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A SIXTH SENSE.

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BY FRANK PODMORE, B.A., OXON.

Briefly, the case is this: a man gifted suddenly with a new sense-organ, capable of receiving hitherto unfelt impressions from the world without, unless he were at the same time, and by a similar miraculous interposition, furnished with the power of interpreting these impressions, would be in the position of a savage put down before a Morse telegraph instrument, and required to communicate with the operator at the other end of the wire. Our communication with the external world by means of the senses is just as arbitrary, and has to be perfected by education in exactly the same manner as our communication with our fellows by means of the voice, of written words, or of the electric telegraph. We do not ordinarily recognise this fact, because our education has been gone through vicariously, in innumerable past generations of human and animal life. As each new object has come within the sphere of our senses, the power of ready and intuitive discrimination has grown up with it. Our sense inferences have been unconscious and mechanical through the habit of ages. But we can recognise that that is so in such cases as the training of a person who has no ear, as the phrase goes, for musical notes. I have often had occasion to notice a remarkable proof of the length of time required to train a neglected sense to distinguish infallibly and immediately between even a few simple impressions. It is an essential part of the student's training in the chemical laboratory, that he should learn to recognise certain gases by the smell alone. Now the nose of an ordinary man is an organ whose education has been very much neglected. Most persons can distinguish the smell of a violet from that of a rose, when they have the flowers before them, and that of mignonette, cyclamen, or stephanotis from either. But it is very doubtful, if the scents could be presented to them apart from the flowers, whether their powers of discrimination would not fail them even in the

case of the commoner flowers; and certainly it would not carry them much farther. Now the disembodied odours of the laboratory are not less distinct from each other, probably, than the scent of the rose is from that of the mignonette, yet it is with the utmost difficulty, and seldom with absolute certainty, that in the first months of his apprenticeship the student can decide by the odour whether the gas coming from a particular test-tube is chlorine or sulphurous anhydride; hydro-chloric or hydro-fluoric acid; or even bromine; and the vapours of hydrosulphuric acid, and of carbon disulphide, though the nauseousness of the one differs widely from the nauseousness of the other, are readily confused by the uninitiate. In truth, the eye even in the present advanced stage of physiologic evolution, is the only sense which is educated, and that, frequently but very imperfectly, even in the discrimination and recognition of simple sensations,—a process involving merely the memory of past sensations, and their comparison with each other and with the present. But whilst the eye excels the other senses even in their lesser power, to the act of vision super-eminently belongs the power of binding by force of association the impression of an object gained by itself as well as by the other senses, and often forming, by an unconscious process, involving not only comparison and memory, but inference and judgment, that complex idea of a thing which we are accustomed to think we gain in a single sensation of sight or of touch. For instance, we may say that we *see* a peach; and not only do we see *it*, but we see that it is soft, and round, and large and downy; or hard and misshapen, and so on.

ANALYSIS OF VISUAL SENSATIONS.

We need not stop here to discuss the question mooted at the beginning of this article of existence at all outside ourselves. Let us allow for the present that there may be peaches, or, for that matter, coal-scuttles. But if we wish to dispense with the slovenly inaccuracy of ordinary saying and thinking, what is it that we really *see*, that is, what is the actual sensation present to our mind at any given moment? Just a mass of colour and nothing more. It is not even a definite mass of colour. To see so much as that our peach has a distinct outline, and does not melt away by insensible degrees into the formless inane, we have to compound several distinct impressions acquired by moving our eyes. But to see that it is spherical, or, indeed, of any solid shape at all, there is very

much more than this required. All that is really present to the eye in such cases are certain variations of light and shade in the colouring of the peach. But yet we instantly decide, not only in the case of peaches, but of any other bodies, that they are solid. Our judgment in this respect is not only instantaneous, it is infallible, or very nearly so. Yet nothing is more certain, than that we really see only a flat surface. We have, however, familiarised ourselves by touch with the general contour of solid bodies; and we have observed, or our brains have registered the fact for us without our conscious observation of it, that certain variations of light and shade, and in the proportions and relative magnitudes of bodies, as seen by the two eyes conjointly, are always associated with the feelings of touch, which we derive from what we called solid bodies. And this union of certain visual and certain tactual impressions has, in the course of unnumbered generations—for we are speaking of the experience, not of the individual, but of the race—become at length so intimate, that we can no longer separate them even in thought. We cannot now receive the purely visual impressions of light and shade, &c., without their being immediately followed in idea by the impressions that have so often accompanied them in fact, and by the idea of the whole—a solid body—which both sets of impressions are supposed to represent. Nor is it possible, by any act of will, to analyse this compound impression into its parts. No one, I apprehend, can actually look upon any solid figure, and realise it to himself as a flat surface. The visual sensation has entered into chemical combination, so to speak, with the tactual sensation, and nothing short of the force that joined them together is required to pull them apart again. For the two have grown up together: together their message has become clearer, more vivid, and more unerring, since first the sunlight streamed through the primæval waters on the skin of the Eozoic sponge, on the soft nerve-pulp of the Jelly-fish. And that which has been united through all the life-time of the earth, we cannot now dis sever.

So that, to see that our peach is spherical, we have to compound this complex feeling of vision with other ideal feelings revived by the memory, of both vision and touch, inferring from certain indications in the actually present impression that these revived feelings are applicable to the instance before us. To get the further idea of hardness and of downiness,

we have to go through further processes of recollecting and compounding, of inference and comparison. And yet, so rapidly are these various mental operations performed, so indissoluble is the connection between the few actually present visual sensations, and the innumerable ghosts of past sensations—visual, tactual, and muscular—which follow in their train, that the ordinary man can with difficulty, if at all, be persuaded, that when he affirms “I see a peach,” he sees nothing round, or hard, or downy, no *thing*, in fact, at all, but just a transient and confused blotch of indefinite and undefinable colour. It may be noted, too, that though it is generally a present feeling of sight which recalls feelings of touch that have been associated with it in the past, yet that, occasionally, the conditions may be reversed; a sensation of touch may be associated with ideal feelings of sight. It is true that, in this case, the ideal feelings are much fainter, but their occurrence is undoubted. For instance, I am sitting in a low chair, absorbed in a book which I am reading, when a pet dog comes up and licks my hand, which is hanging down by my side. Without suffering my eyes for one instant to turn towards him, I lift my hand, and stroke his head. Now, immediately that the action ceases, let me examine the idea which I have of this incident. Is the idea which I call up merely the copy of the actual sensation, is it merely the recollection of a certain feeling of warmth, and softness, and resistance that I am conscious of? By no means: I am conscious of having stroked a dog. That is, the idea, which I have, is the idea of an animal of a definite shape and a definite colour, and a definite length of hair, and so on with a hundred other attributes, which certainly formed no part of the original sensation. But they have so frequently been associated in my past experience with each other, and with the sensation of stroking, that the occurrence of any one of these sensations is sufficient to call up all the rest. And if put on my oath, I should, no doubt, find it hard to determine whether I had actually stroked the dog or no. Or let anyone close his eyes, and then handle a number of objects with which he is well acquainted by sight, and, afterwards, a number of others of unfamiliar shape and material. The definiteness and permanency of his ideas in the one case, which are certainly due to no occult quality in the original sensation—contrasted with the transient blue of feeling, which is all that remains

in the other, will readily satisfy him, that a feeling of touch can, and does habitually, recall past associated feelings of sight.

THE NATURE OF SENSE-PERCEPTIONS.

Having now glanced at the manner of our present sense-perceptions, we may briefly sum up the chief points to be noticed. (*a*) We have seen that perception is by no means the simple matter that we have been accustomed to think it. That to discriminate between our different sensations, in the first place, and, in the second place, to interpret them—that is, to know what sensations signify what objects—is really not a process of feeling so much as of reasoning, and would, if it were performed consciously, demand the exercise of the highest intellectual powers: as it is not performed consciously, it requires no more than the education of custom—but of a custom which has been forming not through the lifetime of the individual only, nor of the race only, but throughout the whole time of sentient life upon the earth. (*b*) We have seen, next, that the idea of a thing which we have, when we see it, is by no means a copy of the single impression entering from moment to moment by the organ of vision, but is compounded of this, and of all similar impressions received in our previous experience, together with innumerable impressions of touch, and other obscure impressions commonly called muscular—themselves probably ill-defined tactual sensations, which have been associated in the past with similar visual sensations. (*c*) And we have seen, lastly, that when any given number of sensations have been constantly received together, they—or if we prefer so to speak, their impressions in the sensorium, or their ideas in the memory—become so indissolubly connected together, that the occurrence of one of the number is sufficient to recal ideally all the rest.

So that having only seen a thing, we have in idea the impression derived from having touched and grasped it as well: or having only touched a thing, we may come to believe afterwards that we have also seen it.

And this bond is probably more intimate between feelings of the same sense: an impression of sight, for instance, will be more readily revived by a sensation of sight than by a sensation of touch. And, of course, the more frequently the sensations, whether of sight or touch, have been experienced together (that is, in immediate succession), the more easily will the one suffice to revive the other.

THE PERCEPTIONS OF CLAIRVOYANTS.

Now, of the perceptions of the clairvoyant, we notice, in the first place, that they are obviously and emphatically the perceptions of a trained and accustomed sense. They have all, or nearly all, the seeming intuitiveness of vision, and far more than that of touch. The clairvoyant, whose eyes are closed, when requested to choose a blue card from out of a number of coloured cards before him, does not slowly and hesitatingly take up one card after another, and say at length, "I have a sensation when I handle this card, which I remember to have had before in handling blue things; this, therefore, is, if I mistake not, a blue card." He performs such a test immediately, and without hesitation. The difference between his powers of perception and those of a man casually blindfolded, is immeasurably greater in degree, and, apparently of another kind, than the difference between a highly-educated blind man, and the same man blindfolded, when set to read in a book printed in raised type. Even in reading a closed book, or a sealed letter, the clairvoyant does not, apparently, find more difficulty than an accustomed scholar would find whilst reading old Greek or black letter. We are, then, I think, entitled to affirm—unless we are to assume that this sensory power is transcorporeal, and altogether independent of physiological analogies—that it is a sense which is continually being exercised, together with our known senses, in the normal state, and has been so exercised throughout a long period of time, if not from the very beginning.

THE SIXTH SENSE.

Next, these perceptions, which, whatever they may be, are certainly *not* those of sight, immeasurably excel the preception of all the other senses, and are inferior to those of sight alone in their precision and the wideness of their range. No sense of touch, it may be assumed, however finely developed, would enable us to distinguish a blue card from a red one of the same material. No sense of hearing would enable us to perceive inanimate objects at a distance, and to guide our steps accordingly. Indeed, so closely do the judgments of this new sensory faculty resemble those of sight, that the clairvoyant is invariably said, both by himself and by his critics, to *see* the objects of which he takes cognisance. It is probable, then, that this new sense will be found to be one which in our normal state is constantly exercised upon the same objects, and at the same time, as the sense of sight properly so called.

THE MEDIUM CONVEYING THE IMPRESSIONS.

Now as to the medium from which the impressions of an hypothetical sense are derived. We know that the heat waves constantly reflected from material bodies, which impinging upon the retina, enable us to see the bodies from which they radiate, are only a small portion of the waves actually reflected. The retina is only susceptible to impressions of certain kinds of ethereal undulations. But the nerves of the skin perceive in the form of heat not only those undulations which affect the retina, but many others to which the eye is insensible. And if we had occasion to pay attention to them, it is possible that we should be conscious of many more such impressions received on the surface of the face, when the eyes are closed. So there may well be molecular movements other than those known as heat and electricity, propagated by a medium other than the hypothetical luminiferous ether, which may be calculated by affecting sensory nerves situated in the general surface of the skin, to give us information as to the nature and attributes of the bodies, from which they are derived. There are indications amongst the lower animals of the possession of some such sensory power, as in the notorious experiments of Spallanzani. This naturalist placed several bats, whose eyes he had put out, in a room with innumerable threads of silk stretched across it, and he observed that, in repeatedly flying backwards and forwards, they never struck against any obstacle. The perception in such cases has generally been attributed to a highly exalted sense of touch, situated in the nerves with which the membranous pinions of these animals are furnished. But it is clear that it could be no sense of touch in the ordinary acceptation of that term, which could warn them of the nearness of objects previously to actual contact. The extraordinarily delicate sensibilities possessed by the blind are, of course, well known; but where, as in most cases, these are obviously due to the unusual development of some known sense, they do not illustrate our argument. But I find that Dr. George Macdonald, in his novel "Malcolm," gives the following description of a Highland piper, blind from his birth: "His whole face appeared to possess an ethereal sense, as of touch, for without the slightest contact in the ordinary sense of the word, he was aware of the neighbourhood of material objects, as if through the pulsations of some medium to others imperceptible. He could with perfect accuracy tell the height of any

wall or fence within a few feet of him ; could perceive at once whether it was high or low, or half-tide, and that merely by going out in front of the house, and turning his sightless eyeballs to the sea ; and knew whether a woman who spoke to him had a child in her arms or not." *

Lastly, that, at least in certain cases, the perceptions of the clairvoyant bear some relation to his physiological structure, is indicated by the fact that he frequently places the object to be read or described on the forehead, where of course it is in close proximity to the great nerve-centre, or on the pit of the stomach, immediately over one of the great nerve-plexuses of the body.

The theory, which, in view of all these considerations, I would advance, may be stated as follows. It is certain that for every ether wave which falls on the retina, there are many more such waves falling upon the general surface of the skin. It is possible, even probable, that all these ether waves, give rise to structural changes in the nerves, on termini of which they may chance to fall, similar in kind to the changes produced in the optic nerve. It is true, that, except when we have a sensation of heat, there is no consciousness of any such changes, but that is no proof, that they do not take place. In the normal condition of the organism, we are not conscious of the impressions received by the semicircular canals, which yet aid in guiding our movements. If they exist, it is probable that the impressions arising from them are very faint, and that they are altogether merged in the much more vivid sensations arising at the same time from the stimulation of the optic nerve. We do not see the shining of the stars, when the sun is in the heavens, but the stars are shining nevertheless.† Now these nerve changes or unfelt sensations, would be registered in the structure of the brain along with the allied changes in the optic nerve, which correspond on the subjective side to sensations of sight. They would be intimately united with these latter, they

would be habitually recalled together with them, they would be associated with them in every act of perception, and would, generally speaking, be undistinguishable from them ; so that their very existence would never be conjectured. For as the eye is never closed in our waking moments, except when the brain is too much pre-occupied to take note of any external impressions, there would not ordinarily be any opportunity for their separate exercise. Lastly, it is certain, that, as such powers of perception would be of little use, they would be, in the normal organism but little developed. But where the visual perceptions require to be permanently supplemented by other impressions, as in the case of bats, who fly by night, when ordinary vision is of little use ; or when, in certain exceptional organizations, as in the case of Dr. Macdonald's blind piper, this power of vision is altogether wanting, we might expect to find these otherwise almost superfluous sense-impressions developed to meet the needs of the organism. What was before feeble, would then, it may well be supposed, become vivid ; what was unfelt before would then enter into the conscious life. The light of the stars is seen when the sun has gone down. And if in some abnormal physiological condition, all the other sensory faculties should be inhibited, and this faculty alone remain active, so that the vital force which serves in the natural life to innervate all the senses, would be concentrated in this one, we should expect that its sensibility would be very greatly exalted, and that its announcements would approach very nearly in accuracy and clearness to those of sight, with which it has always been associated, and to which it is so nearly allied. And this is just the condition, apparently, which we have in somnambulism. The sense of sight is always repressed : the sense of hearing very generally so, and not unfrequently, the sense of pain, and of touch, properly so-called. And here it is necessary to guard against a possible misconception. There are, so far as is already known, three main classes of impressions conveyed by the nerves, which supply the skin, though whether they are appropriated to separate nerves, is not certainly known--impressions, to wit, of contact and pressure : impressions of pain, and impressions of temperature. Now any two of these classes can be abolished, and leave the third intact, such has been observed to be the case in certain morbid conditions. There is nothing, then, to hinder us from supposing that a clairvoyant is a person in whom the sensibility to heat-rays—or to certain

* "Malcolm," page 28, in the one-volume edition. It may be assumed that Dr. Macdonald had some grounds for this description. Nor would this be a solitary instance of the keen observation of a novelist having anticipated the slow steps of orthodox science. Mr. F. Galton, in an article on "Mind," (April [?] of last year) on visual memory, describes how the questions which he put on the power of visual recollection, were treated with scorn by many men of science, one going so far as to deny the existence of such a faculty, not only in himself, but in others ; whilst another frankly confessed that he had always attributed the hints of such a faculty, which he found in novels, to the untrustworthy imaginations of the writers.

† *Pas est et ab hoste doceri* : The illustration is borrowed from Dr. Maudsley ; a man to be classed with Dr. Carpenter and Dr. Forbes Winslow, amongst the relentless foes of Spiritualism.

heat-rays—given out by surrounding objects, is enormously developed at the expense of all the other sensibilities. The clairvoyant says that he *sees* the objects he describes, because these impressions, by the law already explained, inevitably revive the visual impressions, which have always been received with them by the same objects, just as the touch of a dog brings the image of the dog before the memory; and so much the more powerfully and vividly in the case of the clairvoyant, because the impressions of temperature are actually more germane to the impressions of sight, which they recal, being indeed, produced by the same impulses received from different sense-organs.

So much for the theory. In it we have advanced not a step beyond the ascertained facts of physiology. As the theory stands, we have not so much to ask whether it is true, as whether it is adequate; whether these actually received and recorded impressions of heat could, under any circumstances, be sufficiently developed to do the work required of them. Will it, then, explain the facts? Apparently it will not. It will afford a more or less sufficient explanation to certain numbers of the phenomena—to wit, all those cases in which the patient could have seen the thing described had his eyes been open. It will account, more or less satisfactorily, for the discrimination of colour, the reading of open letters and books, and the perception of distant objects, when nothing intervenes in a direct line between the perceiver and the object. But it fails to explain, at least, as above stated, the reading of closed books and of sealed letters, because substances which are opaque to the visible rays—that is, all solids, except certain crystal and certain organic substances, are opaque, I apprehend to the invisible rays as well. It is true that we can extend the theory, and suppose that there are other impulses than that of heat, conveyed under other laws, and by another medium, than those with which we are familiar. And on such a supposition, no doubt, a certain number of the residual phenomena could be explained. But in thus extending the theory, we are quitting our stronghold of fact. We know of no such impulses; we have not the shadow of a proof of any such medium. We can only say, that the thing is not impossible. And even so we can hardly account for such facts as the description of an unknown scene 100 miles away. Such facts as this may be susceptible of a physiological interpretation, but at present we can neither see nor imagine any such. Time will show.

Meanwhile, this hypothesis is thrown out in the rough, as a suggestion towards the solution of a difficult problem. I do not expect, by my own unaided arm, to reclaim for science fresh tracts from the waste lands of the miraculous. Still less am I animated by the desire to destroy, in the act of accepting, what might seem to be an invincible proof of spirit-agency. This essay will have served its purpose if it induce but a few amongst Spiritualists themselves to examine more closely into the phenomena, and endeavour to construct a scientific frontier between the things which belong to matter and those which belong to soul. If we are to be Spiritualists, let us at least observe the laws of dramatic propriety, and not call in a God to aid, until we have a knot worthy a God's undoing.

ANIMAL MAGNETISM.

THE GREAT MAGNETIC LAW OF LIFE.

BY HENRY G. ATKINSON, F.G.S., AUTHOR OF "LETTERS TO MISS MARTINEAU."

With Mr. Harrison's remarkable work in our hands on *Spirits before our Eyes*, there is no occasion to resort to defective arguments in proof that we are all independent personalities, with a permanent sense of identity when under continuous normal conditions. The sense of identity is very much a question of memory from hour to hour and day to day, for we cannot identify our present selves with what we were long ago, the memory of which stage or age is lost. A man tipsy or insane may lose the sense of identity and on recovery forget all about it, when he will fail of course to identify himself with the tipsy or insane man. Moreover, it is hard to conceive that at sixty, one is the same being as in baby life in the nurse's arms. But the universal law of animal magnetism will show Mr. W. J. Colville his logical error. The law is that in all growth and change of the substance of the body, the new material is instantly leavened or invested with the exact nature in every particular of the being, or particular organs of that being, by which it is absorbed, as though the departing element on giving place, as it were, whispered the password and secrets of its being to the new comer. This law of investment refers to all living nature, fish, insect, worm, tree, plant, bird, animal—to all.

Professor Huxley, on Crayfish, does not seem to see why, with this continual renewal of the substance, we might not live for ever. The latest memories and sense of sameness or of identity, are passed to the new matter with

all the other specialities, memories, and acquirements of the particular being. This occurs in respect to all living nature; it is so with the individual from the germ cell to baby life, and on and on to extreme old age and second childishness, when we come to the loss of memory even of that which had happened an hour only before, which may be a puzzle to Mr. W. J. Colville's logic, as well as to that of Professor Huxley with the belief in a soul, as well as to those who do not accept that view. I am much disposed to agree with my old friend, the Rev. Dr. Irons, in his great work on "Final Causes," that unless you accept the Bible as the word of God, there is no other evidence of a reason for the belief in a God, the Creator of the universe. Nor will philosophy permit us to isolate man, as an anomaly in nature, whether Mr. Darwin's reading be the correct one or not, for Mr. Colville's reasoning would apply to the whole animal world. Mr. Colville's argument is that of the late Mr. Serjeant Cox, to which I replied in this and other journals. The generalisation of the marvellous magnetic law of life, is a grand and stupendous fact, the basis of all growth and change of the substance, and of the permanent maintenance of all the differences and precise specialities and varieties in all living nature. The old oak tree of 300 years is not the acorn nor the sapling, nor is it in its living present the same that it was the Spring before. The more we reflect on the magnetic law of life, the law of perpetual inheritance, the permanence of the individual character under all changes, and of the precise nature and correlation of parts, and of our interdependent unity or personality, the more is the amazement. The formative and spiritual laws of the myriad forms and fashions of all the diversity maintained with the unity of nature in a general harmony—mind, instinct, and the formative and conservative principle being closely related in a summary law, that may perhaps for ever escape man's cognisance, for atoms with their attractions, repulsions, affinities, and polarities, go but a small way in the argument. The mechanical theories of the day fail to supply any sufficient explanation, and well may Tyndall say that matter is "mystical and transcendental at bottom." But I must end, and it shall be with a curious passage from the diary of Sir Walter Scott, January 1st, 1826—"Walked into the plantations with Anne and Anne Russell. A thought strikes me, alluding to this period of the year. People say that the whole human frame in all its

parts and divisions is gradually in the act of decaying and renewing. What a curious time-piece it would be that could indicate to us the moment this gradual and insensible change had so completely taken place, that no atom was left of the original person who had existed at a certain period, but there existed in his stead another person having the same thews and sinews; the same face and lineaments; the same consciousness; a new ship built on an old plank; a pair of transmigration stockings like those of Sir John Cutler, all green, without one thread of the original black silk left! Singular to be at once another and the same!" And seemingly as strange to Professor Huxley, in 1880, as to the great writer, Sir Walter Scott, in 1826.

4 Quai de la Douane, Boulogne-sur-Mer.

A LEGAL POINT.

The *Law Journal*, 1865, Vol. XXXIV, (Magistrate's Cases), page 50, gives the details of a case which came before the Court of Queen's Bench, for a decision as to whether falsely pretending to possess supernatural powers, and obtaining money and goods in consequence, was a false pretence within the meaning of the Act of Parliament. The case was alluded to at the recent Old Bailey trial. One Henry Fisher had deserted his wife, Mary Fisher, of Newbury; the latter then applied to a "wise woman," named Maria Giles, and, says the indictment, Maria Giles "unlawfully, knowingly, and designedly did falsely pretend to the said Mary Ann Fisher, that the said Maria Giles then had power to bring back the said Henry Fisher to the said Mary Ann Fisher over hedges and ditches. And that a certain stuff which she the said Maria Giles then had in her possession, was sufficient and effectual for the purpose of bringing back the said Henry Fisher to the said Mary Ann Fisher." Maria Giles was found guilty by the Jury, and the Court of Queen's Bench confirmed the conviction.

ASTROLOGY:—Last month, a period to which astrologers looked forward with something like terror, has passed without any great palpable physical evils equal to those of the Russo-Turkish war of a few years back. There is however a vast amount of undemonstrative suffering all over the United Kingdom, due to the paralysis of agriculture by an unnatural and artificial system of land tenures, so that between one and two hundred millions of money have for some time past been sent abroad annually, to pay for food much of which would otherwise have been produced at home. For the same reason, the home market for town produce, is largely destroyed in agricultural districts. Life-concentration in large towns is deteriorating the race.

THE KABBALAH.

The word Kabbalists, in Hebrew *Anshe Kabbala*, "men who have received," is derived from the Hebrew word *Kabbel*, to receive. That which was received was not merely a doctrine, called the Kabbalah, but a word, the Word, *Logos*, or *Memra Jehova*. As long as the Initiate searches the Word he is a mystic; when he has received the Word, then the Word has become flesh, and the Initiate becomes a Kabbalist. The Word, *Logos*, or *Memra Jehova*, is the Soul in *manifesto*, which spontaneously communicates itself when the Initiate is fit to receive it. M. D. has utterly misunderstood the Kabbalah. It requires pure life. "Live the life and the power shall be given to you." Although a man may have studied this science many years, unless he does so practically, he only loses his time, and in the end remains in complete ignorance of the esoteric meaning and real value of the Kabbalah. Whether his teachings are given in aggressive spirit or not has nothing to do with the question. My opinion is they should never have been put forth at all, as any true Initiate who cared could expose the errors. Theories, especially doubtful and fallacious ones, are plentiful enough; what the age wants is practical directions, and nothing can empirically demonstrate the existence of the Deity but the practice of the Divine and true Kabbalah. All true Initiates have had the esoteric Doctrine. The Hebrews, as I have said, however, as a nation of Monotheists, maintained their system in greater purity than the surrounding polytheistic nations. The oral esoteric tradition among the Hebrew, which is coeval with the nation, is so entirely stamped with the Hebrew individuality, that to assert the Hebrews received their Kabbalah from another nation, is to show unacquaintance with Hebrew, as well as all other esoterism. J. K.

THE religious sense is as yet too feebly developed in most of us; but certainly, in no preceding age have men taken up the work of life with more earnestness or with more real faith in the unseen than at the present day, when so much of what was once deemed all important knowledge has been consigned to the limbo of mythology.—*Fisk's Unseen World*.

EXTRAORDINARY FASTING CASE.—An account published in Glasgow of a remarkable fasting case is exciting great interest in medical circles in Lanarkshire. It is stated that Catherine Marshall, aged 14 years, daughter of a surfaceman, has not partaken of food since the commencement of the year. Her parents cannot get her to take any food, the only nourishment being a little water daily. She scarcely sleeps, and is dreadfully emaciated. Her pulse is perfectly natural. Last autumn she was treated for a pulmonary cold.

THE RABBINICAL ASHMEDAI AND THE SHAMEER.

The central figure of Rabbinical demonology is Asmodeus—"Ashmedia" he is called—the Demon Prince, known also as Samael, the "Malach d'mavtha," or Angel of Death. Round him cluster the most interesting of the Agadoth regarding evil spirits and demons.

The Ashmedai of the Talmud is quite unlike his irreclaimably wicked namesake, notorious in mediæval Church annals. The Jewish Demon Prince has a different origin. He has peculiarities that savour, so to speak, of the synagogue. He was formed, runs the Agadic legend, of the vaporous ether that flecked the moon's surface. He is skilled in every kind of knowledge; is an adept in heavenly and earthly sciences, and can foretell the future. Every day he ascends to Heaven, and attends, with the other angels, the celestial academies of learning. Every day he descends again to earth, and visits in human form, the Rabbinical colleges, and hears the disputations and discussions on Halacha and Agada—Law and Legend. He and his subordinates occasionally do the Jews a good turn. Thus when Esther was married to Ahasuerus—contrary to Jewish custom—the Persian monarch was tricked. An obliging demon took the shape and form of the Jewish maiden in the harem, while she herself, removed by another spirit, was at home with her uncle Mordecai. Ashmedai is altogether an odd mixture of good and bad, of noble impulses and degrading tendencies. A legend connected with King Solomon and the Temple-building will show the Jewish Demon Prince in the most favourable light. Tradition records that none of the stones used for the Temple were cut by man's agency. They were quarried, shaped, and squared by a worm—the "Shameer." Thus runs the story:—When Solomon commenced to build, he asked the Rabbins how he was to square the stones. "There is a worm," they said "the 'Shameer,' created at the beginning of the world, which cleaves every substance upon which it is placed." "Where can I obtain it?" asked the King. The Rabbins advised him to consult a male and female demon, and compel them to disclose to him where the worm was to be found. He accordingly conjured two demons into his presence. They knew nothing of the Shameer, but suggested that Solomon should apply to their king, Ashmedai. "He has dug a well," said the shédim, "in a neighbouring mountain and covered it with a stone impressed with his own seal. Every day he

comes to drink, first seeing that the seal is untouched, and then he re-seals it, so that none can open it." Benaiah, the wise son of Jehoiadah, was thereupon despatched to trap the "Tempter." He took with him Solomon's seal and a heavy chain, upon both of which was the Ineffable Name—the Shem-ham-foresh—and several skins of wine. Benaiah went to work as follows: he first dug a pit below the demon's well, and making a passage between the two, the water ran off into the former. The passage was then plugged up. He now dug another pit on a higher level than the well, with underground communication between them. Into this he emptied the wine, which of course filled the demon's reservoir. Smoothing the ground, Benaiah waited. Ashmedai came as usual, found his seal untouched, opened the well, and discovered wine! The temptation proved great, and he drank: drank till the wine got into his head, and he slept. Benaiah then threw upon his neck the chain with the "Wondrous Name" upon it, and the Ashmedai was led off to Jerusalem. On the way the demon's conduct was extremely characteristic. He met a blind man going astray, and showed him the right way. He saw a drunkard staggering along, and went forward to assist him. He passed where a marriage-ceremony was taking place, and wept aloud. He heard a man order a pair of sandals to last seven years, and laughed outright. Lastly, he came upon a wizard who was engaged in divination, and he roared with laughter. Benaiah asked him to explain all this. "Why did you put the blind man right?" "Because," said Ashmedai, "he was a just man; and Heaven has decreed that whosoever shows him a kindness will have a portion in the world to come!" "Why, then, did you help the drunkard?" "Because he is utterly bad, and will enjoy no after-life; I therefore wished to render him at least a trifling service in this world." "Why did you weep when you saw the wedding-procession?" "Because the bridegroom was doomed to die within thirty days." "Why did you laugh when the man ordered his sandals?" "Because he wanted them to last seven years, and he knew not that he would live seven days." "And why, lastly, did you laugh so immoderately at the wizard?" "Because the impostor, pretending to sorcery was actually sitting on an immense treasure and knew nothing of it." When brought before Solomon, Ashmedai informed the King where the Shameer was to be found, and the stones were then cut by the worm.—*Pall Mall Budget*.

WONDERFUL DEVELOPMENT OF MUSICAL GENIUS IN A CHILD.

A rather remarkable phenomenon in the way of youthful precocity is developed in the person of Frank Morris Witmark, the little son of Marcus Witmark, of No. 402, West Fortieth Street, New York. Frank will be 6 years of age on the 30th of July next. He is a bright little fellow, with large, twinkling eyes, a rather dark complexion and black hair. He is fond of asking questions, and seems possessed of a wonderful power of comprehension and a most remarkable memory. He has been to school only three days of his life, and has not even mastered the alphabet. He comes of a musical family, but no attempt has ever been made to teach him a note of music. Notwithstanding this fact, the little fellow will give the names of upwards of 300 pieces of music, after having once seen them, upon being shown a page of the notes. He stands by the side of his 11-year old brother as the brother plays the piano, and turns the music for him when the bottom of the page is reached, as correctly as a professor of music. A *Times* reporter visited the residence of Mr. Witmark last evening and witnessed the child's performances. Taking a piece of music from the middle of a large pile on the piano, the reporter opened it in the centre, turning the pages back so that the child could not possibly see the illuminated cover, and thus gain a clue to the title by this means. A page of the music was then shown to Frank, who after simply glancing at the notes, piped out in his boyish voice, "Boccaccio March." His answer was correct, and he was equally correct in telling the names of about 50 other pieces which were presented to him in the same manner. They included all kinds of music, from operatic selections to sentimental ballads and comic songs. The rapidity with which he made his answers was astonishing. "Now turn some of the music upside down," said the father, "you will find that he will recognize it as quickly as he has these." Selecting the "Blue Danube Waltz," the reporter presented a page of the notes in an inverted position to the boy, and his eye scarcely rested on them before he told the title of the piece. This experiment was repeated with about 20 selections, and in every case the answer was rapid and correct. It is very doubtful if many professors of music could recognise a selection without running over a few bars of the music, but this 5-year old boy, who knows nothing of the art, and cannot tell one note from another, recognises the notes belonging to any piece

that he has once seen or heard played, instantaneously. Although many persons have visited him since his power became known, nobody has as yet attempted satisfactorily to explain the intuitive knowledge which he seems to possess.

When these experiments were concluded, Frank's brother, Isidore, himself only eleven years of age, but a very good musician, took his seat at the piano and played a selection from *Il Trovatore*. Frank stood behind him and turned the music whenever the end of a page was reached—or rather, he indicated the time to turn, for his little hand could only just reach the bottom of the sheet when he stood on tip-toe. He did not fail once to indicate the proper time for turning the page, and this experiment was successfully repeated with half-a-dozen selections. In some of the pieces Isidore played false notes occasionally, and Frank's acute ear invariably detected them—a fact which he made known by twisting nervously around to his father and muttering, "False." After having shown what his son could do, Mr. Witmark turned his attention to giving the reporter a short history of Frank, of whom he is naturally proud, and whom he looks upon as destined to prove the greatest musical genius in the world. While his father was talking about him, the little fellow sat in a high arm-chair, kicking his feet, but listening intently to every word and wearing a pleasant expression on his tiny face. "It was about six months ago," said Mr. Witmark, "that we discovered this singular faculty in Franky. Isidore was arranging some of the music in his book, and Frank was watching him from a high chair in which he stood. As Isidore turned the pages, Frank would point to them and name the pieces. Isidore told me of this, and I determined to test my little boy. I took some of the music, and, showing him only the notes, he told me the name of piece after piece in the twinkling of an eye. I was astonished, and when I told some of my friends they would not believe me. I invited some of them to come and see for themselves, and since then we have had company nearly every night to see Frank and wonder at his powers. It is only a few days ago that we discovered that he could turn the music for his brother. A week ago, Monday, I sent him to school for the first time, and on that day I took the advice of many of my friends and went to see S. R. Wells & Co., the phrenologists about him. They asked me to bring him to the store, and on the following Thursday I did so. Mr. Sizer, the

phrenologist of the establishment, examined the boy's head, and told me he had a wonderful faculty for music. 'In him,' he said, 'you have combined the genius of Auber, Liszt, Mozart, and Meyerbeer.' Mr. Sizer gave me several directions about his diet, and I came home determined not to let him go to school again for a few years at least. Yesterday we had his photograph taken for Mr. Sizer. If the child lives—and there never was a healthier child than he is now—I shall educate him strictly with a view to his musical abilities."—*New York Times*.

THE RECENT FLETCHER CASE.

Two of the American Spiritualist newspapers, contains inflammatory articles to the effect that Mrs. Fletcher has been condemned in England for witchcraft. As a matter of fact, no action was taken at the Old Bailey upon the witchcraft count. The *Daily Telegraph* of April 12th last, in its report of the trial, says:—

"Mr. Justice Hawkins, addressing Mr. Addison, said he need not trouble himself about the last count in the indictment (that which has reference to a conspiracy to defraud by witchcraft). In the first place there was no evidence to support it, and the count was absolutely bad in itself."

So on this head much good indignation has been wasted on the other side of the Atlantic.

The *Daily Telegraph* also reported that when Dr. Mack was questioned about running away from his bail, his own recognisances, in America, he replied that a bargain was made—a solemn obligation was entered into—that if Madame Hart-Davies dropped the prosecution against the Fletchers, all other suits should be dropped against him, and on that assurance he did not go back to America.

"PEACE ON EARTH."

The following beautiful lines, of a religious nature, were published some time ago; they are from the pen of Mr. Edmund Yates:

"God's peace on earth—towards Men His goodwill,"

Proclaimed by angels centuries ago,

To Bethlehem's shepherds, echoes even now,

Wind-wafted from yon church upon the hill.

And wearied, yet all sleepless, as I lie,

Strange visions crowd upon my 'wildered brain.

Departed forms before me rise again—

Comrades of wassail-days long since gone by!

Rings many a silenced voice upon mine ear,

Strong grasps from hands now stiff and cold I feel,

And, though I know the fantasy unreal,

Vainly I strive to check the rising tear.

"God rest him!" say I, though mine eye be dim,
(And Heaven be thanked, my heart is lightly
moved!)

"God rests the souls of those I dearly loved,
And Glory in the highest be to him!"

Who at this holy season fills the mind
With calm content and gentle thoughts of love
To those now singing in His choir above,
And waiting for the dear ones left behind.

E'en for each other lingering here below
Do better, nobler sympathies arise.
Forgiveness comes beneath a Christmas guise,
And ancient memories smooth the angry brow!

All breathe a blessing on their English home—
The war-worn soldier in the Indian camp—
The settler standing on the fresh-cleared swamp—
The sailor tossing on the Arctic foam.

And on the ear of each, by fancy borne,
The music of the merry bells is ringing,
Blithe notes of jubilee to heaven winging
Through the clear air upon this Christmas morn.

CHRISTMAS, 1851.

SITTING ALONE WITH CONSCIENCE.

I sat alone with my conscience,
In a place where time had ceased;
And we talked of my former living
In the land where the years increased.
And I felt I should have to answer
The question it put to me,
And to face the answer and question
Throughout an eternity.

The ghosts of forgotten actions
Came floating before my sight,
And things that I thought were dead things
Were alive with a terrible might;
And the vision of all my past life
Was an awful thing to face,
Alone with my conscience sitting
In that solemnly silent place.

And I thought of a far away warning
Of a sorrow that was to be mine,
In a land that then was the future,
But now was the present time;
And I thought of my former thinking
Of a judgment-day to be;
But sitting alone with my conscience
Seemed judgment enough for me.

And I wondered if there was a future
To this land beyond the grave;
But no one gave me an answer,
And no one came to save.
Then I felt that the future was present,
And the present would never go by;
For it was but the thought of my past life
Grown into eternity.

Then I woke from my timely dreaming,
And the vision passed away,
And I knew the far away warning
Was a warning of yesterday;
And I pray that I may not forget it,
In this land before the grave,
That I may not cry in the future,
And no one come to save.

And so I have learned a lesson,
Which I ought to have learned before,
And which, though I learned it dreaming,
I hope to forget no more,
So I sit alone with my conscience,
In the place where the years increase;
And I try to remember the future,
In the land where time will cease.
And I know of the future judgment,
How dreadful soe'er it be,
That to sit alone with my conscience
Will be judgment enough for me.

The Spectator.

SPIRITUALISM IN MARYLEBONE:—Next Sunday evening, at seven o'clock, Mr. MacDonnell will lecture before the Marylebone Society of Spiritualists, Quebec Hall, Great Quebec Street, on "Religion in Business," and on the following Sunday Mr. Hunt will deliver a discourse on "The Spiritualist's Last Sickness and Death." Next Wednesday at 8.30 p.m., Mr. F. O. Matthews will officiate. Last Sunday evening, Mr. MacDonnell took for his subject, "Earl Beaconsfield."

A CLAIRAUDIENT WARNING.—A reporter of the *Globe-Democrat* interviewed Mr. Wm. Woolridge, one of the unfortunate men who were blown up on the tow-boat, John Means. Mr. Woolridge made the following statement in regard to the accident while being conveyed to his home at Cairo, Ill., upon the steamer City of Helena. About five minutes before the boat blew up, he felt a peculiar chill creep over him, and his frame shook as if with an attack of the ague, and at the same time a voice whispered to him in a distinct manner the words, "Danger! danger! danger!" He was just debating in his mind whether to relate the occurrence or regard it as a vague hallucination of the brain, when the boat was blown to atoms, and he found himself in the river floating on a portion of the wreck, from which he was taken by some men in a skiff. Mr. Woolridge made this statement in a whisper scarcely audible, being almost speechless, and completely prostrated from the terrible scaldings and bruises he received at the time of the explosion. He makes no claim to being a Spiritualist, and can only attribute the strange warning he received of the coming accident to some cause or mystery in nature that time has never solved. —"*Religio-Philosophical Journal*," (Chicago, April 9th, 1881.)

Answers to Correspondents.

Errata:—In the section of Mr. Podmore's article, printed last week, on page 194, line 4, "the somnambulists, say they," should run "the somnambulist, say they," (i.e. the physiologists.) Line 13, "dormant" should be "dominant." In the 2nd column, line 6, "their" should be "those." And page 195, line 6 "what" is a misprint for "which."

THE ENGLISH TRANSLATION OF PROFESSOR ZOLLNER'S EXPERIMENTS.

LIST OF ENGRAVINGS.

FRONTISPIECE:—The room at Leipsic in which most of the Experiments were conducted.

PLATE I:—Experiments with an Endless String.

PLATE II:—Leather Bands Interlinked and Knotted under Professor Zollner's Hands.

PLATE III:—Experiments with an Endless Bladder-band and Wooden Rings.

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