evening were very remarkable; but I believe your lordship requested me to relate only what I remember of the coal test.

The Countess M. de Pomar writes to Lord Dunraven an account of a *séance* held at Lady ——’s, at Brighton, in which she says:—

Mr. Home went to the fire and took out a large red-hot mass of coal, which he held in his extended hands and blew upon it to keep it alight. He walked up and down the room with it; then went to Lady —— and wanted to put it in her hands, but she drew back. He then said: “No, you must not have it, for you have no faith; it will burn you.” Lady G. extended her hands, saying: “I will take it without fear, for I have faith.” Mr. Home then placed the

burning mass in her hands, and she did not feel it at all hot, although she held it for at least one minute. It was afterwards put on a sheet of paper, which directly began to blaze, and had a great hole burned in it.

Lord Adare relates an instance in which a red-hot ember from the fire was placed by Mr. Home on the hand of a Miss D., who remarked that instead of being hot it felt rather cold. Earl Dunraven adds in a note: "I am informed by Miss D. and the Master of Lindsay, that Lord Adare has omitted to state that Mr. Home put this coal between his coat and shirt, under the arm, and that no mark of singeing or burning was visible on the shirt."

The editor of the *Spiritualist*, in the last number of that journal (March 15), gives the following testimony:—

On one occasion, in the presence of four other witnesses, we saw the remarkable manifestation, so often mentioned in the journals devoted to Spiritualism, of the handling of red-hot coals by Mr. D. D. Home while he was in the trance state. The fire was a large one. He turned over the coals quietly with his hands, then selecting one half as big again as an egg, he resumed his seat at the circle, held the red-hot coal on the palm of his bare hand over the table, and sat talking to those present till the coal was black, and nearly cold. At a guess, the time he held the coal thus, one short interval of half a minute excepted, was about four minutes. He then dropped it into the fender, put his hand into the fire again, and selected the largest coal in it. This coal nearly covered the palm of his hand with its base, and it stood six or seven inches high, something like an irregular pyramid. As he walked about the room, with this coal on the bare palm of one hand, the coal was so brightly heated, that at first it threw a ruddy glow upon the walls of the room; and when he resumed his seat, and held it over the table as before, the heat it emitted was felt upon the faces of the members of the circle. This coal he held thus for more than five minutes, giving trance communications all the time.

The first coal, while upon Mr. Home's hand, was too hot to be laid hold of by those members of the circle who tried to take it at the request of the spirit speaking through the medium. He then remarked that one lady present had a portion of the same mediumistic power; placing the hot coal upon her hand, he allowed it to remain there about half a minute, and nothing but a sensation of gentle warmth was felt. While this coal was still red, he curved his other hand close over the top of it, and the coal could be seen glowing through the spaces between his fingers; while he held it thus enclosed, he brought his hands before the eyes of one or two witnesses in succession, that they might clearly examine it glowing between his fingers. While this was being done his hands were, of course, exposed to the full heat due to contact, radiation, and convection currents. Some other remarkable manifestations took place at this *séance*, and after it was over, when Mr. Home was in his normal state, in reply to a question, he said that the spirits tell him that while he handles red-hot coals, they send a current of some of the forces under their control down his arms and hands in such a way as to prevent injury from heat. This *séance* took place at the residence of Mr. C. F. Varley, C.E.; but Mr. Varley was on the Continent at the time. A wet hand may be momentarily dipped with impunity into melted iron or copper; the sudden transformation of the liquid into vapour tends to chill the skin, and during the instant the chill lasts, a thin layer of vapour lies like a cushion, between the metal and the skin. This is why blacksmiths can for an instant lick a white hot poker. Conjurors, who handle hot things, are said to previously toughen the skin of the hand, by repeated washings with diluted sulphuric acid. In Mr. Home's case, the question resolves into one of length of contact, and temperature at the point of contact, carbon not being a very good conductor of heat. The first coal which we saw lying steadily on his hand, was

so hot at first, that its reflected light made the skin of his hand appear to be incandescent for a little distance all round the edge of the plane of contact. The second and larger coal he carried about the room at first, so that it was not so minutely examined at the point of contact; it was not shifted from its one place on the hand until he threw it in the fender.

We find in *Human Nature* for January last, under the head "Manifestations through Mr. Home, at Clifton," an instance of the Fire Test which is given by Mr. John Beattie, of 2, Westbourne Place, Clifton, at whose house it occurred. After describing other manifestations with which we are not now concerned, Mr. Beattie proceeds:—

Mr. Home then rose and went towards the fire, knelt down, and stirred the fire well up. After it was burning very freely, he pulled his shirt-collar well down from his neck; then putting his right hand quietly into the fire, as it were to fill it with heat, he poured it down in front of his throat (he complained of a sore throat before the *séance*), the hand each time going well into the fire, and being in form as if lifting water. He afterwards deliberately took in his hand a piece of live burning coal, about the size of a hen's egg. He took the Rev. B. by the hand, but he could not bear it near his hand. He said, "You have no faith." Next he put it nearly into my hand, but it burned my palm. He then said to the lady, "You have faith," and the coal was placed in her hand. Her words were, "I hardly feel it warm." I asked that it might be again tried on my hand. He remarked, "Thou hast prayed well." I could just then bear it. Mr. Home then walked about, talking to the invisible beings—sometimes speaking of himself as a third person; then smiling, he said, "Yes, yes, I will." He again knelt before the fire, which was then blazing freely. He leant forward, and, with a peculiar action of the head, as it were when a person would lean over a tub of water, to dip the hair into it and not wet the face. I cannot describe the action better. There was not the slightest smell of a hair being singed in any way. He then, as if weary, sat down, and after a time began to recover from what seemed, by the long time required for recovery, a most profound trance.

In the February number of the same publication, Mr. H. Nisbet, of Glasgow, gives an account of some similar phenomena there, in his own house, on the 10th January last. After stating that Mr. Home went into a trance, Mr. Nisbet says:—

Mr. Home invited Mr. J. N. to sit beside my wife; and this being done, he placed their hands together, palms upward; then, putting his hands over the fire, he grasped, as it were, the heat, and conveyed it towards their hands, repeating the movement several times, and advising them to have faith. He walked about for a short time, and then knelt down before the fire, and taking into his hand a small piece of red-hot coal, he laid it for a few seconds on the hands respectively of my wife, one of my daughters, and Mr. J. N., remarking as he did so, "It will not burn you." They said they felt a slight warmth while the coal lay on their hands. He then took the same coal, which he had still in his grasp, and applied it to their hands as before—telling them that *now* it would burn them, and this they unmistakably *felt*. He then laid the same piece of coal on a doubled-up number of *Daybreak*, and it at once burned a hole through the eight sheets of paper. Holding it up, so that we might see the hole, he said,—"There is *Daybreak*!" Then taking a blazing coal the size of his hand, and putting it on the same number of *Daybreak*, lying on the palm of his left hand, he walked about the room for at least three minutes, the coal blazing brightly all the time. He then threw the still burning coal on the fire; and the number of *Daybreak*, with the hole burned through it, but unscathed (though somewhat smoked) by the last mentioned experiment, was handed to Mr. J. N. with the request to keep it as a memorial.

Mr. Home is not the only medium known for this class of phenomena. At a public meeting at the St. John's Temperance Hall, Corporation Row, Clerkenwell, December 9th last, Mr. Towns said:—"Among other strange things the spirits have caused me to do, I have been made to hold my hands in gas flames where they were not hurt." Again, at one of the public Conferences on Spiritualism in Gower Street, held last winter, Mr. Shorter stated that at the house of Mr. Steele, 36, Great Sutton Street, Clerkenwell, in a well-lighted room, and in presence of twenty witnesses who could attest its truth, Mr. Morse, while entranced, had taken from the fire a lump of burning coal, held it in his hand, and carried it round successively to each one present. The next day Mr. Morse called on Mr. Steele, who carefully examined the hand, and not the slightest trace of burn or injury could be found, nor did the medium experience any. Mr. Steele rose and confirmed this statement in every particular.

In a lately published work, *The Question Settled*, by the Rev. Moses Hull, (reviewed in our last number) is a letter from Mr. Peebles, the United States' Consul, which we here present:—

Hammonton, N.J., March 31, 1869.

Rev. Moses Hull.

Dear Friend,—Your favour of March 11 lies before me, with contents noted. I cheerfully comply with the request to furnish you a brief statement of a remarkable spiritual manifestation witnessed by myself through the mediumship of Dr. E. C. Dunn, involving a seeming suspension of the laws connected with heat.

These are the main facts:—

My friend Dr. Dunn, accompanying me several years on my lecture tours as a healing medium, speaking occasionally under spirit-control, was often entranced in my presence. Our electric atmospheres naturally intermingling, the magnetic sympathy became finally so intensified, that a portion of my circle of spirits could quite easily throw the doctor into an unconscious trance condition.

One of these spirit-guides—a thinker and practical chemist on earth—was Perasee Lendanta, living in the mediæval ages, and equally conversant with the Christian and Neoplatonic dogmas. Whenever he entranced the doctor, I expected a feast of reason and flow of sound thought.

At the close of a service in Battle Creek, Mich., on a Sunday of June, 1862, inviting and even urging the doctor, he accompanied me home. Soon, while comfortably sitting in my library room, he became suddenly entranced, and, during the entrancement, this *conversation*, with the manifestation, followed:—

"Owing to the good conditions to-day," said the spirit, "I was enabled to approach very near you while lecturing; thus infusing much of my own force and thought into your discourse."

"Thank you. I felt your presence. You are to me like a wall of fire and a shield of brass, imparting a stern, positive, independent feeling."

"The world has yet to learn the full import of the terms 'individualism,' 'self-reliance,' 'independence.' . . . What inquiries to-day?"

"I desire to ask this question: Were Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego cast into a fiery furnace, coming out with not a hair of their 'heads singed,' nor the 'smell of fire' upon them?"

"I don't know, sir. Was not there?"

"Well, do you believe the recorded Scriptural account?"

"Most certainly, I do."

"Why do you believe it?"

"In the first place, because *reasonable*, and, in the second place, because the same and even more remarkable things may be done in the present."

"If so (half smiling, half doubting), I should like to see a slight practical illustration of your position."

"If you have a large kerosene lamp in your house, procure, light, and place it before this medium, with the blaze on, high as it will bear."

Securing the lamp, and placing it before the doctor in full blaze, this controlling spirit thrust the medium's hand into it, holding it there full *five minutes*; the flames streaming up between the fingers. It seemed as though it must be burned to a crisp. Finally, the spirit-intelligence removing it, I wiped the smoke and soot from the hand, and it was not in the least injured by the fire. After a little spasmodic struggling, as usual, the medium became conscious, complaining only of a terrible magnetic pressure upon his head. This soon wore away, when, before leaving the room, he was again entranced.

"There!" said the spirit, "you have seen a man's hand thrust into the fire and not burned."

"Certainly I have: now tell me how you did it."

"Owing to the feebleness of the English language in the line of metaphysics and spiritual science, this would be a more difficult task than to seemingly destroy the law of heat. I will try. Aided by others, I gathered or accreted fine etherealized spirit-substances from surrounding spirit-space, and, polarizing and otherwise preparing them, constructed a sort of electric coating or covering, winding it close around the medium's hand. This covering was just as impervious to heat as is a pane of glass to the beating rain drops. Furthermore, I could envelop this whole mortal form in this magnetic mantle; and, so long as I could maintain the requisite conditions, the body would not be injured by fire."

"Something very similar is evidenced in the case of the three men cast into the *fiery furnace*. It was an ancient spiritual manifestation. Your Scriptures say, 'Lo, I see four men loose walking in the midst of the fire; . . . and the form of the fourth is like the Son of God.' This '*fourth*,' seen by the clairvoyant eye, was an angel, or spiritual being that once inhabited your or some other earth in the universe of the infinite." . . .

These facts, in addition to the evidence on the subject presented in previous articles in this Magazine (pp. 205, 289, Vol. III., and pp. 44, 81, Vol. IV., N.S.), demonstrate as far as evidence can demonstrate, that spirits (or if you will an invisible intelligent power claiming to be spirits) can so control and regulate the elements and forces of nature, as, under suitable conditions, to preserve the living sensitive human body and other physical substances from that injury and destruction which, but for such interposition, would result from their natural operation.

This, after all, if we admit the existence of spiritual beings, is not so incredible, or even so very wonderful, as it may at first appear. It corresponds to what we are familiar with in daily life. Fire, water, air, and the invisible elements, are all subject to the control of man; and his power over them is ever increasing with his knowledge. "Thou hast placed all things under his feet" is no less the affirmation of Science than of Scripture—of philosophy than of piety. Are then the immortals less intelligent, less potent than mortals? Might we not have reasonably anticipated what Spiritualism proves, that their chemistry—their

electricity—their knowledge of and control over substances and elementary forces far transcend our own;—and that they are thus able to produce phenomena which baffle and perplex our most advanced scientists, and so to demonstrate the existence of that higher supra-mundane intelligence and power which many of these scientists would fain deny, but the evidence of which it seems likely that they will not much longer be able to resist?

T. S.

NOTES AND GLEANINGS.

SPIRIT-FACES SEEN AT PUBLIC MEETINGS.— SPIRIT-PHOTOGRAPHS.

THE *Banner of Light*, January 29, 1870, contains a letter from Mr. D. A. Eddy, of Cleveland, Ohio, giving an account of some remarkable public manifestations in New York, through the mediumship of a Mrs. Harriet Thackerbury. It seems that her husband, Mr. Benjamin Thackerbury, a rough, uneducated, generous sailor, was drowned in Lake Ontario, upwards of nine years ago, and the manifestations in question purport to be made by him in association with other spirits.

A small light frame, about 3 by 2½ feet square, covered with black oilcloth, forming a cabinet, is used; the door forming the front having an opening or aperture 14 by 16 inches square, covered with a drop-curtain, tucked in at the top, making the inside dark, except what little light finds its way through the imperfection of the framework and covering.

“When tests are to be given, the medium’s mouth is filled with a wet sponge; her lips compressed together and sealed securely with several pieces—one over the other—of adhesive plaster. Her hands are then securely tied behind, when she takes a seat in the cabinet, and immediately passes into a deep trance or unconscious state. In from one to two minutes after the door is closed, talking by the presiding spirit, familiarly known as ‘Ben,’ commences.” He, and other spirits answer questions, and write communications; and musical instruments, and singing both by male and female voices, are heard: “the female voices, so far as the music is concerned, will compare with the most celebrated singers now before the public.” Several faces also appear simultaneously. Mr. Eddy says—“Judge of our surprise, when suddenly and without any previous warning, several faces appeared at the opening in the door

above referred to." Many faces thus seen have been recognised as those of departed friends and relatives by persons in the audience. Five different negatives of the faces have been taken by a photographer in daylight, and the spirits expect after a time that "they will be able to present themselves as plainly and distinctly for photographs as any one could in the form."

HOW DO SPIRITS READ THOUGHTS?

At a recent *séance*, a medium in trance replied to this question to the following effect:—

It is almost impossible to make it clear to those who have not a full knowledge of matter and spirit and their relations to each other. The most perfect form of clairvoyant seeing, or thought-reading is where the consciousness of two souls is inter-blended, and the thoughts and ideas are identical—common to both. Thought-reading of this kind is impossible with the physical conditions around these on earth. There is another method of thought-reading, in which two souls are placed *en rapport* with the "idea of the thought." The "idea" is the thought externalised, or given a more palpable form, and the spirit or sensitive clairvoyant sometimes reads the thought by penetrating the idea. The lowest form of thought-reading is that in which the thought clothes itself with the idea, and the idea again with an objective creation. The thought inside the idea has shape and form, and behind it again are interior subjects for further investigation.

THE EX-QUEEN OF THE GRAND OPERA OF PARIS.

The *Evening Standard* states that the Baroness Kischendorf (formerly Madame Stoltz, Queen of the Grand Opera of Paris) has gone strenuously over into devotion, and has "broken out in a book entitled *Dictées Spirites*, which she puts forth as having been written under the immediate inspiration of Queen Marie Antoinette."

A UNITARIAN PREACHER ON DEMONIACAL POSSESSION.

Theological opinion has nowhere undergone such strange mutations as in New England. There Unitarianism acquired its firmest seat, and there Spiritualism has won its chief triumphs. A curious instance of the action of these two heresies (shall we say?) is before us in an article entitled "The Perfection of Jesus," in *Old and New*, a Boston monthly magazine, written by the Rev. J. F. Clarke, a distinguished

Unitarian preacher. "As regards Demoniactal Possession," writes Mr. Clarke, "I think that Jesus believed in it, and that He spoke to the evil spirits as though they would hear Him. A few years ago I thought that He shared a popular error in this, which our century had outgrown. But within a few years I have been led to believe in the reality of Demoniactal Possession. I have myself known personally, or by credible testimony, of at least half a dozen instances of persons, who, after having allowed themselves to become spiritual mediums, seem at last to have been taken possession of by a low and unclean order of spirits. And the best way of rescuing them, when they were too far gone to help themselves, was to have some other person possessing greater spiritual force to do what Jesus did, namely, *order the spirit to go away*. I believe that in certain places and periods, the nervous condition of men is such that the lower order of ghosts may get control over them, and that when Jesus came, it was just such a time and place as this."

We commend Mr. Clarke's observations to our readers as one of the signs of the times. A Unitarian assigning his experience in evidence of the existence of devils is not to be passed over lightly.—*North Londoner*.

A HAUNTED RAILWAY.

The Boston papers publish the following as a strange but well authenticated story:—"The engineer of the freight train on the Boston and Lowell railroad, which leaves Boston about three o'clock in the morning, has on several occasions discovered a red light swinging at a furious rate at the Woburn station, where the train stops for water. The light would sometimes be in front and sometimes in the rear of the train. When the engineer would stop his train and send some one to learn why the signal to stop was made, the messenger would be greatly surprised to see the light vanish. Investigation has proved that no person was there with a lantern, and the brakeman and conductor concur also in having beheld the phenomenon, which, so far as known, is without visible cause. Some labourers living on the line of the above station state that a few mornings since they were coming down the road in a hand car, when they suddenly heard the approach of an engine and train, and knowing that no train was due in the vicinity at that hour they became greatly frightened, and, jumping out of the car, threw it off the track to await the train which they thought was coming at a rapid pace upon them, but which, it is needless to say, did not come. The superstitious regard the affair as a

forewarning of some disaster, while the Spiritualists have the ready theory that it is the spirit of a man who was killed there about two years since."—*New York Times*, Jan. 30.

THE CHALK-PIT PHANTOM.

The mysterious appearance, nearly every evening, of an aged gentleman, dressed in the costume of the last century, walking near the Old Chalk Pit, by the Pilgrim Road, Oxford, is much commented on, and has given rise to some alarm among the labouring population, and apparently not without cause. The appearance certainly *is* singular, and, in spite of some endeavours to fathom it, remains hidden at present. So late as Friday night last, February 4th, about seven o'clock, a labourer's wife returning from Kemsing village, where she had been shopping, overtook what seemed to be a gentleman walking in the road, close to the turning leading directly to the pit, and although his pace was slow and deliberate, and the night quiet, no sound of his footstep reached her, nor did the sound of the strokes of a large cane which he had in his right hand do so. She passed him, and describes him as stooping slightly in gait, his dress being a dark coat, and broad hat, from under which a profusion of white hair fell, frilled shirt, knee breeches, and low shoes. She addressed him with "good night, sir," but no answer was returned, and to her infinite alarm, when the chalk pit was reached, nothing was visible! Her sensations may be imagined, when it is stated that there is no means for a person who might be jocularly inclined to secrete himself near the spot in question: and had the figure passed up the chalk-pit lane, she must have seen it. One or two labourers, returning home from work, have also seen "the old gentleman," as he is now called, and agree in the description of him, but what his visits denote puzzles many.—*Evening Standard*.

LE CONCILE DE LA LIBRE PENSEE.—ABOLITION FAUX DOGMES ET DES MENSONGES SACERDOTAUX, &c.

M. Piérart has resuscitated his *Revue Spiritualiste* under this title, and in a quarto form of 32 pages. We trust that he will meet with the success which his long-continued efforts for the truth and for the freedom of mankind from the fetters of priestcraft and the dogmatism of science so richly deserve. This opening number contains a great variety of most valuable matter, and thus gives ample promise for the future. The scandalous conduct of the clergy in many parts of France is reported from the local papers, in whose different districts it has excited the deepest indignation. In many places the clergy

have refused the burial of Protestants in the public cemeteries till compelled to give way by the authorities. Balls have been denounced from the pulpits, and the ladies who after that should dare to attend them, have been designated by the most opprobrious names, the only consequence of which has been that these balls have been more numerous than ever. In fact, both at Rome and in their own neighbourhoods, the Catholic clergy seem seized with that madness which we are told God sends when he means destruction. The certain result of such conduct will be to alienate the people from the Church.

M. Piérart has a Spiritual department in his journal, and gives us four very curious facts, particularly of a rain of earthen clods on a blacksmith and his men at Criel, which continued for some days though they put all the window shutters up and stopped every place by which such clods could come.

“VERY STRANGE.”

Certain subterraneous noises, says the *Diario* of Barcelona, similar to those made by a train just starting, have recently been heard at Cadiz. These sounds are produced at intervals in different points of the city, and what is very strange is that the governor is almost always informed by anonymous warnings of the hours when the noise will be heard. Several families have quitted Cadiz, not believing themselves in safety.

SCEPTICISM.

The Rev. Henry White, the chaplain of the Chapel Royal, Savoy, stated in a recent sermon, that a celebrated German theologian had reckoned up a thousand volumes which had been published during the present century in opposition to the doctrine of the immortality of the soul, and ten thousand containing vague speculations on the subject.

THE LATE W. E. HICKSON, ESQ.

We deeply regret to have to announce the departure, on 22nd March, of this excellent and estimable friend, and occasional contributor to our pages. As an eminent political writer and thinker, and as an able literary man, and proprietor and editor during 11 years of the *Westminster Review*, he was well known in the world of letters, whilst his kindly and genial heart made him beloved by his friends.

A MUSICAL MEDIUM.

Mr. Jesse B. Shepard, from New York, is now in London. Some musical *séances* have been given by him to select audiences at 15, Southampton Row, Holborn. It is alleged that this

young man cannot read music, and knew nothing of it till his remarkable powers were conferred on him by spirits. His voice is said to be a fine soprano of great power and scope, rising to E flat, only one note below that of Jenny Lind. His instrumental performances are reported as equally fine. The most remarkable feature of his playing is that he can reach an octave and a half (12 keys), and frequently does so in making a long run.

Correspondence.

ANTI-CHRISTIAN SPIRITUALISM.

To the Editor of the "Spiritual Magazine."

SIR,—My article in a recent number of the *Spiritual Magazine* appears, from the many letters I have received, to have given general and great satisfaction. But there is one exception. Mr. Burns, editor of *Human Nature*, in the March number of that journal, has made the most extraordinary charges against me, namely, that I have accused him of being "essentially different from myself in his intellectual, moral and spiritual abilities to recognise historical fact, estimate moral purposes, regulate his motives in accordance with the Divine will," &c. Again, that I say "he is not a Christian." Again, "W. H., in the pages of the *Spiritual Magazine*, published by myself, brands me for ever with the blackest religious stigma that can be attached to any man in this age and amongst this people."—*Human Nature*, pp. 121, 122.

Now I ask where I have made these charges against Mr. Burns? Where I have made one, the very least of them? Certainly not in the article on Anti-Christian Spiritualism in the January number of the *Spiritual Magazine* for this year. Certainly in no article whatever, in any journal or at any time. The only personal reference that I have made to Mr. Burns in the article in question, is simply to say, that in a late number of *Human Nature*, he "taunts Christian Spiritualists with being *timid*." Has not Mr. Burns done that? Yes; it stands in these words on page 583 of that journal for November, 1869:—"When we look around the circle of our timid, spiritually blind and bigoted brethren, many of whom profess to be ashamed of Spiritualism, we feel that Spiritualism and these good and pure souls have more reason to be ashamed of them. It is evident our English 'Christian Spiritualists' are so far wise in qualifying the term 'Spiritualist;' a term, which in many respects they can lay very little claim to."

As that is a mere question of fact, which Mr. Burns will not deny, we may leave it. But for all these serious accusations against himself which he enumerates, the reader will look in vain in my article. My remarks are on Anti-Christian Spiritualism generally. That there are plenty of Anti-Christian Spiritualists both here and in America who are directly proving the truth of Christian prophecy by listening to the lying spirits which it declared would come in the latter times, nobody can deny; but a charge against Mr. Burns as being one, made by me, exists only in his own imagination. In fact, every one who has read my article must see that. I hold that every man has a right to his own opinion, whatever that may be. I may not admire it; I may *regret* that Anti-Christian opinions abound; but I make no attempt to tax Mr. Burns or any other man with holding such, when he has not openly avowed them. Mr. Burns says that a charge of not being a Christian is regarded by him as a brand of the blackest dye. So much the better; I am glad to hear it. He says that he does not deny that Jesus is a real historical character. So much the better; again I am glad of it. But who said that he did deny it? Who branded him as an Anti-Christian Spiritualist? Not I, certainly. My remarks, as I have said, apply only to Anti-Christian Spiritualism; and if Mr. Burns does not entertain such views, of course they do not apply to him. The whole of his extraordinary charge is totally beside the mark. As I never knew what Mr. Burns's religious creed was, and never thought it worth my while to enquire, it was impossible for me to say what it was. He might just as well have charged me with terming him an elephant or a hippopotamus. With my article already before the public, every one will see at a glance how totally non-existent are the charges which he so boldly affirms to be there.

My offence is simply that I have defended what ought to be dear to us all—the Christian religion; which ought to be dear to Mr. Burns, if he be, as he asserts, a Christian. This is the first time, through a public career of half a century, that any one has ventured to accuse me of “tortuous logic;” “of prevarication and gross misconception;” of branding men with the blackest stigmas; and as I have always been found battling openly, without regard to consequences, for a pure Christian Spiritualism, it is significant that it should be a brother Spiritualist who comes forward in the character of accuser. Whether justly or not, I am quite willing to leave to the due estimation of the Spiritualistic public.

Let me, however, just observe that Mr. Burns terms me his “venerable and venerated senior.” Truly his assault on me is not in a very venerative vein. Still further I am designated as

his "dear friend and neighbour and fellow-labourer." I was not previously aware of any claim to be styled his dear friend or very near neighbour; but the proofs he gives of his friendship or neighbourhood must be thought, I imagine, not very desirable. Fellow-labourer, I may be, as a general labourer in the field of Spiritualism; but if being a fellow-labourer means that any such labourer is entitled to turn upon you like a besotted navvy, who deals his blows on whoever has the ill-luck to be near him, prudent people will endeavour so steer clear of Spiritualism altogether.

But our professor of *Human Nature* is as irate with my remarks on Godfrey Higgins as with those which I *did not* make on himself. He says if the said Higgins were in the flesh he would "stop my mouth." How does he know that? But if he could accomplish that feat, he must stop the mouths of the greatest authorities on Indian language, literature and mythology, who have lived since his time, during which this branch of knowledge has wonderfully progressed; still further he must stop the mouth of history and theologic criticism for many centuries—a most capacious mouth indeed.

In a word, I would kindly suggest to Mr. Burns that a little more modesty, especially in treating his "venerated seniors," and a great deal more reading before undertaking theological polemics, would do him no harm. A little more exercise of cool judgment would save him from fighting with windmills of his own erection. Theologic criticism is an immense subject, which might occupy him and an opponent for their whole lives, and leave them just where they were. In no age has Pope's couplet more significant application than in this:—

A little learning is a dangerous thing;
Drink deep, or taste not the Pierian spring.

And further, if Mr. Burns has such a horror of being deemed "not a Christian," it would be wise in him to make his Christian belief more prominent, and not to allow so much writing in his journal in its disparagement, at least, without giving it an answer. Not to quote with so much apparent gusto such statements as that "the historical Jesus is copied from Chrishna, and the theologic Jesus is a CHURCH MONSTER of the Christian Fathers" (*Human Nature*, November 1869, p. 585). It would be wise to avoid terming those who prefer the Christian faith to the obscure babblings of unknown spirits, "wolves in sheep's clothing," and "popes" (*Daybreak*, March 1, 1870). These are not likely to be accepted as the utterances of a Christian. The worst of popes is an Anti-Christian pope, who is full of self-conceit, and of despotic dogmatism, instead of that "charity which suffereth long and is kind; envieth not; vaunteth not

itself ; is not puffed up ; doth not behave itself unseemly ; is not easily provoked ; thinketh no evil." It would be still further wise in Mr. Burns not to advertise his journal, as in his March number, as the *only philosophical* and independent journal of Spiritualism, as this is a direct insult to the editors of the *Spiritual Magazine*, gentlemen of great abilities and solid acquirements, who have rendered services to Spiritualism far greater than Mr. Burns can yet pretend to, or will ever be likely to accomplish unless he alter his tone and bearing toward his fellow-labourers, and on the great topic itself. Besides being an insult to the editors it is a gross injustice to the Magazine itself, which is entrusted to him for publication ; and, in its completed volumes, is one of the greatest and most valuable collections of remarkable spiritual facts and sound spiritual reasonings in existence. Let him remember that a man of real talent and learning is generally modest and unpretentious ; and does not blow his own trumpet because he knows that whatever merit he possesses will be quickly seen and appreciated by others.

Mr. Burns has my sincere wish, that as he advances in life, he may see in the old landmarks, the proofs of the most sacred convictions of hosts of noble and exalted minds, which ought not to be lightly outraged, and of a spiritual sagacity in their attachment to the long-predicted Saviour of Mankind. The history of this Saviour has been too keenly scrutinized and tested by the greatest intellects and the profoundest learning of ages to have left his character or acts dependent on the opinions of Godfrey Higgins, or of any other carper at Christianity. That character and life are unassailable by any calumniators of the early ages, and require no support from councils. They are neither individuals nor councils which can determine the personality or doctrines of Christ, but the prophecies of the old and the text of the New Testament. There we have the foundations of our belief as attested by the first authorities of the primitive times. Let Mr. Burns be assured that when the rubbish of French Re-incarnation, and the scepticism of ill-informed Sciolists have passed away, the truth of Christianity will remain unshaken as ever, and its most divine philosophy will still be the light and comfort of travellers towards eternity. Every day is adding proofs of the authenticity of Bible history. At this moment turns up the Stone of Moab, confirming the fidelity of the Hebrew annals—those annals which embody the age-long prophecies of the Saviour of the World.

As I am just now preparing to quit England for a long period, this is the only notice which I can or shall take of these phantasms of charges. I close my remarks on them with an expression of my great satisfaction in the cordial approbation which

my defence of Christianity has elicited from the general body of Christian Spiritualists. In fact, however little agreeable it may be to certain individuals, so long as I have a voice or a pen, I will exert them on behalf of the noblest and most beneficent religion that this dark and calamitous earth ever possessed. I should deem myself worthy of all contempt if any calumny or abuse could deter me from standing firm by that divine revelation which has done so much for mankind, and which will do infinitely more when men and their governments cease to prostitute its sacred name to their base ambitions and vices, when they really conform themselves to its celestial principles of peace, unity and love.—Farewell !

W. H.

ON AN EXTRACT FROM MR. HENRY JAMES.

To the Editor of the "Spiritual Magazine."

March 10th, 1870.

SIR,—In your present number is a series of extracts from Mr. Henry James, given without note or comment. In one of these, the writer, after speaking of the pretension to any individual ability to keep the Divine law as insufferably arrogant in the Divine sight, goes on to say:—"And I presume, on the other hand, that there is no attitude of mind more intrinsically respectable in the Divine sight, more cordially delightful to the Divine mind, than that which should exhibit the thief or the adulterer, totally indifferent to the unrighteousness which is conventionally charged upon his private character, while he calmly referred all the evil of his conduct to the wholly unscientific aspect of our social relations; to the shockingly imperfect way in which the sentiment of human equality or fellowship is yet organized in institution."

Mr. James is a bold though erratic thinker, who does not shrink from pushing a principle to its extreme logical consequences whatever these may be; and in the present instance these consequences may be strictly deducible from the doctrine he affirms that man has in himself no power either of good or evil;—that every affection and every thought, no less than every act, is but a necessary result of the spiritual influence in which, all unconsciously to himself, he has been immersed from birth. A doctrine, however, more debasing and pernicious it would be difficult to conceive. It represents man as a mere unconscious instrument on which angels and fiends discourse celestial or infernal strains—a puppet pulled by invisible wires; and human life as a mere play of marionettes. It places a Guyon and a Greenacre on the same level. There is no virtue in vanquishing temptation, no vice in yielding to it. It may no doubt be very pleasant to "the thief or the adulterer" to "calmly refer all the evil of his conduct to the wholly unscientific aspect of our social relations," and be very comforting to him to be told that "there is no attitude of mind more intrinsically respectable in the Divine sight, more cordially delightful to the Divine mind"—if only he can bring himself to believe it; but I venture to affirm that in the vast majority of instances, even the thief or the adulterer would in his inmost heart revolt at the immorality and blasphemy of this pretence. The sense of sin, the haunting remorse, the upbraiding conscience teach a different lesson, and one which no sophistry can effectually hide from the consciously guilty soul. I cannot believe that the *Spiritual Magazine*, in inserting the extract to which I have drawn attention, intended to sanction its teaching; it surely must inadvertently, and by some oversight have found its way there.

AN OLD SPIRITUALIST.