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SCIENCE vs. MODERN SPIRITUALISM.

A TREATISE ON

TURNING TABLES,

THE

SUPERNATURAL IN GENERAL, AND SPIRITS.

TRANSLATED FROM THE FRENCH OF

COUNT AGÉNOR DE GASPARIN,

BY E. W. ROBERT,

WITH AN INTRODUCTION

BY REV. ROBERT BAIRD, D.D.

VOL. I.

NEW YORK:
KIGGINS & KELLOGG, PUBLISHERS,
123 & 125 WILLIAM STREET.

1857.

ENTERED according to Act of Congress, in the year 1856, by

KIGGINS AND KELLOGG,

In the Clerk's Office of the District Court of the U. S. for the Southern District of New York.

761
—
1/4/1890
—
3 Vols.

8

The translator has taken the liberty of adding to the original title, the words, "SCIENCE vs. MODERN SPIRITUALISM," as an explanation to the American public of the nature and design of M. de Gasparin's work.

W. H. TINSON, Stereotyper.

E. O. JENKINS, Printer.

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INTRODUCTION

BY REV. ROBERT BAIRD, D. D.

COUNT AGÉNOR DE GASPARIN, the author of the following work, is one of the most distinguished French Protestants of our times. His family is of Italian origin, as the name sufficiently indicates, and came, if we have been rightly informed, into France from the Island of Corsica, more than a century ago. His father was a member of the Chamber of Peers in the reign of Louis Philippe, and for some years was Prefect of the Department of the Rhone. At one period he held the post of Minister of the Interior. He was also a member of one of the five "Academies" which constitute the "Institute of France," and reckoned to be a man of highly respectable talents, and of extensive and solid attainments. Both father and son were warm supporters of the throne of Louis Philippe, and cherished for that monarch a very strong personal regard, which partook, we might say, of the nature of sincere friendship.

Count Gasparin spent the earlier part of his life at Paris, where he received an education corresponding with the distinguished rank of his family. He is a scholar, in the highest and best sense of the word—his acquirements being at once various and profound. He is the author of several interesting and important works, of which we may mention his *Intérêts Généraux du Protestantisme Français*, in one volume 8vo., and *Christianisme et Paganisme*, in 2 vols. 8vo., as possessing far more than ordinary value for intelligent Christian readers of all countries.

To great advantages of personal appearance, Count Gasparin unites the grace of most refined and elegant manners. Few men, in any country, have associated more constantly or more intimately with elevated and cultivated society, than he has done from early childhood. And it has been justly remarked of him, that "he unites the accomplishments of the courtier with the sincerity and benevolence of the Christian."

By inheritance, Count Gasparin possessed a handsome patrimonial property; and his resources have been greatly augmented by marriage

with a Swiss lady of ample fortune, of the Canton de Vaud, in which country he has spent much of his time for the last ten or fifteen years.

Removed thus from the necessity of pursuing professional studies as a means of livelihood, he has devoted his time chiefly to writing works of a religious and philanthropic nature. His publications, counting pamphlets as well as books, are already numerous, although he cannot be much more, if at all, than forty-five or forty-eight years old. Besides these, he has written much for the journals, religious and secular.

Nor has the pen of Madame Gasparin been much less prolific than that of her husband. One of her earliest and largest works has had a wide circulation in France, and the French-speaking portions of the countries circumjacent. It is entitled, *Marriage from a Christian point of view*. She has recently written much and strongly against the *Institutions of Protestant Deaconesses*, which have begun to spring up in France and Germany.

Count Gasparin is an earnest and zealous Protestant Christian, of what is called in France the "Evangelical School," in contradistinction to that which is termed "Latitudinarian." It is rare to see in any country a man in so elevated a position who is so humble and spiritually-minded a follower of the Lamb. No man living, probably, has stood up more courageously than he in behalf of the Gospel, and the religion which it teaches, in circumstances of the most trying nature. He has borne the "shame" which, in the estimation of too many of the great and fashionable people of this world, attaches to the "Cross," and he has borne it well. He was the founder, in the year 1842, of a Society for the promotion of the Protestant interests—a Society which has done much for the protection of the religious and civil rights of the Protestants of France, as well as to advance their interests in many other ways. He also took a very prominent part, a few years later, in the formation of the "Free Protestant Church of France," a church which renounces all connection with, and dependence on, the State and its patronage.

In the year 1842, Count Gasparin became a member of the Chamber of Deputies, having been elected to that branch of the French Legislature by the inhabitants of the Island of Corsica, a part of the kingdom in which there was, probably, less Protestantism than in any other. This was owing in part to the influence of his father, who had made many friends in that island, when he was Minister of the Interior, and in part to the influence of Louis Philippe, to whom the Count was Master of Requests, a post of honor which gave him great advantages for familiar access to his Majesty.

During the few years he was a member of the Chamber of Deputies, Count Gasparin delivered several speeches which reflected the highest

honor on his talents as a logician and an orator, as well as on his courage as a man in fearlessly avowing and defending the true principles of Christianity. In particular, his efforts in behalf of Religious Liberty both in the Senate and in the Courts of Law, were eminently able and effective,—though far from being acceptable to the government, which was then rapidly succumbing to the influence of the Jesuits. In consequence of this he failed to be reelected to the Chamber of Deputies, and retired to the walks of private life.

Availing himself of the leisure which this state of things allowed him, and accompanied by Madame Gasparin, he made a long tour in the East, an interesting account of which the literary public of France has been in possession of for some years. It was whilst prosecuting his journey that he heard of the Revolution of 1848, and the downfall of his friend Louis Philippe. Without loss of time, he addressed the exiled Monarch a long and faithful letter, filled with sentiments eminently Christian and instructive.

Upon his return from his travels in the Holy Land and the adjacent countries, Count Gasparin took up his residence at the village of Valleyres, in the Canton de Vaud (Switzerland), where he has mainly, if not uninterruptedly, resided, in the midst of the friends and relatives of his wife, having no desire to live under the dynasty by which his native land is at present ruled.

It was there that in the years 1853-54, his attention was called to the subject of the "Turning Tables," which was then exciting much interest in France and Switzerland. Believing that great evils were likely to result from the delusions to which the abuse of this phenomenon seemed to give rise, he applied himself conscientiously to the study of its causes. With the aid of personal friends, in whom he could implicitly confide, he devoted several months to the investigation of the subject. He was stimulated to undertake the task, by seeing that the "Academies," or branches of the Institute of France, whose province it is (or is supposed to be) to examine into all subjects which have any connection with Science, had refused to do so—contenting themselves with pronouncing dogmatically on the question, rather than collecting carefully the facts appertaining to it, and making the deductions which a sound philosophy demanded.

In the work, to which these few paragraphs respecting its author will serve as an introduction, the reader will find a very full account of the experiments which Count Gasparin and his friends made with so much care, and on so many occasions, and the conclusions to which he came. He will find also the Count's speculations on other, and, in a certain sense, kindred subjects; such as the Supernatural in general, the Agency

of Spirits, False Miracles, Animal Magnetism, Spirit-Rappings, etc. These topics are treated at length, with the vivacity which characterizes the French mind, and in the style in which it expresses its conceptions; and, so far as we are able to judge, with no ordinary ability. The translation—although by no means an easy task—has been well executed, and reflects great credit on the translator.

In conclusion, we can, from many years' acquaintance with the author, assure the readers of this work, that it is the production of a mind not likely to be satisfied with insufficient data, or misled by illogical deductions, and incapable of attempting to impose on others.

We have never seen the subject to which it relates treated with more patience of inquiry, or fairness of analysis and conclusion. It is the honest result of investigation prompted by an earnest desire to know the true.

R. B.

P R E F A C E .

A BOOK should be its own defense ; it is a loss of time to re-write or eulogize it in the preface. Of what use then are prefaces ? To settle certain preliminary questions—to dispel certain prejudices that hinder men from reading—to remove certain obstacles in the way of investigation. When an author has finished his work, corrected his proof-sheets, and carefully reviewed his arguments, his last step is to examine if there be between him and the public any of those misunderstandings which render their accordance difficult or imperfect.

There is, in this case, such a misunderstanding. There is one word, an important word, respecting which, some obscurity seems to exist in the public mind, and which I feel called upon to explain. I am told that the subject of my work is not *serious* !

In other terms :—We do not care to know whether you are right or wrong ; it is enough for us to know that the truth of which you claim to be the champion, is not in the number of licensed and authorized truths, of truths upon which we may bestow our attention without compromising ourselves, that it is not among the truths one can acknowledge—the *serious* truths ! Some truths are ridiculous ; so much the worse for them ! Their turn will come, perhaps, and then, men who respect themselves will condescend to extend their protecting arm ; but, in the meantime, so long as cer-

tain persons knit their brows, so long as certain circles treat the thing as a jest, it is bad taste to brave the censure of received opinion! Speak not to us of truth and its rights; we have something to think of besides truth! The question with us is of expediency, of appearances, of remaining in the beaten track, of marching in the ranks of *serious* men!

The legitimate conclusion from all which is, that we should not write, and that we must not read works on the Turning Tables and the Spirits.

Turning Tables! I am well aware that this name is objected to. I might have sought one graver and more scientific, but to do so, seemed to me an act of cowardice. It is the right of the poor, dishonored name to figure in the day of rehabilitation; it is the right of the flag that has seen the battle, that has been trampled in the dust, torn and riddled by the shots of the enemy, to unfurl its tattered remnants in the day of triumph. A new banner would be out of place streaming from the windows of *Les Invalides*. The Turning Tables have conquered; I shall not disown them. Tables they were, and tables they shall remain.

This brings us back to the question of the serious. Is that then our real position? Have we indeed only such convictions as the world allows us? Engrossed in the care of our sacred persons, in arraying ourselves in the costume of the moment, in speaking a jargon whose epicurean pedantry inspires respect, do we yield our support only to theories sanctioned by the areopagus of *sensible* men, or by the leaders of our party? If this be the case, let us renounce the words belief and truth. We fancied ourselves to be liberal and friends of representative government! An illusion. We simply adopted the fashionable color, Liberalism was becoming. We imagine ourselves to be Christians! Another illusion. The dangers with which we were menaced by Socialism, brought about a *soi-disant* religious re-action; it was possible to be Christians and to be, at the same time, serious; we have profited by our position, and have become Christians. But, should the wind tack,

should the hour come when Liberalism and Christianity are again ridiculous, we shall take care to remain serious by ceasing to be Christians and Liberals.

Now, this hypothesis is by no means gratuitous. It has been ridiculous to defend liberty; it has been ridiculous to take up the cause of the oppressed. When Jesus Christ was dragged before Pilate, it was ridiculous to declare one's self his disciple; all the serious people of Judea, all, without exception, shrugged their shoulders in pity. When the apostles preached the Gospel at the price of their blood, there was no lack either in Rome or in Greece, of self-satisfied philosophers, shrewd politicians, brilliant orators, honest and enlightened men. Is it probable that any of these, classed Christianity in the number of serious opinions?

No, it is impossible to express the contempt for truth which lies at the foundation of the theory of the serious. Behind these grave subjects, these grave thoughts, these grave words, this affectation of gravity, behind this perpetual *cant*, dwells an immense scepticism, and what is more, a deplorable frivolity. These men, who have no suspicion of the value of the truth they spurn, are, indeed, very frivolous! These men who aspire only to be serious, have really but little respect for themselves!

But their ambition is often higher, whatever they may say. I suspect that, thanks to God, they are not so wise as they pretend to be. Among those who make the most display of their reverence for the serious, and who blame us for venturing to look into questions of bad repute, there are some who really love the truth, that is to say, who love it for itself, who love it through evil report and through good report. Their views do not change with the fashions—they can bear to be considered ridiculous where duty is concerned—they would have done what I have done, if they had believed what I believe. Why should they do themselves the injustice to imagine that they adopt certain principles for the sake of appearances, while they actually adopt them because they believe them to rest on a foundation of truth!

As for those who have indeed thus degraded themselves, the non-serious men look down upon them from the height of their imprudence with feelings of the deepest compassion. Nothing can be more discouraging than the light in which they regard human convictions and discussions. If such theories as theirs were to prevail, the true, the just, the good would henceforth be words deprived of all meaning; the serious and the expedient would be enthroned in their place, and we should always be justified in changing our colors whenever a serious proposition became ridiculous, or a ridiculous proposition serious.

Ah! the truth is always serious; so also is error. It is as serious a matter as falsehood, as insolence, as cowardice. Everything here is profoundly serious—everything—even the fatal tendency, which, claiming to substitute the serious for the true, threatens to kill within us the very germ of our convictions, manly action, and noble independence.

I have thus far reasoned as though the subject of these volumes were really liable to the objection, as though it were not serious, and very serious in every sense of the word; it was important that the shameful doctrine which it is my purpose to attack, should be first condemned, in and for itself, independently of its special application; it was of primary importance to establish that the truth of which we speak, is not an insignificant truth, and that to the man who obeys his convictions, no truth is insignificant. Indeed, that the gravity of this subject is only too great, is a fact that will not be doubted by the readers of these pages, which so abound in things really serious, that the conventionally serious will soon be obliged to renounce its most insincere protestations. After having successfully labored, alas! in discouraging the greater number of those who have mounted the breach in the name of science, of reason, and of faith, it will at length be roused to exertion by the imminence of a peril in which there is, decidedly, nothing pleasant.

Not that many absurd and laughable things have not been said and done in relation to the tables and the spirits; their partisans have neglected nothing that could throw discredit on the question. Nor is it necessary to be a very profound observer in order to remark that gross superstitions have made their way in spite of their foolishness, and, indeed, because of their foolishness; that behind the promulgation of these superstitions, comes the rehabilitation of the Middle Ages, their institutions, their dogmas, their persecutions, their judicial proceedings; that by restoring a belief in witchcraft and the false supernatural in general, other restorations are prepared; that all this is attempted by the unanimous action of a considerable party whose influence in such matters, unfortunately, extends beyond its proper limits; that both the Gospel and Modern Civilization are jeopardized; that even the partial, the transient action of such a school, may give a fatal blow to our moral, political, and religious life.

This should have been understood by intelligent men in the beginning. Before indulging in raillery and contempt, they should have made it their duty to inquire if the facts pointed out, were wholly based on lies and illusions. Experience teaches us, that in general, illusions and lies subsist only by virtue of the truth that has been foolishly abandoned to them; this truth, distorted by some, and disdained by others, is the only life of systems incapable of existing by themselves.

Here then, was presented an important investigation, and far from impeding it by ridicule, it was of the utmost consequence that it should be aided and encouraged. Here was a glorious opportunity for beginning at the very foundation of a study, often undertaken, often interrupted, never ended:—the study of sorcery, and the supernatural apocrypha connected with it. What has hitherto been wanting to make this study complete? The knowledge of a certain fragment of truth, which has underlaid so many absurdities throughout so many ages, which has rendered all attempts to refute them wholly inadequate, which has been the

cause of their periodical resurrection, and which, even at the present day, to the disgrace of our times be it said, brings them before us under a new form. The Turning Tables have opened a way to investigations highly interesting in a scientific point of view; they have seemed to announce the presence of a physical law, a fluid action, or some other force, the natural explanation of sorcery past, present, and future.

I consider the solution of this question a matter of some moment. The problem of the supernatural, such as it was stated in the Middle Ages, such as it is now stated anew, is not of those we are permitted to disdain; its import and its grandeur cannot fail to be perceived by the most unreflecting minds. According as we admit the devil of tradition, or the tempter of the Bible, we shall have two different religions and two different civilizations.

There is no point upon which the ideas of the world are less settled. Legendary witchcraft and the recent exploits of the spirits are, in general, neither wholly accepted nor energetically repulsed; men are content with doubting. They think that it would be unjust to reject everything or to admit everything; therefore do they fluctuate between a puerile credulity and a fatal incredulity. Now, one set of men denies the personal existence of Satan and his angels; now, another set of men talks to you of sorcery, spells, charms, ghosts, souls raised from the dead, and thousands of prodigies effected by the spirits; or more correctly speaking, the same men are at once credulous and incredulous; credulous because they are incredulous.

Every one understands his dignity in his own way; I hope never to make mine depend upon refusing to grapple with an evil like this. It is possible that the question, grave as it is, has not yet received its certificate of seriousness; prudence, perhaps, demanded that I should have waited, and my present course will cause some of my friends to groan, but I am used to grieving them; the groans they have uttered under other circumstances still ring in my ears. When I stood forth a champion for religious liberty, I was assured

that I should ruin everything, and that the moment had not yet come. When I pointed out the iniquity of the affair of Tahiti, I was reproached with having compromised myself in a suspicious transaction between Queen Pomaré and Mr. Pritchard. And to go still further back to the very origin of my follies, when I declared myself a Christian, I was warned that I was a lost man, that my association with the *Methodists* would deprive me of all the influence I had hitherto possessed, and that in too frankly expressing my sympathies with the Gospel, I should lose the means of serving it.

My friends will pardon me, I trust. I fear I shall never learn to fight *according to rule*. I have again disregarded the rules to be observed in serious matters, by not waiting until a subject, very serious in itself, had been declared so in form.

It is even worse than that :—I have adopted an isolated position, by which I run the risk of being disclaimed by everybody.

Two parties were engaged in a controversy in regard to the Turning Tables ; instead of taking sides with one against the other, and thus insuring myself allies, I turn my back upon both ! I offend the men of science by affirming and demonstrating fluid action. I offend the champions of the spirits, by combating their superstitions.

“ Mais qui voulez-vous donc qui pour vous sollicite ?

— Qui je veux ? la raison, mon bon droit, l'équité.”

I reply in the words of Alceste ; I am also ready, if need be, to add with him :—

“ Soit ! j'aurai le plaisir de perdre mon procès.”

But I do not believe my cause will be lost. I have frequently remarked the privileges arising from that want of tact which speaks of things as it sees them, and which knows not how to sacrifice one side of truth to the interest of another. The opinion which disputes the supernatural pretensions of the new phenomena, and proclaims their physical reality, already begins to gain ground ; it has

been recently developed by M. Felix Mornand, in one of our most widely circulated journals: the views he so admirably expresses are held by many others.

Moreover, is the fact that we stand alone, or nearly so, any reason why we should recoil from our duty? Shall we imitate the physician of Charles IX., in whose presence the horn of the fabulous unicorn was every day gravely dipped into the king's glass, in order to make sure that it was not poisoned? Being urged to protest against so absurd a usage, the prudent man replied: "Whoever takes his stand against received opinions, meets with the fate of the owl when he shows himself by daylight; all the other birds fall upon him and strip him of his feathers."

We must resign ourselves to the loss of a few feathers, if necessary. We must refuse to listen to the enervating language which a skillfully disguised egotism is continually sounding in our ears: "Be cautious! Be careful of yourself! for you are a precious treasure, of which the country or the Church should not be defrauded, and which should be reserved *for great occasions!* [that never come.] Sacrifice small truths for the better defense of *great truths!* Above all, make for yourself the reputation of a sensible, practical, *serious* man! A temperate style, moderate opinions, inoffensive studies, will easily gain you this title. Avoid irritating discussions, and subjects not generally sanctioned! Do not waste your strength on every occasion; economize, hoard up; your very convictions demand it, for the time will come when you will need to be rich and to spend largely in their behalf."

The answer is easy. In amassing wealth, one becomes avaricious, and the great disbursements of the miser are always projects, nothing more. Besides, in what condition will this man, who has practiced so much economy, find himself in the important hour, the hour of sacrifices? He will be worn out, disenchanted, without faith in anything, accustomed to impose silence on his soul and to introduce calculation into his conscience. Now, no man can sacrifice himself to convictions, unless he have them.

But let us leave the book, and return to its theme. Here, all is profoundly serious, the disease, the remedy, the superstitious recrudescence and the physical fact by which it is destined to be overcome.

The disease has become immensely aggravated within the past year. If good sense, as I have just indicated, has made progress in a few reflective minds, gross error has spread itself over a much larger domain. We witness a strange spectacle: protected by men of science who anathematize experiments, and will not, on any consideration, modify their official theories, the apologists of the Middle Ages turn to their advantage the very fact that should confound them; in proportion as the ranks are thinned of the ridiculed, condemned, and discouraged experimenters, they rush in and occupy all the vacant places, which will suffice to drive away men who have hitherto, fearlessly given their attention to this subject. We do not like to have the appearance of doing just what the evocators of spirits do; to seem to work like them, although in reality working against them, is disagreeable. Thence arises a feeling of uneasiness which disturbs the most resolute minds, and increases so rapidly, that ere long, perhaps, it will become difficult to form a chain or undertake an uninterrupted series of investigations. Those who, at first, only laughed, will finally regard the subject with an aversion and a disgust which, combined with our natural want of energy and perseverance, will lead to universal desertion. By dint of abusing the tables and throwing odium upon them, the champions of the supernatural apocrypha will succeed in scattering their adversaries.

And these champions are of various sorts; they come from the four corners of the earth. Among us, they are the Ultramontane party, whose manifesto has been written by M. de Mirville, and to the refutation of which I have given special attention. In America, they are the Unitarians, who demand of the spirits the promulgation of a philosophical religion, a Christianity without Christ; adversaries of the faith, they abandon themselves, as might have been ex-

pected, to a prodigious credulity, and launch out on the ocean of the supernatural.

The supernatural! the cry of Emerson. The supernatural! the pretence of the Mormons and their socialist Gospel. The supernatural! the rallying word of the Crusaders, everywhere enrolled against the Bible. In the very bosom of Protestantism, voices are to be heard echoing to those of the Ultramontanes, the Unitarians, and the Mormons; many excellent Christians repudiate the principle which takes its stand in opposition to the extra-Biblical supernatural; they predict that the next religious awakening will take place in the name of prophecies, ecstasies and miracles. In short, we now-a-days hear of nothing but apparitions and prodigies; the period draws near when, according to the prediction of Jacobi, "men will no longer believe in God; they will believe in spectres."

It seems to me quite time to resist such a tendency, and to create a re-action.

Having now pointed out the gravity of the evil, I would dwell upon the efficacy of the remedy; far from holding the language of discouragement, I pronounce the triumph to be certain and easy, if we choose that it shall be so. Apart from the powerful weapons furnished us by history, by reason, and especially by the Word of God, we have henceforth at our disposal a scientific argument not possessed by our predecessors. The certain something of truth which is mixed up with sorcery, and gives it its life, the physical phenomenon, long suspected by thinking minds, which has been discovered but not sufficiently demonstrated by Animal Magnetism, finds its irrefutable proof in the Turning Tables. The nervous system of the tables does not lay itself open to the charge of impressionability, there is no great danger of their imagination leading them astray; therefore, when they rise from the ground under the action of my hand, *which does not touch them*, it is certain that they obey a physical force, a material action determined by my will.

This fact contains nothing less than the solution of the problem of the supernatural. Heretofore, whoever examined it with care,

found a certain mass of evidence unexplained by any interpretative hypothesis, either by that of nervous excitement, that of errors of testimony, or that of hallucination; there has still remained a large class of real phenomena decidedly contrary to the known laws of the physical world. Everything that the natural laws could not explain, was explained by the supernatural, nor is this astonishing.

To-day, the natural laws are becoming more and more complete, and the explanation with them. Henceforth, the supernatural has nothing further to do here, and sorcery disappears.

I shall doubtless be asked what it is that authorizes me so positively to announce the fact of the elevations without contact. I might refer to my book by way of answer, but I choose rather to satisfy the impatience of the reader. Moreover, the preface has an advantage over the book; being written last, it supposes a greater familiarity of the author with the subject. During the long months required for the printing of two large volumes, he cannot remain entirely inactive. I have the following observations to add to our preceding experiments:

Some distinguished men of science to whom I communicated the results obtained, were unanimously of the opinion that the elevations without contact would possess the character of absolutely certain proof, provided we could succeed in verifying them by any material process. They said: "Strew some flour over the table the instant the hands are separated from it; in these conditions, cause it to effect one or several elevations; then, if the layer of flour does not bear the impress of fingers, or give any other evidence of having been touched, there can no longer be a word offered in objection to your theory."

Well! we have recently and on several occasions, performed this very experiment. I briefly present a few of the details.

Our first attempts were most unsuccessful. Making use of a coarse sieve, which it was necessary to move about over the entire surface of the table, we met with a double inconvenience; first, of

suspending for too long a time, and consequently, annulling the action of the operators; secondly, our layer of flour was much too thick. The enthusiasm of will was weakened, the fluid action impeded, the ardor of the table diminished; in short, nothing progressed. The effect was even so injurious, that the table not only refused elevations and rotations without contact, it almost refused ordinary elevations and rotations.

After a while, a brilliant idea suggested itself to one of the operators. We possessed a pair of bellows, such as are used in sprinkling sulphur over vines infested with *oidium*. Substituting flour for sulphur, we renewed the operation.

We were in the most favorable conditions; the weather was dry and warm, the table bounded beneath our fingers, and indeed, before the order to raise the hands was given, the majority of them had spontaneously ceased to touch the table. The command being issued, the entire chain separated from the table, which was, at the same instant, covered by the bellows with a light cloud of flour. Not a second had been lost, the elevation without contact had already taken place, and in order to leave no doubt in our minds, it was repeated three or four times in succession.

That done, the table was scrupulously examined: it bore not the faintest token of having been touched or even grazed.

The fear of inadvertently touching it, was indeed so great among the operators as to cause them to raise their hands much higher from the table than in the previous sittings, without, however, producing any diminution of the fluid action. I should also mention that we resorted to none of the manœuvres, none of the passes of which we had made use at other times. Remaining in its place above the table to be raised, the chain had preserved its form; it had scarcely effected a slight motion in the direction of that which it provoked at a distance.

I add, in conclusion, that we did not rest contented with one experiment. We produced several elevations in succession, at the close of which, a minute examination of the flour that covered

every portion of the surface of the table, convinced us that it had been absolutely untouched.

I may be deceived, but it seems to me that this is clear.

More than one unprejudiced mind will have anticipated this conclusive demonstration. In default of such a proof, clear, material and unimpeachable, had we not already a moral proof, whose value could not be misunderstood? To those who do not believe in European witchcraft and the spirits of America, the extent and persistency of these facts would have remained inexplicable unless viewed in the light of physical phenomena. There must be a reality of some sort, either natural or supernatural, at the basis of cotemporary sorcery, as well as of that of previous ages.

How could this have failed to be remarked? If the rotation of the tables had been mere illusion, nothing else, they must long since have been annihilated. They have been obliged to struggle against Academic thunderbolts, the charges of bishops, the attacks of the press, the triumphant refutations and the no less triumphant contempt of a certain set of men who despise without knowing why. They have had to struggle against political events, if I may so speak, against Russians and Turks, Paskewitch and Omer Pasha. They have been cursed, disdained, and forgotten, yet they are still alive. Concerted indignation, concerted silence, all have been powerless. The tables turn in spite of M. Faraday; their death has been predicted, it has been demonstrated; but they continue to turn. They turn so well that their antagonists are beginning to revise their opinions, and the latest works written in opposition to them, give evidences of a caution, a circumspection, I might almost say a respect, to which they are certainly unaccustomed.

If my protestations and researches have in any degree contributed to this result, all the honor is due to those courageous fellow-laborers who have perseveringly pursued our experiments, undaunted by fatigue, by obstinacy, by a momentary want of success, or by their disgust with apparent contradictions. Animated by a love of truth, feeling the scientific and moral importance of their

work, comprehending that the establishment of the physical fact could alone oppose an insurmountable barrier to the invasion of superstition, they have drawn from their Christian consciences a strength which they could have derived from no other sentiment. Simple curiosity would have wearied of the task; faith has persevered, and as usual, faith has triumphed.

VALLEYRES, *August 8, 1854.*

The First Part.



TURNING TABLES.



CHAPTER I.

THE QUESTION.

It is my aim, in the first place, to resolve the question of facts. The theory will follow.

To demonstrate that the phenomenon of Turning Tables is real, and of a purely physical nature ; that it cannot be produced either by the action of our muscles or the mysterious influence of spirits, such is my theme. I desire at once to state it with precision and define its limits.

I experience some satisfaction, I avow, in being able at last, to oppose unquestionable proofs to the sarcasms of those who find it more convenient to ridicule than to examine. I well knew that this was an ordeal not to be escaped, and that no new truth becomes evident without having been looked upon as ridiculous ; but it is none the less pleasant to reach the point where things take their legitimate places, and the parts of the players cease to be inverted. Such a gratification one can well afford to wait for.

I long feared that the phenomenon of the tables would not admit of a scientific and decisive demonstration—that while giving absolute certainty to the operators and immediate witnesses, it would furnish no irrefutable argument to the public. In view of mere probability, every one would have remained free to preserve his own opinion ; we should have had believers and unbelievers classified rather according to tendencies than by

reason of their knowledge or ignorance of facts ; the latter would have exulted in the agreeable consciousness of their intellectual superiority, the former would have abandoned themselves in despair to the current of fashionable superstition : truth, incompletely demonstrated, would have received the treatment and would finally have assumed the character, of falsehood.

By the blessing of God this shall not be the case.

I have stated the scientific question, I must also state the moral question—the true question for me—that which has stirred my soul and forced me, as it were, to undertake studies to which I could have wished to remain a stranger.

The rights of truth, than which I know nothing more holy on earth, were at stake. He who does not love all truth loves none ; he who does not constantly feel himself a slave of the truth—bound to serve it, to bear witness for it, to suffer, if need be, in its cause—will never believe in anything. Whether the point in question be of religion, of politics, or of philosophy, it does not matter ; he will possess perhaps, the illusions of belief, but not the reality.

It is thus that this debate, so cried down, rises in one point of view, to the level of the most elevated discussions, and has its roots in the depths of the human conscience. The sentiment that impels me to take part in it, is the same that makes me a Christian. I belong to the truth, whatever it may be, solely because it is the truth. I know that I have no argument to hold with it, no bargain to make for my devotion. I know that if I prefer myself to any truth whatever, my whole faith receives a mortal blow. Strange Christian indeed, he who recognizing a truth and seeing it ill-treated and dishonored, values himself, his own personal interests before it, and fails in defending it, through fear of the criticism of the world !

But let there be no mistake as to my meaning. I invite no one to take up his lance and buckler, and beat about the

country, redressing wrongs in behalf of unrecognized truth. I am of my age, and I do not look for the restoration of the order of knights-errant. We are by no means called upon to copy after Don Quixote, but simply, plainly and courageously, to stand by our opinions. If, when thousands of men were convinced of the rotatory movement of the tables, a few sarcasms had sufficed to impose universal silence ; if the fear of raillery had everywhere prevailed, a public lesson of cowardice would have been given to our time, which it does not require. It would have been taught anew to place what is expedient above what is true, to accommodate itself to reigning modes, to reject the inconvenient luggage of personal and manly belief. Is it found perchance, that there is a superabundance of energy in the world ; that there is too much spirit, too much strong individuality, too many independent minds, who believe what they believe, who say what they think, who set themselves against the tide, and who in good or ill fortune, surrounded by friends, or standing alone, under all circumstances, courageously maintain their flag ? As for me, I see only those, whose profession of faith is always that of all the world, who pass their time in discovering virtues in the victor, crimes in the vanquished, men devoid of that correct life which alone gives the austere love of truth, men whose thoughts waver the moment they cease to lean on the general thought, thereby resembling trees which, torn up by the roots, retain a perpendicular position so long as sustained by their neighbors, but which fall to the ground from sheer weakness, the instant the axe deprives them of their support. Take political questions, take moral questions, everywhere you will meet the same spectacle. Slavery, for example, no longer leaves our consciences in suspense ; we know how to regard the sale of men, women, and children, the separation of families, the immorality, the systematized cruelty, the crimes to which the most humane masters are in some sort condemned ; and yet, excepting the brief moment, in which the influence of a fine book performs the unheard of miracle of making truth the fashion, everybody cautiously disposes of slavery in a sensible

and well-bred manner. *Negrophilism* is in such bad taste ! Positive minds are so absurd ! Thus a man enlists in favor of iniquities, tears, tortures, and if he visits Brazil, the United States, or Cuba, he is careful on his return, to utter the highest eulogiums on the felicity of the blacks.

To deny, as occasion may seem to require, that which we esteem to be true, to deny it, because we believe in no faith really deserving this beautiful name, this is our malady. I would not be of those who aggravate, let me rather be of those who work to cure it. That which we *esteem* true, do I say ? and indeed, should we be in error, our duty towards it is in no respect changed. The Mussulman is in error, but he always merits respect, when believing in Mahomet, he exposes himself in defence of his doctrine to raillery or persecution. Whether we deceive ourselves, whether our persuasion on the subject of the tables be an illusion or not, we are none the less bound to maintain what we esteem to be true concerning it, so long as our illusion subsists.

The question is now stated ; the reader knows its scientific aspect and its moral aspect. It remains for me to say one word regarding the method in which it should be treated.

There are but two methods of investigating a question ; that of the ancient schoolmen, who affirmed certain truths *à priori*, to which the facts were bound to conform, and that of modern science, dating from the time of Bacon, which first observes the facts, and constructs no theory until after they are stated.

It would seem that the method of the schoolmen must be very fascinating, since there are those who, in the middle of the nineteenth century, and in the name of the academies, dare carry us back to it. In reality, this is much less extraordinary than at first sight might be imagined. When theories are constructed, it is convenient to transform them into definitive axioms. Thereby, one avoids the necessity of beginning over

again, and is at last permitted to shut the door upon facts, saying to them, "You come too late!"

This is precisely the language which has been held. Our laws are decided, the world is known to us, our limits are fixed, we cannot condemn ourselves to Penelope's employment; so much the worse for observations behind time! We welcome only those that come in with accepted doctrines, that develop and confirm, even in modifying them. Those which start a new, suspicious, or heretical principle, we anathematize at first view, and without examination. It would not be worth while to possess authority if it could not be used, or if it must always stoop to argue with every chance applicant. The Church refuses not seceders, it burns them.

The Academies have burned no one; they have only condemned to death, facts full of peril to Orthodoxy. They have refused them earth and water, that is to say, the right of free, *bonâ fide* discussion. It is well known what abuse of power they committed against magnetism, in spite of intelligent and liberal protestations. Now, a phenomenon, not less provoking, presents itself, which is guilty of the wrong of manifesting in man a force independent of muscular action. But we have decided that things cannot go on in this way; we have penetrated all the secrets of creation, and we know how forces ought to be produced! It is all well enough that a theory should be slowly formed by virtue of facts; the facts, in their turn, should now have the complaisance to conform to the theory!

Unfortunately, nothing can be less complaisant than facts. They are endowed with injudicious obstinacy. Magnetism is still there; we have succeeded in bringing it into disrepute, in impeding its progress, in perverting its course, in excluding it from the light of all serious research; we have not succeeded in destroying it. Turning tables continue to turn; they have not "stopped of themselves," as was predicted; we have succeeded only in diverting from its true path, for the benefit of evocations and sorceries, a discovery which had a right to the grave and earnest attention of scientific men.

And the quarrel is not terminated. It will exist as long as shall exist the two hiatus that science voluntarily maintains in its descriptions of the physical world. Its duty is to take every thing into account—both complex and simple phenomena—those produced only under certain special circumstances, as well as those produced under ordinary circumstances. To demonstrate assertions to be false, or to make room for them if they be true, behold its mission, and for its own interest even, we should never tire of recalling it to the post of duty, we should never permit it to overlook things which trouble it, or which it does not choose either to admit or refute.

That it should be critical—very critical—in matters of proof, that it should exact positive and incontestible facts, that it should impose quarantine on suspicious ideas, that it should study scrupulously and with mistrust that which appears contrary to received notions, is perfectly natural. But that it should refuse to see, that it should refuse to read, that it should refuse to study, that it should, in advance, repulse facts in the name of theory, is most unjust and tyrannical. Such a course, moreover, is wholly unphilosophical; and although its immense services authorize it to dare much, science should not attempt with impunity, at the present day, to abandon the Baconian induction, and return to the dogmatism of the Middle Ages. Its high renown, its legitimate authority, would thus become tarnished and weakened.

“But,” says one, “the Institute has certainly the right to reject essays on such subjects as that of perpetual motion, and if a man should propose a way of travelling to the moon, it ought not be compelled to lose its time listening to him. Do you not yourself state in the problem of the tables, the limit where absurdity begins? Do you not throw aside the evocation of spirits in spite of all the proof in its favor?”

In spite of all the proof! No. I prove on the contrary—and long chapters are devoted to this proof—that the pretended acts of sorcery related to us, repose absolutely on nothing. We extol the spirits, we cite their prose and their verse, we retail

their predictions contradicted by events, we expound their theology contrary to that of the Holy Scriptures, and changing at will, according to the particular convictions of those who make them speak ; as regards real facts, none are produced that might not be classed with the purely physical phenomena of magnetism or Turning Tables. I have, then, no aversion to arguments, and I reject none that I have not refuted.

Moreover, I do not contest with the Academies, the right of proclaiming certain impossibilities, or of casting aside without repeated examination, that which has once been fairly shown to be false. But it is this first demonstration upon which I insist. I grant that it exists in regard to perpetual motion ; it exists in regard to excursions to the moon and to the ring of Saturn ; it exists in regard to the transmutation of metals—and, if to-morrow, some modern alchemist should pretend to have discovered a California in his alembics, I am entirely of the opinion that the Institute would be justified in refusing him a hearing.* It may be seen then, that in denouncing the despotism of scientific men, I know how to respect their liberty. I am content to renew my question : Have you studied the Turning Tables ? Have you condescended to give them your serious attention ? Have you demonstrated, either wholly or partially, that the phenomenon does not exist, or that it is impossible ?

You have not demonstrated it, and it is fortunate for you that you have not, for *to show the scientific impossibility of that which is*, would be to play a bad trick with science. No, you have not demonstrated, you have affirmed, which is already sufficiently imprudent. Without any wish to “lord it over the academies,” might I be permitted, ignorant as I am, to offer

* In thus speaking, I advance, perhaps, a little too fast. The idea of transmutation is not philosophically absurd. Is gold a simple body ? Do we know that it is a simple body ? Is it not demonstrated that the same elements, combined in the same proportions, produce substances very dissimilar ? Is there any difference, as to chemical composition, between the rag, gum and starch, to say nothing of a fourth transformation (sugar), in which the quantity of water *appears* more considerable ?

I have deemed it my duty to add this note, in order to be rigorously exact, and in order to prove, by taking, for example, the great work in person, that it does not deserve to be abused by scientific anathemas.

them an humble piece of advice ? that they do not swell too largely the list of things declared *impossible*. This, list prepared some centuries ago, would have comprised the rotation of the earth, the antipodes, attraction, the weight of the air, electricity ; prepared to-day, it would probably comprise more than one subject, destined to provoke the hilarity of our posterity. Is it so long since the Plutonian formation of rocks was an article of faith ? What is now thought of M. Elie de Beaumont ? M. Babinet, one of the enemies of the tables, told us not long ago—that Seneca had had the merit of being right in opposition to the entire human race, “ which was almost equivalent to being wrong.” The academies of his time, condemned without examination, I suppose, his views upon the true path of comets, just as the academies of the present day, have condemned without examination, our ideas upon the natural motion communicated to the tables ; they threw his treatise aside with other rubbish. Sixteen hundred years afterwards, all the authorities, clergy, and scientific men, Kepler and the pope, placed the magical influence of comets in the list of axioms, that the “ illuminated ” alone could contradict !——a scientific anathema which has endured I hope * * * * But let us not be uneasy, the world progresses faster now, it will not take sixteen hundred years for us to make our views accord.

We shrug our shoulders ; the comets ! it is so evident !—Evident, because we know the facts ; because facts have prevailed over preconceived theories ; because facts are not weary of being facts, and have not recoiled before the supreme judgment which has declared them impossible. The rotundity and the rotation of the earth also appear evident to us ; and yet, they have not always had the laugh on their side. What, antipodes ! men who walk on their heads with their feet in the air ! vessels that must doubtless be dashed to pieces, impelled by the curve and by the fall of waters ! Do we turn with such velocity and yet not feel it ! Certainly, air being less dense, should not move so quickly as we : a wind from the east, of terrible impetuosity must constantly prevail on the surface of the globe ; all the trees must

incline to the west!—Surely good reasons were not wanting, the evidence of the senses and the deductions of intelligence held the same language; scientific and sensible men will never have so strong an argument against the rotation of the tables as they then had against that rotation of the earth, of which M. Foucault, a short time since, furnished a new and ingenious demonstration.

We must, after all, come back to this: we are surrounded by mystery; we live in the inexplicable; we are inexplicable ourselves. The most learned know but little, very little, and their error lies, not in being ignorant, but in thinking that they know everything. And yet, they only require to have a memory. Who condemned the emetic in the time of Guy Patin? Who since then has promulgated a long series of judgments, each more peremptory than its antecedent, judgments, infallible yesterday and reformed to-day? In truth, I ask myself how it is that we do not hesitate before pronouncing a sovereign and disdainful decision upon subjects we have not examined, when we everywhere meet insoluble questions, when even a basket of carrier-pigeons encloses a problem which throws the academies into despair!

The lesson that grows out of our debate is at the service of the whole world; for the whole world is interested in its discussion, and the ignorant more than any. A positive tone, a consequential air, a shrug of the shoulder, are, and always will be the wit of those who lack it; such modes of treating a question dispense with study and reflection. But scientific men should adopt a different method; men who think should be less prompt and less sure of themselves, than men who do not think. It is thus in fact, that things happen ordinarily, and this is why I particularly regret that any other course should have been pursued in regard to Turning Tables. The refusal to examine is not merely a treacherous weapon, it is also dangerous, and in the end, wounds the hand that uses it.

And why has it in this instance been the resort of so many distinguished men? Whence comes the brutal significance that

has been attached to it? Why should the new phenomena have been treated as an enemy? Yes, an enemy, it is not too much to say; a simple error would have been received otherwise; it would have been refuted. The Turning Tables have not been judged worthy of such an honor; scarcely do they appear than the cry is, "we shall not occupy ourselves with them!" This betokens the existence of a hostile principle, a determination to denounce and kill on the spot. Indeed, this principle is perhaps not very difficult to discern.

Materialism has invaded us, notwithstanding some superficial appearances of spirituality. It reigns in the soul and in the intellect, the progress of industry, the magnificent discoveries of modern science have contributed to found its empire. It is so far the master that it often controls, unconsciously to themselves, those who think they are combating it, and in the question which now occupies us, the materialism of the tables is, in general, not less frightful than that of their adversaries. To connect the apparitions of spirits and their revelations with the rotation of a piece of furniture, is assuredly to reduce to the grossest definition our relations with the invisible world. And as for the adversaries of the tables, let them look into their consciences. Is it not true that with many of them, the greatest objection lies in their repugnance to admit anything whatever, which is external to the regular, and in some sort, mechanical action of natural laws? They very justly ridicule the spirits, but in what sense do they themselves believe in God and the devil? God is the first cause, and the devil is an abstraction. There is a creator; there are established laws, a jerk given, and then everything moves of itself; the providential intervention of a heavenly Father listening to our prayers, attentive to our wants, interposing in small things as in great, is a religious illusion that we must leave to old women. The demon himself is the allegorical personification of our temptations and our evil dispositions. Then, after having exiled God and suppressed the devil, they set at work to curtail the sphere of man himself, by depriving him of his power as a moral agent. Speak to them of electricity!

Speak to them of weight ! These are laws pure from all contact with thought or the human will ! But do they meet with mixed facts, material forces which require man's permission to develop themselves, they instantly start back in horror. It is the abomination of desolation ! Far better to leave science incomplete than to admit the heterodox notion of a physical act, which is first of all, a moral act !

Such was the unpardonable crime of magnetism, and such is, with still stronger reason, the crime of the Turning Tables. There, without the will we obtain nothing ; we may form a chain for twenty-four hours in succession, we shall not produce the slightest motion. With the will, on the contrary, comes a display of force, and this force raises the foot designated by the thought ; it raises it from a distance and without the aid even of a finger touching any portion of the table.

When I compare these two things, the reigning materialism, and the nature of the new phenomenon, I am no longer astonished at the reception accorded to the latter. We hold no discussion with a personal enemy.

The course that has been pursued thus explains itself, although it is by no means justifiable. Scientific liberty needed to be prohibited. There was already too much ; it was disagreeable and provoking to have always thrust in the face this obstinate protestation—a protestation armed with proofs, and which all the more carefully studied the facts, in proportion as they were brutally discarded. They had thought to get rid of the annoyance by a *coup de main* ; they had attempted to stow all away in the same sack, the physical agent, the spirits and “*les montagnards en disponibilité*.”* We must then all and each of us take our stand. A loud voice and high sounding words will not settle the question, as unfortunately, they have so often settled it under other circumstances. We shall have made one step towards that El Dorado, that ideal of academical government, when we shall

* Referring to those who remained as it were, on the fence, openly taking no sides, but secretly favoring Spiritualism.—*Trans.*

have reached the point of consenting to examine before we reject. Then and then alone will it begin to be possible, seriously to approach the delicate and mixed branches of science, in the bosom of which the material and the moral are blended.

The reader now knows why I have taken up the pen. I shall teach him nothing if I add that I have been strongly counselled to let it alone. Some advised me from motives of personal regard, thinking it my duty to sacrifice this particular truth to others—truths much more important, to which my life has hitherto been consecrated, and which would bear the blame of my discredit. Others urged me to silence in the name of charity and peace.

To answer the first was not difficult. I should have been unworthy to maintain great truths, had I voluntarily deserted small ones, if preoccupied with myself, I had thought only of my own interests.

As for the second, their appeal in the name of charity and peace, was of a nature to demand a conscientious examination. I gave it that examination, and this is the conviction at which I have arrived.

It is especially the adversaries of the tables who preach silence to the partisans. They find it easy enough to throw publicly in our faces, the gravest accusations: simpletons or liars—they give us the choice. But when it comes our turn to answer them, they experience scruples without number; publicity seems to them so full of inconvenience; they think we ought to study and be silent! To talk loudly, to injure men, and afterwards invite them to resign—really, it was too much. If we had, in fact, consented to say nothing, we should have shown ourselves neither charitable nor pacific, but of little sincerity or courage; such conduct would have been a tacit confession that we were worthy of the treatment inflicted upon us; that our assertions had been inconsiderate, that our words exceeded our thought, and that our thought exceeded the reality;

that there was nothing earnest either in our acts or in our discourse.

No, Charity does not keep silence in such a case. Do you know what she does? She allies herself to the most entire frankness towards things, the most perfect respect towards individuals. Now, it costs me nothing to testify this respect, because I feel it. It would be strange indeed, that the son of an academician should be the only one not to honor in the Academy of Science, the glorious vanguard of modern civilization, the most brilliant cluster of lights which perhaps has ever shone upon the earth. If M. Faraday and M. Foucault have been unjust to the tables, that does not take from the one his European celebrity, nor from the other his ingenious discoveries filled with promises of the future. It would be unbecoming in me to wish it, and especially in regard to M. Foucault; for, without the summary proceedings to which he has thought it his duty to resort, without the peremptory tone he has employed, I should never have applied myself to the study of the new phenomenon with that perseverance which the sentiment of duty inspires.

I attack, then, neither scientific men in general nor any in particular. I make no foolish pretension of undervaluing them, nor the pretension, still more foolish, of exalting myself. Penetrated with a sense of my own incompetency, I was ready to accept their decisions as though they had been oracles; their refusal to investigate, revolting as it was to my entire moral being, has alone had the power to tear me from more congenial pursuits. I could not quietly submit to hear them say: "We will not see; we will not read; we will not experiment; we will not reply." But even then, when, with my feeble voice, I ventured to interrupt a prolonged and universal silence, I refused to my adversaries no part of the respect which was their due. Still more, I comprehended their conduct: having seen nothing serious in a scientific point of view, having taken part only in miserable drawing-room experiments, simple rotations that muscular action holds itself prepared to explain, they had

reason to doubt. Philosophical doubt is always a duty ; it is the necessary guarantee of true science. New facts and especially new laws should make their proofs complete, before they are allowed admittance. The repugnance one experiences in modifying received notions, is a sentiment I am little disposed to contest, since I entirely participate in it. In science, in philosophy, in religion, we have, each and all, to resist the melancholy current of credulities. Everywhere, we find some who are ready to accept blindfold all that is presented them, who study nothing, who love the strange, the supernatural part of which agreeably excites their surfeited imaginations, who believe things the more readily, in proportion as they are less believable, and who appear to have adopted for their device the *credo quia absurdum* of the Fathers of the Church.

To mistrust the facts was natural, but it would have been prudent and loyal not to exceed the limits of doubt, inasmuch as they had not investigated. The impetuosity of the first moment has carried them a little too far ; but I am sure that the men of true science will not fear to retrace their steps. It is for ignorance to show itself obstinate and stubborn in spite of facts. Facts, doubtless, are what every one demands, and facts I am about to offer to the reader. It was my first intention to present my testimony in the form of a memorial, addressed to the Academy of Science. The scruples that have restrained me may be divined without my stating them.

CHAPTER II.

THE FACTS.

THERE are two ways of experimenting with Turning Tables. They may be sought as a diversion or as a subject of study. I do not blame in the slightest degree, those who find in them a source of after-dinner amusement, during the interval between coffee and tea ; I would merely state that we have pursued a different course. Our sittings have been genuine sittings, to which were devoted the best hours of the day, and the results of which, verified with minute care, were faithfully recorded on the spot, in a journal kept for the purpose.

This journal is now in my possession, and it seems to me that I cannot do better than to take its reports successively, and borrow from each, the most interesting observations. I shall thus pursue the historical method of relating the truth, instead of systematizing it. The reader will follow us, so to speak, step by step ; he will examine and compare my various assertions ; he will himself, form his convictions, and will judge if my proofs have that character of frequency, of persistence, of progressive development, which false discoveries founded on some casual or ill-defined coincidence, never possess.

The first report bears the date of the 20th September, 1853. We had previously held numerous sittings, but we did not think it necessary to note down the results to which we had arrived, and which were briefly as follows :

I mention first, those that were not sufficiently significant to be characterized as proofs, viz. : the rotations, the raising of

the tables and their dances. I acknowledge that no demonstration can be based upon them ; unconscious muscular action and tendency to motion, furnish explanations, therefore, which, although in reality ill-founded, are logically irrefutable. The operators being in the secret of what is necessary to be done, being also capable of doing it, and naturally disposed, even without accounting for it to themselves, to communicate a mechanical impulsion in that direction, it consequently becomes impossible to establish to the eyes of the public, that the essential cause of the obtained facts is elsewhere. They alone who have directly and frequently participated in the experiments, who have felt produced under their fingers, these motions of a particular nature, which cannot be imitated by the action of our muscles, possess an invincible conviction in that respect. They, and they alone know on what to rely, for they have sometimes seen the table refuse to turn at all, notwithstanding the impatience of the experimenters and their clamorous appeals ; they have also been present at the beginning of its rotations, as it started off so gently, so noiselessly, so voluntarily from under fingers which scarcely grazed it. They have seen the feet, apparently glued to the floor, remain firmly fixed in their position, in spite of all efforts to detach them, and the excitement of those who formed the chain ; they have at other times seen these same feet, animated and energetic, leaping clear of the ground, bounding to meet the hands, and executing, with almost frightful vigor, thoughts hardly conceived in the mind. They have heard with their ears, heavy blows and light blows, the first so violent as to threaten injury, to the table, the second so faint as to be heard with difficulty, and the wondrous delicacy of which, none of us could imitate. They have remarked that the force which raises the feet from the ground, is not diminished when everything that can act as a lever is removed from the surface ; they have themselves commanded the table to raise the foot upon which rested the only hands that composed the portion of the chain still subsisting, and the foot in obedience was raised as often, and as high as

they willed. They have followed the table in its dances, when it beat the measure with one foot, with two, when it reproduced exactly the rhythm of the music that had just been sung, when, conforming itself in the most comical way to the invitation to dance the minuet, it assumed the airs of our grandmothers, gravely wheeling about to the right and left, making the courtesy, turning round and advancing up the other side.

The manner in which these facts were accomplished enlightened them more than the facts themselves ; they were in contact with a reality which does not long allow itself to be disregarded. But, at the same time, they knew they had no right to impose their personal opinions on others. An opinion is little more than an impression. Now, an impression is not and never will be a proof. So long, therefore, as we obtain only rotations, rappings, dancing and other analogous phenomena (such as the resistance opposed by the table when it is raised and its top uncovered, to the hand that endeavors to force it back on the ground) ; so long as we remain there, we must renounce the idea of communicating our convictions to others, however firm and well-founded they may be.

But the perseverance with which we followed up our investigations previous to the 20th September, had already conducted us a little further. We had ascertained two principal things : the raising of a weight which the muscular action of the operators was powerless to disturb, and the reproduction of numbers indicated by our thoughts. I confine myself to these two points, casting aside whatever is secondary, or remains doubtful.

The elevation of weights is not always obtained. It is with that as with all the rest : one day the table will turn and lift its feet from the ground, cumbered though it may be with a man weighing one hundred and seventy-four pounds. Another day it will remain motionless although the man mounted thereon weighs but one hundred and twenty pounds. This, however, is the exception. In general, light persons, children, young people are raised with great facility. With heavy per-

sons, the difficulty is more rarely vanquished, and this result would alone be a convincing demonstration of the presence of a special physical agent, if it could not be objected that the man placed on the table, lends himself voluntarily or involuntarily, to the motion that takes place. It will be seen, further on, in what way we get rid of the objection. For the present, I content myself with recording the fact, as it took place in our first researches. I do not wish to anticipate.

The reproduction of numbers indicated by our thoughts, was also equally improved on, in proportion as the observations multiplied and the objections were produced. This was the point to which we had arrived, previous to the 20th September.

We had remarked that all the experimenters did not succeed equally well, and that those who were most reliable met with better success some days than others. We were, nevertheless, prepared to affirm, that numbers communicated secretly to any one person in the chain, would in general be reproduced with exactness. In fact, we several times in the presence of witnesses, accomplished this experiment to the extent of ten or twenty figures, indicated by different individuals among the audience, and executed immediately without an error.

It having been objected to us, that the sums whispered in the ear might be heard by the other members of the chain, we decided that they should be written; it having then been objected that the number might be in some way indicated by the countenance of the person who knew it, we decided that the operator should close his eyes; it having been objected that the person charged with the execution, might act upon the foot in front of him, if not to put it in motion, at least to prevent its movement, we decided that the blows should be struck by each foot successively, or by one foot, of which the witnesses should themselves make choice.

Arrived at this point, it seemed to us that the reproduction of numbers from the mind had acquired a true, scientific value. In fact, all communication of these numbers to the other members of the chain having become impracticable, there no longer

remained more than one mechanical means of explaining our habitual success. This was to suppose that the foot charged with the operation, might be put in action by the person opposite, making a lever of that part of the table nearest him, and be checked by the experimenter who knew the figure. But how explain, then, the obedience of the table when the figure was a cypher, and when the chosen foot was neither before nor opposite the individual who knew the figure? It was out of his power to make any impression on the motion; he was unable to arrest or anticipate it, notwithstanding the experimenters were so placed as to act as a lever. The latter, according to the hypothesis, should always, and at all hazards, give the balance, and the execution of a cypher would be impossible. The hypothesis then, having no foundation, fell to the ground, and the mechanical explanation fell with it. No one certainly could have doubted the experiment, after seeing the impatience and disappointment of the members of the chain, each time the foot rested motionless when it had been commanded to move. We were dismayed at this apparent check, and if it had depended upon us, the motion would have taken place. It did not take place, because it did not come from us, but from the will of a single person, of the one precisely who made use of no mechanical action to provoke or hinder it.

I think now what I thought then: this demonstration has a real value. But I can pass it over, for I have many others still more irrefutable. I am rich; I will allow myself a little prodigality.

Moreover, this is not the moment to bring forward the essential proofs. At present I do not reason, I relate. Let us enter into the history of the experiments described in our journal.

Sitting of September 20th.

I leave out, according to my promise, everything that has not been sufficiently studied, everything that ulterior experiments have rendered in the slightest degree doubtful, everything that

is merely a repetition of the facts already stated. This deduction performed, there still remain some results to notice.

And first, to speak of the table that has served us most frequently. The top is of ash, about 32 inches in diameter, and rests upon a heavy pillar from which project three feet, 22 inches distant from each other. Another table, the top of which is a little larger, the pillar less heavy, has also been employed. In fact, we have sometimes put in motion tables with four feet, both round and square, all of respectable dimensions. The number of experimenters forming the chain at a time, is ordinarily ten; it has varied between the two extremes of eight and a dozen. The rotation usually manifests itself after five or ten minutes. In certain cases—very rare—we have waited nearly half an hour.

On the 20th of September, then, we desired to put to the proof the pretended faculty of divination ascribed to the tables. For this purpose, we submitted to the one around which we were sitting, and which operated to admiration, the most elementary question assuredly, that can be proposed to a *spirit*. . . . We placed three nuts in the pocket of one of the experimenters; the table, interrogated as to their number, promptly struck nine blows!

The same person, after having succeeded in obtaining several numbers indicated by his will—among which was a cypher—entered upon a contest with his vis-à-vis. This constituted a particularly interesting experiment, which we termed *the balance of forces*. It cannot be said in this case, that the motion was communicated by the vis-à-vis, acting as a lever; for the interests are opposed. The vis-à-vis are struggling against each other, the one wills a large number, the other a small number. Were the impulsion of a mechanical nature, the champion of the small number would determine to cease furnishing the balance from the moment his number had been struck, he would even lean in such a manner as to obtain judgment! But, no! the most powerful operator carries it; if he is charged with the high number, the high number is attained. One thing must be remarked, however, that from the moment his adversary's limit

is passed, and the wills have ceased to coincide, the blows become less strong; the foot which previously obeyed both thoughts, is no longer sustained by more than one.

We then changed the conditions of the struggle. A coalition was formed to the advantage of the small numbers; they were confided to two, afterwards to three members of the chain, and it was then only that the knight of the large numbers was vanquished, and the foot in front of him (a foot over which he was deprived of all mechanical action), ceased to follow the impulsion of his will, in spite of the experimenters opposite, who alone would have been sufficient to put and maintain it in motion, had that motion been produced by muscular force.

It is to be taken for granted that different combinations were tried, and that they produced results, not less decisive. We made a variation in the feet, sending the blows from one foot to another. We inverted the *rôles*—the most powerful experimenter was in his turn charged with the small numbers; and he regularly succeeded in stopping his adversaries, no matter which foot was designated for the operation.

It was at last proposed to try the counterproof of one of our most conclusive experiments; that which consists in making the table turn and knock while supporting the weight of a man weighing 174 pounds. The man was placed upon it; the twelve experimenters, taking care not to form the chain, applied their fingers to the table and exerted themselves to obtain by the tension of their muscles, what they had obtained some days previous, without tension or effort. The energy with which they worked was astonishing! and yet—nothing! The rotation took place in a feeble degree, scarcely turning half round; the poor table all the time trembling and creaking as though it were about to split in pieces. To raise it from the ground was out of the question. Not one of the feet would give the least sign of docility. It is useless to add, that, for the strongest possible reason, we gave up all hopes of obtaining the complete revolution, which our simplest commands had effected but a short time before.

Sitting of the 22nd September.

We have not established any new fact worthy of being mentioned here ; but among the old facts reproduced, I think it useful to describe the motions of the table while bearing the same person who was placed on it three days before. The inutility of muscular action had then been seen ; we were this time about to see the power of the fluid, or whatever physical agent it may be, of which the operators dispose when they form the chain, and when they command with a firm will.

We were indeed very glad of the opportunity to make this comparison.

In the habit of criticising our experiments, and not willing to accept as a certainty what we had observed only once or twice, we were anxious to begin by placing ourselves in the identical positions. The success has this time been complete. The table has turned ; it has struck several blows ; it has stood entirely upright, so as to throw off the man.

I desire, in passing, to be permitted to record a general remark. We had already held numerous meetings ; our experimenters, among whom were several young, delicate women, had acted with uncommon perseverance and energy ; their physical fatigue at the termination of each sitting, was naturally very great ; it might consequently have been expected that nervous accidents, more or less grave, would have occurred. If the explanations based upon the involuntary acts accomplished in a state of extraordinary excitement, had rested upon any real foundation, we should have had ecstasies, almost possessions, and in all cases nervous attacks. Now, it did not happen, during the five months we thus met, animated and noisy as our experiments frequently were, that one of us, for a single moment, experienced the slightest discomfort.

Still further, when one is in a state of nervous tension, he becomes absolutely incapable of acting on the table. It must be taken cheerfully, briskly, with confidence and authority, but without passion. This is so true, that the moment my in-

terest in it becomes too great, I cease to make it obey me ; and in all our sittings, I invariably found that whenever, by reason of the public discussion in which I was engaged, I allowed myself to desire success too ardently, and became impatient at our numerous delays, I lost my influence over the table.

Sitting of the 26th September.

Our début was discouraging enough, and led us to think that the entire results of the day would be limited to the two following observations, which are in fact well worth their price, and which our practice has not ceased to confirm :—First, there are some days when we can do nothing, however numerous, strong, or animated we may be. This proves that the motions of the table are not obtained by fraud, nor by involuntary pressure of the muscles. Secondly, there are persons (among others, those who are unhealthy or fatigued) whose presence in the chain, is not merely useless, but injurious ; themselves deprived of fluid, they seem also to hinder its transmission and circulation ; their good will, their faith in the table, go for nothing ; so long as they are there, the rotations are feeble, the elevations are languid ; the commands are not executed, the foot placed in front of them is particularly affected by paralysis ; induce them to retire, and immediately, life reappears and everything succeeds as by enchantment.

It was not, indeed, until after we had taken this course that the movements became as free and energetic as usual. We had already met with several checks, and especially when the point in question was to dislodge a man placed on the table. In vain did we issue our commands impressively and with spirit ; no rotation, no perpendicular motion ! We were forced to substitute a child for the man, and then alone could we succeed in producing action.

We were thus almost disheartened, when the purification of which I just now spoke was tried, and immediately, what a metamorphosis ! Nothing seemed difficult to us ; those even, who,

like me, ordinarily succeeded only tolerably well, now caused the numbers indicated by our thoughts to be correctly rapped out, with the occasional exception of one rap too many, resulting from the tardy issue of the mental order which should have arrested the blows.

Finding that everything progressed according to our wishes, and determined to attempt the impossible, we undertook an experiment which marks our entrance into quite a new phase, and puts our previous experience under the guarantee of an irrefutable demonstration. We were about to forsake probabilities for evidence. We were about to make the table move *without touching it*.

Our first success was brought about as follows :

Choosing a moment when the table was impelled by an energetic and truly spirited rotation, we all raised our hands at a given signal ; then, maintaining them united by means of the little finger, and continuing to form the chain at about an inch above the table, we pursued our course, and, to our great surprise, the table also pursued its course, making thus three or four turns !

We could scarcely believe in such a success ; the witnesses of the experiment could not refrain from clapping their hands. And not less remarkable than the rotation without contact, was the manner in which it was effected. Once or twice, the table had ceased to follow us, because the accidents resulting from our change of place had separated our fingers from their regular position above the margin ; once or twice the table came to life again, if I may dare thus to express myself, as soon as the revolving chain returned to its proper relative position. We all had a perception that each hand had carried, by a sort of attraction, the portion of the table underneath it.

Sitting of the 29th September.

We were naturally impatient to submit the rotation without contact to a new proof. In the confusion incidental to a first

success, we had not thought either to vary or renew this decisive experiment. Since then, we had reflected on it ; we had felt that it was important to do the thing over again more carefully, and in presence of new witnesses ; that it was especially important to produce the motion in place of continuing it, and to produce it under the form of elevations, rather than confine ourselves to the rotations.

Such was the programme for the meeting of the 29th of September. Never was programme more implicitly followed.

First of all, we resumed our experiments of the 26th. The table being in full rotation, the hands were separated and continued to turn above it, in forming the chain. The table followed, making sometimes one or two revolutions, sometimes half, or nearly a quarter of a revolution. The success, more or less prolonged, was certain. We verified it several times.

But it might be said that the table being already started, preserved a certain impetus which it mechanically obeyed, while we imagined it to obey our fluid power. The objection is absurd, and we would have challenged any one to obtain merely a quarter of a revolution without forming the chain, no matter how great the velocity of the rotation ; we would especially have challenged them to succeed in renewing the race, after it had been a moment suspended. Nevertheless, it is well in such matters, to anticipate objections, however absurd, as long as they are plausible : and this might appear so to the eyes of the careless observer. It was necessary, therefore, to produce rotation from a condition of complete repose.

We did so. The table being motionless as well as ourselves, the chain of hands separated from it and began to turn slowly a short distance above its margin. At the end of a moment the table made a slight motion, and each person endeavoring by his will to incite the portion underneath his fingers, we drew the body of the table after us. The same circumstances then occurred as in the preceding case ; it is so difficult a matter to maintain the chain in the air without breaking it, without removing it from the edge of the table, without moving too

quickly and thus interrupting the established relation, that the rotation is often arrested after one, or even less than one, revolution. Nevertheless, it is sometimes prolonged during three or four.

We expected to encounter still more obstacles, when it came to the point of raising it without contact. But we were agreeably disappointed—the fact was entirely otherwise, and we accounted for it in the following manner: there being in this instance no circular movement demanded from us, we found it much easier to retain the normal position of the hands above the table. The chain being then formed a short distance above the top of the table, we ordered one of the feet to rise, and it instantly obeyed.

We were in raptures. This beautiful experiment was renewed many times. We ordered the table, likewise without touching it, to stand erect, and to resist the witnesses who should attempt to bring it to the ground. We ordered it to turn over, and it fell with the feet in the air, although our fingers at no time touched it, but always remained at the same distance from it.

These were the essential results of this meeting. They are such, that I hesitate to mention by their side, other incidents of secondary importance.

I will merely add in passing, that the sitting had commenced very discouragingly; that not only had it been necessary to send away some new operators, but several of the old ones were deprived of their usual enthusiasm. The table obeyed badly; blows were struck feebly, and as if with regret; the numbers demanded were not expressed. Therefore, we took a new course, from which good results flowed without number: we persevered and persevered cheerfully; we sung, we made the table dance, we banished from our minds all new experiments, insisting upon easy and amusing operations. After a certain time, the order of things was changed, the table overflowed with activity and willingness, its obedience almost anticipating our commands; we were prepared to approach matters of grave import.

Sitting of the 6th of October.

Notwithstanding the distraction created by too many spectators, and the lassitude caused by the stifling heat, we obtained in this long sitting the most essential confirmation of previous results.

Numbers indicated by the thought, the balance of forces, the elevation and resistance of the table, all were renewed. As regards the resistance in particular, we measured it. A weight of 80 lbs. did not suffice to lower the table over which we made the chain, when it formed with the floor, an angle of 35 degrees. The same table forming the same angle, fell heavily under the force of a weight of about 60 lbs. when not sustained by the influence of the chain. Note, moreover, that the hands placed opposite the weight of 80 lbs. had been raised, and did not again touch the table while it continued to resist. But I do not offer this as a conclusive experiment, because I know that there is a certain point of equilibrium, where a table the most destitute of fluids, would, of itself, resist a considerable pressure ; notwithstanding, therefore, the difference above established, I discard the fact (very real to my eyes), which I have just related, for I am determined to adduce only such proofs as cannot be controverted.

We tried also to set in motion the table bearing the weight of a heavy man. The rotation was at that time impossible, but the feet struck several heavy blows.

Passing then to the counterproof, we remarked that when we act mechanically, precisely the contrary result takes place. By energetic muscular efforts, a slight rotatory movement is obtained, it is impossible to raise the feet.

Finally, we resumed the great experiment, that of motion without contact.

It seemed at first, that we were not in a condition to obtain good results. But soon, however, we succeeded in continuing the rotation and in producing it from a state of repose. Its most

remarkable feature was, that our commands effected a small rotation, about one quarter of a revolution, although we ourselves remained entirely motionless. The table thus gently glided from under our fingers.

The perpendicular motions without contact were produced many times and with energy. The table, influenced by our hands, which were extended a short distance above it, stood erect, resisted efforts to lower it, and turned itself completely over several times.

Sitting of the 7th of October.

Another long and fatiguing *réunion*. It was principally devoted to the trial of divers pieces of mechanism, which had no success : metal rings, frames of canvas or paper placed above the table, platforms turning on pivots, and the keyboard of a piano. Whether a view of the machines in question suppressed the emission of the fluid in the operators, whether the machines themselves suppressed its circulation in the table, whether, in fact, the natural conditions of the phenomenon were disturbed in another manner, it is certain that the results were either nothing or questionable.

Only one new experiment succeeded. A platform turning on a pivot supported a bucket. After filling the bucket with water, I and two other operators plunged our hands into it. There we formed the chain, and began to turn round, avoiding to touch the bucket ; it was not long before the bucket also put itself in motion. The same thing was done several times in succession.

As the objection might be offered that the impulsion given to the water was sufficient to impel a thing so easily moved as a bucket, we immediately proceeded to the counterproof. The water was agitated circularly, and with much more rapidity than when we formed a chain in it, but the bucket did not stir. It remains to know, doubtless, if one of us three did not touch the interior of the bucket in order to influence its motion. To

this I reply, first, that the manner in which our hands were plunged into the bucket was evident proof that none of our fingers could, corporeally, touch the bottom ; secondly, that being careful to form the chain in the centre, we might as easily have brought our fingers in contact with the walls of the room.

The doubt however, not being absolutely inadmissible, I continue to rank this experiment among those of which I do not pretend to make any use. I desire to show myself difficult in point of proofs.

That which is furnished by the expression of numbers indicated by the thought, is still one of the most substantial in my estimation.

What rendered it particularly convincing, in the sitting of which I speak, was, that each of the ten operators, in turn, received the communication of a sum in writing, from some member of the audience, the others having their eyes closed. Now, of the ten, all, with one exception, obtained perfect obedience from the foot designated by the most suspicious witnesses. Whoever reflects on the above-mentioned experiment, will see for himself that it is entirely beyond the circle of things admissible, that fraud could have any agency in producing the combination of motions here communicated. The objection needs to invent a prodigy far more surprising than ours.

Let us return to the demonstration *par excellence*—the elevation without contact. We began by accomplishing it three times. Then, as it was suggested that the presence of witnesses exercised a more certain influence over a small table than a large one, over five operators than ten, we caused a round table, made of spruce, to be brought in, and which the chain reduced one-half, sufficed to put in rotation. Whereupon, the hands being raised, and all contact having ceased, the table elevated itself perpendicularly seven times at our command.

Sitting of the 8th of October.

This sitting was accomplished under such circumstances that I ought, perhaps, to pass over it in silence. The death of a valued friend had plunged us all into profound grief, and the moral depression resulting from it took away the fluid power even of those in whom it was usually most abundant. Had it not been for the presence of a visitor, who had come a long distance to assist at our experiments, and who could not prolong his stay, we should certainly not have attempted to act at such a moment.

Among the new trials, I will mention one, the object of which was to raise entirely from the ground a table suspended to a pulley, and balanced by a counter weight. Only one of its feet touched the ground, and the weight to overcome was reduced to a trifle. The chain having been formed, the foot that touched the ground, rose clear from it, and the table thus accomplished some vibrations without encountering the floor.

Had it been raised? I am far from affirming this to be the fact. It might have been simply impelled by the fluid, so as to change the mode of suspension, and put a space between the earth and its foot. It might also have been that the action of the hands on it was purely mechanical, that the cord which sustained it had been removed from the vertical, and that the friction had ceased because the table was forcibly drawn to the right or left, at the precise instant when its foot would have been impelled to strike the ground.

Consequently, this fact possesses no value either in favor of or against my theory. I will say as much of various analogous experiments, and also of the key-board of the piano, over which we formed the chain anew without obtaining any rotation. The fluid is probably lost in this labyrinth of springs and platforms; moreover, the confidence and will are weakened.

To conclude with something less negative, I will state two more facts confirmatory of preceding results.

Among the numbers called for, the malice of a witness had placed a cypher, and the foot designated for its expression was at the left of the operator, beyond the sphere of his muscular action. Now, the command having been issued without producing any response, we were all extremely annoyed, convinced as we were, that our powerlessness for the time being was so great as to prevent our obtaining even the simple elevation. I confidently assert, that if the experimenters placed in front of the foot, ever were tempted fraudulently to apply mechanical action, they were at that moment. Our *nerves* were intensely excited, and our impatience was at its height ; nevertheless, no motion was observed, and to our great relief the figure was announced to be a cypher.

We at length twice effected the motion without contact. At such a time, it was much, and we considered ourselves happy in having accomplished it.

Sitting of the 27th of October.

I relate things as they occurred, and have no wish to describe ourselves as more triumphant than we actually were. The reader must judge for himself. I confess, that here again is a sitting by no means brilliant.

Moreover, this lack of uniformity has its interest. We were, for example, deprived of a great portion of our power, by the single fact of the indisposition of the person who has most influence over the table. Now, let the enemies of the tables try to explain that ! If it were the result of mechanical action, it and we would have succeeded as in the past, for our muscular force was not diminished.

If it were the result of fraud, we should also have succeeded equally well, for our *personnel* was the same, and nothing prevented the dishonest hands from performing their office. If it were the consequence of unconscious and involuntary motion, the success ought likewise to have been complete, for never had we been more ardent and energetic. But there we sat, real

objects of pity, sometimes passing an entire quarter of an hour without obtaining a rap or a simple rotation.

Nevertheless, we finally arrived at some results, which were as follows :—

Seeing that we did not succeed in effecting the perpendicular motion without contact, starting from a state of immobility, we contented ourselves with effecting it under the more modest form of a continuation of the motion ; thus, we commanded the table to strike eight blows ; at the third, the hands were raised, and the table, no longer touched by any one, pursued its task, at one time striking four, at another, five, and at another, eight.

Such was our principal exploit. I will cite another, the exact value of which I do not pretend to determine.

It had been objected to our experiment in which the table was made to strike while it bore the weight of a man, that this man could lend himself to the motion, and in a measure provoke it. Earnest seekers after truth, we felt that there was plausibility in this objection, and consequently decided to give it our particular attention. The living being, endowed with intelligence, and consequently a subject of suspicion, was replaced by inert matter ; retorts, filled with sand, were put on the exact centre of the table, which was then summoned to display its skill.

But the day was badly chosen. After having thus deposited, one upon the other, two retorts, weighing 130lbs, we found that we were incapable of producing the elevations ; we were obliged to content ourselves with continuing them ; the retorts were therefore removed, the table set in motion, and the retorts replaced while the rotation was going on, did not check it ; they were jostled about with considerable force, and the sand was spilled out on all sides.

The remainder of the sitting was devoted to new experiments on the pretended power of divination. Let me here recapitulate the results of those we had attempted in this and in other sittings.

When the table is requested to divine anything that is known to one of the members of the chain, it happens frequently enough, and very naturally, that it divines. The operation is

the same as that of numbers indicated by the thought, neither more nor less.

When the table is asked to divine something which is known to one of the audience who takes no part in the chain, it sometimes happens that it divines. This occurs when the person in question is endowed with great fluid power, and can exercise it at a distance. We obtained no such demonstration ; but others have succeeded, and their testimony appears too well established to be called in question.

Up to the present time, we perceive not the slightest trace of divination ; fluid action, either near or distant, accounts for those results which at first glance would appear to resemble it.

If tables divine, if they think, if they are under the control of spirits, we ought to obtain conclusive responses under circumstances where the facts are not known, either in or out of the chain. Now the problem thus stated, its solution is not difficult.

Take a book ; do not open it, but invite the table to read the first line of any page you may choose to designate—page 162 or page 354. The table will not recoil ; it will strike blows and you will compose words. It is thus, at least, that we have always been treated. Be that as it may, one thing is certain : no spirit, either here or elsewhere, now, or at a future time, however cunning or clever he may be, has read, or will read this simple line. I recommend this experiment to the partisans of the thinking tables and of mysterious evocations.

As for the examples of nuts, pieces of money contained in a purse, the hours, playing cards, the tables conform themselves exactly to the calculation of probabilities, they divine just as much as you and I do. As regards the question of small numbers of which we get a proximate idea, the circle of possible combinations is very little extended ; the mind fixes upon a figure, which has tolerable chances of being correct ; the proportion between the failure of the table and its success, is about the same as it would be, independent of all miraculous divination. We are here very far from those uniform results obtained

by fluid action : numbers indicated by the thoughts, for example, which succeed ten or twenty times in succession, during moments of excitement. This cannot certainly explain itself by any casual conjunction of circumstances.

Sitting of 9th of November.

We were in haste to take our revenge ; and it far anticipated our hopes.

Before commencing my relation of this sitting, the most remarkable of all, I wish to observe that neither the thermometer nor the compass have furnished the slightest, interesting indication. I have thought it my duty to note this in passing, in order to show the reader that we have not neglected to employ instruments which it would seem, might have put us on the road to a scientific explanation. In general, I pass over in silence, the various trials that have remained in the condition of trials, and have led to nothing positive.

Our first care was to renew the experiment of raising an inert weight. This time it was agreed that we should begin with a condition of absolute immobility. The question was to produce, not to continue the motion.

The centre of the table having been determined with precision, a bucket, filled with sand and weighing 42lbs. was placed upon it. The feet raised themselves easily as soon as the order was given.

A second bucket weighing 38lbs. was then placed in the centre of the first. They were both raised, less easily, but very distinctly.

A third and smaller bucket, weighing 26lbs., was likewise added, and placed upon the other two. The elevation took place.

We had prepared, in addition to these, some enormous stones, weighing about 44lbs. We put them on the third bucket. After considerable hesitation the table raised each of

its three feet successively and several times, with a force, a decision, and a spirit which surprised us. But its strength, already subjected to so many trials, was unequal to this. Staggering under the energetic impulse communicated to the entire mass of 150lbs., it suddenly gave way, and its pillar was rent from top to bottom, to the great peril of the operators on the side towards which the load fell.

I do not pause to comment on such an experiment; it covers the whole ground. Our muscular force would not have sufficed to determine the motion that took place. An inert and uncomplying weight had replaced the person whose complicity was to be feared. In fine, the three feet having been raised, each in its turn, there could be no excuse for insinuating that we had put the weight more on one side than on the other.

Our poor table having been wounded on the field of honor, and not being able to cure it immediately, we took a new one, strongly resembling it, but which was in reality, a little larger and a little lighter.

It remained to know if we should be obliged to wait until it had become charged with fluid. The occasion was favorable to the resolution of an important problem: Where resides the fluid? in the operators or in the table? The solution was as prompt as decisive. Hardly had our hands, forming the chain, been placed on the table, than it turned with the most unexpected and comical rapidity. Evidently the fluid was in us, and we were free to apply it to any other table.

Our time had not been lost. In the condition in which we found ourselves, the motions without contact, ought to have succeeded better than ever. We were not deceived in supposing it.

The rotations without contact, were first obtained to the number of five or six. The motion under our fingers, and under the will that attached itself to this or that particular point of the table, was slow at the beginning, gradually accelerating towards the end; several rotations lasted during three or four revolutions,

As to the elevations without contact, we discovered a new process which rendered success more easy. The chain, formed a short distance above the bed of the table, is so arranged as to pursue its course in the direction of the point where the motion is expected to take place. The hands nearest the foot called upon to rise, are outside the bed of the table, which they gradually approach and pass over; while the hands opposite, and which at first had advanced towards the same foot, move off to one side, drawing it with them. It is during this progression of the chain, while all the wills are fixed on one particular spot in the wood, and the orders to rise are uttered with force, that the foot quits the earth and follows the hands to the point of overturning the table, if not prevented.

This is not an isolated result. We reproduced it about thirty times. We caused it to be executed by each of the three feet successively, in order to deprive the critic of all pretext for cavil. We, moreover, watched the hands with scrupulous attention; and when it is observed that this watchfulness was continued during thirty operations, without surprising the slightest contact, it will be concluded, I think, that the reality of the phenomenon is henceforth established beyond all reasonable contestation; especially, if it be added that during the last elevations, one of the spectators, kneeling down, applied his eye to the plane of the table, in such a manner as to assure himself that it was the whole time free from touch or other improper influence.

One word more. It seemed to us that the table once made a movement forward instead of perpendicularly, and that it had thus followed on the floor, the progress of the chain. This was a fact to verify.

Confirmed, as will be seen by our subsequent experiments, it manifests under a new form, the impulse to which the table yields. It is curious to see it submit to our action from a distance, and glide over the ground, when it has not force enough to rise. In fact, the same thing occurred when the hands rested on it. If the fluid power does not suffice for the eleva-

tion demanded, the table takes flight and makes its escape, sometimes in a right line, sometimes by commencing an unlooked for rotation—now in one direction, now in another. The impulse communicated, whether great or small, produces a proportionate effect.

Sitting of the 24th of November.

The peculiar characteristic of this sitting was the absence of the person who exercised the greatest authority over the table. By operating without him we were enabled to establish two things :—the first, *an experimenter cannot with impunity be dispensed with* ; the second, *that he can be dispensed with in case of extremity, and that success, although less brilliant at first, is not impossible*. I underline this last point, along with the frequent modifications caused by our *personnel*, for the benefit of the suspicious portion of the community, who, not knowing the moral value of the persons in question, would be disposed to impute to their dexterity, results to which they, themselves, essentially contribute.

First of all, and when there was in none of us any fluid developed, we desired to ascertain if it could not be produced by the simple process of mechanical rotation. Applying, then, our hands to the table without forming the chain, we turned it rapidly for nearly a quarter of an hour. We then commanded the table to resume this motion of itself ; we commanded it to raise one foot, and although our fingers rested on it the whole time, it was impossible for us to obtain the feeblest movement.

Still more significant was the fact, that having formed the chain, but having determined its rotation by the mechanical action of our hands, we were able thus to continue it for a quarter of an hour, without inducing any fluid manifestation ; in vain did we address various orders to the table—not one of them was obeyed. We exercised no power over it.

It is consequently clear, that the phenomenon is of a mixed nature ; that a given position and a circular course are not of

themselves sufficient to call it into existence. There must be still another force—the will.

Our wills being finally brought into co-operation with the other powers, and the muscular pressure having ceded its place to the pressure of commands, we produced the fluid rotation after five or six minutes' concentration of our thoughts. We clearly felt that we lacked some person of importance, and that we did not possess all our usual power ; nevertheless we were determined to overcome the obstacle, even at the price of greater moral fatigue.

The great difficulty, motion without contact, was thus attacked in front.

The rotations without contact were obtained three times. I should add that they were very incomplete, a quarter or a half revolution at most.

The success of the elevations without contact was more decisive ; but it was bought by the expenditure of a very considerable amount of strength. After each elevation we were obliged to take rest, and when we had reached the figure nine, yielding to lassitude, we were compelled to stop entirely. It is necessary to go through with such experiments in order to know how much attention and energy they exact, to what degree it is indispensable to will, to will absolutely that such a knot in the wood of the table follow the extended fingers that attract it from a distance.

Be that as it may, our attempt was crowned with success, and we felt at liberty to terminate the sitting by exercises less exhausting.

The idea then occurred to us to make the trial on a large table with four feet. It had often been claimed that the round tables with three feet, alone lent themselves to our operations ; it was time to furnish demonstrative proof to the contrary. We therefore, selected a table whose diameter was $3\frac{1}{2}$ feet, and the half of which, independent of the foot that supported it when drawn out, folded up at will.

Hardly had our fingers touched it, than it surrendered itself with a loud noise to a rotation, the vivacity of which surprised us, thus showing that tables with four feet were not more re-

bellious than others. It furnished, besides, a new argument in favor of one of our preceding observations ; the fluid is in the individuals, not in the tables. Indeed, the motion was produced almost immediately, and before the large table could be considered as charged.

It was afterwards required to strike blows by its different feet. We began with those that supported the top and one of the leaves; they were three in number. They raised themselves, two by two, with such force as to break one of the casters in splinters.* Now, it would be difficult to accept the idea, that the intensity of this motion could result from the fraudulent action of the fingers as a lever upon so heavy a piece of inert matter, or that they could impel it to such a height.

It remained to try the foot which was independent of the bed of the table. We thought it would obey as readily as the others ; but no ! in vain we lavished the most pressing invitations, it did not once consent to rise, whether in company with its neighbor on the right, or whether associated with its neighbor on the left. Supposing that this reluctance might be owing to the persons placed near it, we changed the position of the members of the chain. Useless efforts ! all the combinations were doomed to be successively foiled.

We already anticipated an important consequence from this fact. But as it was afterwards proved incorrect, the rebel foot yielding us its perfect obedience on another occasion, I shall not confide our process of reasoning to the public ; I will only beg them to remark two things : first, the care which we constantly took to confirm the accuracy of our proofs by repeated experiments ; secondly, the impossibility of having recourse to explanations based on muscular action. This action could have been exercised as easily to raise the foot that was independent of the table, as to raise the feet confined to it ; and yet, by the operation of some unknown cause, evidently foreign to all mechanical laws, the latter alone consented to move.

* It was the only table with casters of which we made use.

Sitting of the 28th of November.

We were all assembled ; but two or three of the operators were slightly indisposed. In fact, from some cause or other, the meeting was only remarkable because of the almost total absence of fluid power. For a single moment we had a little. Half an hour of action, two hours and a half of inertia.

I always state the fact as it is ; first, out of respect for truth, and also, because it seems to me that nothing better refutes the vulgar objections, than to show that the same individuals are incapable of constantly obtaining the same results. Their muscles have not changed ; their susceptibility is as great ; their dexterity in fraud (we need not fear to speak thus), has not vanished, and yet, behold them unable to do that which but a short time previous, they had done with extreme facility.

Our wounded victims had been cured ; the old table reappeared with its pillar repaired ; the large table with four feet was supplied with a new caster. It was with this we commenced. Inauspicious beginning ! that which the other day had whirled and leaped about with so much vigor, now scarcely stirred. And as for inducing either of the feet to strike a single blow, we were compelled to renounce the idea.

Then, passing to the table with three feet, we entered upon our phase of animation, which did not, however, long continue.

Nevertheless, we profited by it to the extent of effecting five elevations without contact. After which, our slender provision of fluid being exhausted, it was no longer possible to effect anything. The rotations without contact, as we had foreseen, were utterly out of the question.

Nothing could be more lamentable and curious at the same time, than to see us sitting round the various tables, passing from one to the other, resorting to all sorts of expedients, and yet unable to obtain more than a languid rotation, which soon ceased entirely.

Sitting of the 2d of December.

I should have been sorry to close the relation of my experience with a report so little brilliant. Happily, the result of our last meeting, gives me a right to leave quite a different impression on the mind of the reader.

We were all in excellent spirits ; to which the fine weather perhaps contributed, and this is not the first time I have remarked the coincidence. One thing is certain, that the same persons who, on the 27th of November, had obtained but a half-hour of success, passing the rest of the sitting in vainly soliciting for something better than poor, imperfect rotations, or languid blows, ruled the table to-day with an authority, a promptness, and if I may be allowed the expression, with an elasticity that left nothing to be desired.

The large table, with four feet, had been put in motion, and this time, the facility with which the foot at liberty raised its portion of the top, proved that we were right in not drawing from its preceding refusal a too positive conclusion.

We did not succeed in raising this table without contact, or in folding up its movable leaf. None of us were surprised at this, for the weight was very considerable ; our attempts, however, were not entirely without fruit, for they brought about a result of which we had not dreamed.

Each time that we endeavored to elevate without contact, the portion of the table furthest from me, I felt the foot, whose neighbor I was, gradually approach, and lean itself against my leg. Struck with this fact, which was repeated several times, I inferred from it that the table was sliding forward, in consequence of not having enough force to raise itself. We thus exercised a sensible action upon this large table without touching it in any way.

In order better to assure myself of the fact, I left the chain, and observed the progress of the feet of the table on the floor. It varied from less than an inch to several inches. Having afterwards tried to fold up without contact, the movable leaf of a

card-table, covered with cloth, we obtained the same result. The top did not yield to our influence, but the whole table was carried forward in the direction of the ordered motion. I should add, that it was far from easy for it to slide along thus, for the floor of the hall in which we carried on our experiments, is rough and uneven.

It is not less interesting to note here, the moment when the movement usually occurs. It is precisely the same as that in which the elevation without contact takes place whenever it is effected. When the portion of the chain which presses forward, is about to pass beyond the edge of the table where it is brought back, and the portion of the chain that draws, is about to pass over it in making a retreat, then is manifested, either the ascensional, or in default of that, the sliding motion. Our fluid power is at its maximum, just at the point where our mechanical power is at its minimum, where the hands that push have ceased to be able to act (supposing fraud is intended), and where the hands that draw cannot yet act.

Returning to the table we generally employed, we tried to produce the rotations and elevations without contact. Our success was complete.

The rotations were to the number of three. We obtained the elevations, one after another, with the most satisfactory regularity. Setting aside as uncertain, four movements which, although real, did not terminate in a complete elevation of the top; even leaving out of consideration two energetic overtures which were separately produced, we effected an uninterrupted series of fourteen elevations, and so emphatic, in general, that we were several times obliged to catch the table thus subdued, in order to prevent its becoming a total wreck.

The reader is now as well acquainted with the results of our sittings as though he had personally assisted at them. I have concealed nothing; I have related the best and the worst, the experiments that were failures, and the experiments crowned with success. I have felt the necessity of being faithful and

modest, even to scrupulousness ; some may think to the point of dupery. "Of what use," do they say, "is it thus to proclaim the impressions you have received from certain meetings? Would it not be far better to signalize the most remarkable and conclusive results of your least brilliant sittings? Do you not know the public? Do you not know that it will take you at your word, and that, without stopping to examine facts, it will seize hold of the smallest sign of dissatisfaction on your part, to declare itself dissatisfied with the whole matter? With the public, it behoves us to keep up the triumphant air, if we intend to triumph."

It is possible ; but that does not trouble me. I have no taste for the big drum ; and if, because I do not beat a *rub-a-dub-dub* of victory at every sitting, I cannot succeed in rousing the enthusiasm of certain people, I will dispense with it. But, there is one thing with which I cannot dispense ; it is a respect for truth.

And then, I have a prejudice. I esteem (it has been a whim of mine a long time), that justice is sovereignly able. I believe that the public mistrusts astounding narratives, and that it listens with but one ear to those who have nothing but success to relate. I am convinced that my simple analysis has a very persuasive eloquence. What is to be seen, in fact, in these sittings with which I show myself so little satisfied? Results of a character to overthrow the objections of a badly-informed science, results which I might have deemed impossible three months ago, and which of themselves alone demonstrate that my thesis is invincibly true. I admit that we have become difficult, but that proves our right to become so. An elevation without contact would have enraptured us at the commencement ; our excitement would have been less at the reproduction of numbers from the mind, still less at a knock or a rotation. Now, we exact considerable series of motions without contact ; we desire to be able to study them methodically and at our ease ; if we obtain only a few isolated triumphs, we knit our brows, and the sitting is unfavorably noticed. I perceive

nothing very compromising in that, and, indeed, it seems to me that, in thus presenting the facts, I have facilitated the task of men disposed to reflect.

They will read over again the most discouraging of my reports. In that of the 27th of October, they will find the continuation of the motion without contact: the table elevating itself three, four, and even five times after the hands have left it; an inert weight of 130 lbs. placed upon its top, not arresting a motion which we had been accused of arresting with the end of the finger when numbers were reproduced from the thought! In the report of the 21st of November, they will find the large table with four feet put in motion and made to dance, for the first time; they will, moreover, count upon their fingers three rotations and nine elevations without contact, the whole taking place in the absence of the most powerful member of the chain. In the most lamentable report, that of the 28th of November, they will have no trouble in discovering five elevations without contact. This is little, and it is immense. Who could have foreseen at the outset of this discussion, that we should reach a point where we could say: This is little!

It will now be my object to sum up and appreciate the principal results stated in the reports from our official journal. And first, I would beg to call attention to the character of progress which continually marked our investigations.

Numerous sittings preceded those of which I have just given an account, and it was in them that we took our first step forward. At the beginning, absolute and obstinate immobility was alone the fruit of all our orders, repeated for more than an hour in succession. Next, came a day when the reality of the motion manifested itself in a manner to convince us that the table turned under our fingers. This appeared perfectly wonderful—of far greater importance than it appeared after we had obtained distinct knocks! The elevations without contact astonish us less at this moment, than the elevations with contact astonished us then, although we clearly comprehended that we had received no conclusive demonstration, for we had accom-

plished nothing which muscular action could not rigorously explain. We enter, then, upon a new study, that of numbers indicated by the thought. We perfect it ; we introduce cyphers therein ; we vary the feet ; we institute the balance of forces. We, at the same time, apply ourselves to ascertain and measure the amount of power to elevate, possessed by the fluid. Weights are suspended to the table when it is erect and resting on only one foot : then again, while it is in its natural position, a man mounts on the bed of the table, which must of course raise him as it rises.

We had reached this point when the incredulous raillery with which our observations were met, made it our duty to penetrate still further. Our object henceforth was to discover irrefutable proof, and we pursued the subject although we dared hope but little. The eleven sittings already related were consecrated to this research.

The phenomena previously observed are in them confirmed and developed. The large tables with four feet concur with the tables which have only three feet. Inert weights are substituted in place of the man who was suspected of being in league with the table charged to raise him. At last comes the great discovery, in its proper turn ; it comes bringing with it regularity and increase of knowledge. We commence by continuing the motions without contact ; we finish by producing them ; we even succeed to a certain extent in giving rise to their operation, these extraordinary facts manifesting themselves occasionally in uninterrupted series of fifteen or thirty. The slidings complete the work by bringing to light one of the phases of action exercised at a distance ; they show it not powerful enough to raise the table, in which dilemma it draws it.

Such is the rapid history of our progress ; in itself alone, it constitutes a substantial proof, the examination of which I recommend to earnest thinkers. It is not thus that error progresses. Illusions engendered by chance do not thus resist a long study, nor do they thus constantly recur in a whole series of experiments, justifying themselves more and more.

In regard to the other proofs, I would, before leaving the exposition of facts, briefly recapitulate them and determine their value.

Let me mention first the very peculiar and truly inconceivable character of the motions of the table ; the manner in which it starts on its revolutions, so gradual, so gentle, so foreign to the abruptness attendant on mechanical impulsion ; those spontaneous energetic elevations which do not cease to be produced, even when everything that could act as a lever is removed from the opposite side of the table ; the dances and musical imitations which the operators, by means of their combined and voluntary action, in vain attempt to equal ; the light knocks succeeding heavy ones, the exquisite delicacy of which nothing can express. But I fully comprehend that I must not permit myself to insist upon such considerations. Here the demonstration lies almost entirely in its various shades. It must have been seen—it must especially have been felt—felt under the fingers, what the fluid alone is capable of effecting. It must have been a matter of personal experience, how conscientiously the experimenters abstained from muscular action. All this will of course have no weight with the public. It is not bound to believe us on our simple word, bearing which in mind, I pass on.

The numbers indicated by the thought, and the balance of forces, have quite a different bearing in the way of proof.

When all the operators, excepting one, are absolutely ignorant of the figure to be executed, the execution (if it is not fluidic) should proceed either from the person who knows the figure and who furnishes, at the same time, the motion and its check, or from a relation which is instinctively established between this person who furnishes the check, and his *vis-à-vis* who furnishes the motion. Let us examine both hypotheses.

The first is untenable, for in the case where a foot is designated, upon which the operator who knows the figure cannot exercise any muscular action, the foot thus designated, rises none the less promptly at his command.

The second is untenable, for in the case where a cypher is indicated, the motion which under the circumstances of the hypothesis ought to be furnished, is not obtained. Still further, if two persons placed on two opposite sides of the table, engage in a struggle, each undertaking to make a different figure triumph, the most powerful operator obtains the execution of his number, although his *vis-à-vis* may be interested not merely in refusing his coöperation to the last raps, but also in arresting them.

I know that the numbers indicated from the thought have not a good reputation ; they lack a certain pedantic and scientific *tournure*. Nevertheless, I do not hesitate to place some stress on them, for there are very few experiments which better show the mixed character of the phenomenon, the physical power developed and applied independent of ourselves, by the effect of our will. Here lies the grand scandal, and I would have no cause to be ashamed of my position. I maintain, moreover, that this is as scientific as anything else. True science is not limited to the employment of such and such processes, and such and such instruments. No result manifested by a fluidometer, could be more scientifically demonstrated than that which is seen by the eyes, and appreciated by reason.

But let us proceed. We are not at the end of our proofs. There is one which has always particularly impressed me ; it is that resulting from a want of success.

It is pretended that the motion is produced by the action of our muscles, by our own involuntary pressure ! Now, here are the same operators who have hitherto obtained from the table the accomplishment of all their caprices ; their muscles are as strong, their animation is as great ; their wish to succeed is perhaps, more lively ; and yet nothing ! absolutely nothing ! A whole hour will pass without any sign of the slightest rotation ; or if there be rotation, the elevations are impossible ; the little that is done, is done indolently, miserably, and as if with regret. I repeat it, the muscles have not changed. Why this

sudden incapacity? The cause remaining identical, why should effects vary so greatly?

"Ah," is it said, "you speak of involuntary pressure and you do not speak of voluntary pressure, in one word, of fraud. Do you not see that those disposed to fraud might be present at one sitting and absent at another, that they might act one day and not care to give themselves so much trouble the next?"

I will answer very simply and by facts.

Those disposed to fraud are absent when we do not succeed! But it has many times happened that our *personnel* was in no way modified. The same persons, absolutely the same, had passed from remarkable power to relative powerlessness. And this is not all. If there was no operator whose presence always preserved us from checks, neither was there any whose absence rendered us incapable of success. With and without each member of the chain, we have succeeded in executing all the experiments, all without exception.

Those disposed to fraud do not give themselves so much trouble every day! The trouble would indeed be great, and those who suppose fraud, do not imagine to what prodigies they have recourse. The accusation is an absurdity which amounts almost to nonsense, and it is its nonsense which takes from it its venom. Such things cannot offend us. But let us admit for an instant that Valleyres is peopled by the disciples of Bosco;* that jugglery is generally practised there, and that for five months in succession, it has been daily performed under our eyes, under the eyes of numerous and very suspicious witnesses without the detection of any perfidy. We have so well concealed our play as to invent a secret telegraph for the numbers, a particular turn of the finger whereby to shake the most enormous masses, a method of gradually raising tables which we do not appear to touch. We are all of us liars—all; for it is a long time that we have mutually watched each other, and yet the secret is not betrayed. Still further, the contagion of

* A celebrated juggler of France.—*Trans.*

our vice is so prompt, that the moment we admit a stranger, a hostile witness, into our chain, he becomes our accomplice, he voluntarily shuts his eyes upon the signs transmitted, upon the muscular efforts, upon the prolonged and repeated suspicious motions of his neighbors! Very well, granting all that, the difficulty is not yet overcome. It will remain to explain why the impostors should sometimes take rest at the very moment when it would seem most for their interest to succeed. Indeed, it has frequently happened, that at those sittings where were present the greatest number of spectators, and our desire to succeed was most intense, the result of the sitting was most indifferent. Other sittings, under the same conditions, were comparatively brilliant.

Behold then, the real and considerable inequalities. From one sitting to another, from one hour to another, with the same *personnel*, in presence of the same witnesses, we pass from power to impotence and *vice versa*. At one moment, the most elementary phenomena are refused to our entreaties, the moment following, we effect the elevations without contact!

I repeat it, when we possess all our most powerful operators, we sometimes fall into a vexatious languor; when deprived of their assistance we never become wholly powerless, sometimes even producing the motions from a distance. And yet, we are accused of muscular action and of fraud!

Fraud and muscular action! Here is a fine opportunity to put them to the proof. A weight has just been placed upon the table. This weight is inert and can lend itself to nothing; fraud is everywhere, perhaps; it is not in the buckets of sand. This weight is equally divided between the three feet, which is proved by each of them raising it in turn. Its total amount is one hundred and fifty pounds, and we do not dare to make it more, for one day it was sufficient to break our strongest table. Well, let us begin. Since muscular action and fraud are to explain everything, it will be easy for them to put the mass in motion! But they do not succeed this time: the fingers contract, the joints are strained in vain, no elevation is produced,

and yet a few moments after, the elevations will take place under the same fingers as they gently graze the plane of the table, without any exertion on their part, as will be easy to assure ourselves.

Very ingenious, scientific measures, which I do not claim the merit of inventing, have put it in our power to convert into figures the effort required to produce the rotation or elevation of a table thus loaded. But the calculation having been made at a time when the table was charged with a man weighing one hundred and seventy-four pounds, I am obliged to reduce it, when I apply it to the inert weight of one hundred and fifty pounds only, by which the man was replaced. It is always the case with this latter weight that the rotation is obtained by virtue of a lateral attraction of about sixteen pounds, while the elevation is only effected by a perpendicular pressure of one hundred and twenty pounds at least (which we reduce, however, to one hundred pounds, if it is preferred, in the supposition that it would not be absolutely vertical) ; hence, several consequences :

First, muscular action can produce circular motion, but it cannot raise a weight. Indeed, the ten operators have a hundred fingers applied to the plane of the table. Now, the vertical or quasi-vertical pressure of each finger would not on an average exceed three hundred *grammes*, the chain remaining the same. They develop then only a total pressure of thirty thousand *grammes*, very insufficient to effect an elevation.

Secondly, it is something striking, that the phenomenon which would most easily result from muscular action is precisely that which we obtain most rarely and with the most difficulty. while the phenomenon in which muscular action does not succeed, is that which we most frequently realize when the chain is formed. Now, why should not our involuntary impulsion always make the table turn ? Why should not our fraud always procure the same triumph ? Why do we ordinarily succeed in effecting only that which is mechanically impossible ?

I advise those who are determined to ridicule the tables not to

look at them too closely. Let them by no means turn their attention to our last proof, that of the elevations without contact. It will not leave them the slightest pretext for incredulity.

Here, again, we owe to scientific observations the means of opposing figures to those who exclaim : "But we have not seen ! some finger may perhaps escape the watchfulness of the operators and the witnesses ! Who can demonstrate to us, that certain involuntary touches, or certain fraudulent manoeuvres do not furnish the true explanation of the prodigy ?"

This is my answer. When it is required to elevate one of the feet of our old table (one of those which has been put in motion without contact), it is necessary to apply to it, either a vertical pressure of eighteen pounds, or a combination of traction and pressure, the result of which should follow an angle of thirty-five degrees with the plane of the table, and be equal to a weight of nine pounds.

It is at this second estimate that it is expedient to pause, because the elevation without contact is, in general, effected while the hands are moving. There is no more question of a simple perpendicular force, or nearly such, as in the case of the table charged with the weight ; there is a combination of traction and pressure, and if a finger should then touch the plane of the table, it would act at the same time in this double direction.

That settled, we must likewise take into consideration what the finger can do when it presses, and what the same finger can do when it draws, in regard to the general motion and the effect of a smooth surface.

Here, three hypotheses offer themselves : an involuntary, and consequently light, grazing of the surface, fraud acting circumspectly, and fraud, communicating a violent impulsion. Let us examine them successively.

An involuntary grazing of the surface might exercise a pressure of sixty-five *grammes*, and a traction of thirty *grammes*. It is then a total force of ninety-five *grammes* which it develops. Now I think I should do the reader injustice were I to enter

into an elaborate argument to demonstrate to him that in the elevation without contact, fifty fingers cannot touch the plane of the table. Not less than that number would be necessary to produce the force of nine pounds demanded ; moreover, it would be required to suppose them all opposite the foot to be raised, and in the most favorable position. Fifty fingers to escape rigid scrutiny ! Fifty ! nor is that number large enough, for an involuntary grazing is necessarily of very short duration, and since it is required to bring about the slow and progressive ascension of the table, it would be necessary for all the fingers successively to co-operate. This is beyond serious refutation.

Is circumspect fraud less unworthy of it ? A fraudulent finger which does not act by violent impulsions can exercise a pressure of two hundred and thirty-five *grammes*, and a traction of one hundred and seventy *grammes* ; that is to say, its total action may amount to four hundred and five *grammes*. Eleven fingers must therefore practise fraud at the same time ! Is that possible ? Is it even conceivable ? Let us see.

Let us first represent to ourselves the manner in which the hands are interlaced when they form the chain above the table. All the little fingers and all the thumbs are occupied in maintaining the chain ; each operator preserves only six fingers at liberty—at liberty in a very feeble measure. Here we are at the outset reduced to the extremity of supposing two imposters, each employing his two entire hands, or five, six, or ten perhaps, each employing one or two fingers.

But there is still another trifle to be considered. Will these imposters all find themselves opposite the foot required to rise, in the situation where they can best possess the maximum action we have admitted. If it be not thus—and it is impossible that it should be thus—we are forced to augment the number of fraudulent fingers, to suppose fifteen, sixteen, more perhaps, in place of eleven.

Is that all ? No. The elevation is gradually effected, and is sustained ; fraudulent fingers hastily applied, and then return-

ing to their post, could not produce such action. The table would have a jerking motion, and would fall back as the power ceased to impel it. We are bound to follow our hypothesis to the end, and to represent to ourselves, either fifteen fingers boldly at work from the commencement until the end of the motion, or other fifteen, entering upon the field of action when these retire, in order to bring about between them all the progressive ascensions that take place

And of this immense manœuvre nothing is ever perceived! Its absurdity is too evident to require any further demonstration.

Our third hypothesis still remains: Fraud, violent, gross fraud. Fraud does not proceed by moderate, prudent pressure, it proceeds by energetic impulsions! Very well, let us not weary of discussing the absurd.

We shall be pardoned, I think, for the blows of the feet, or properly speaking, blows of the fist.*

But do the energetic impulsions differ very materially from these? The effect is ordinarily in proportion to the cause. A violent impulsion produces a violent elevation. Now, here we have a steady motion, characterized by nothing sudden or unequal, and tranquilly prolonged until the table is completely overturned.

It is the nature of fraudulent operations, violent ones in particular, to risk themselves precipitately, to flee with not less precipitation the watchfulness of the spectators. There will doubtless be premature attempts, vigorous bounds, followed by falls, more or less irregularity, and other obstacles in the ascensional

* Is it necessary to speak thus in order to be exact, of the pressure that might be exercised by the bodies of the operators? I shall allow myself to dispense with it, for everything has its limits. It should not be necessary to recall to mind, first, that if the bodies only laterally touched the table (this, however, was not the case), it would have moved forward, and could not have risen. Secondly: if any person had had the assurance to press the table perpendicularly with his breast, in order to provoke an elevation, he could not have assumed a posture so extraordinary, without attracting to himself the general attention of the audience. In short, thus to shake the table would not have been a sufficient display of strength; for it would be required to produce the complete overturn, which happens every day when we do not deliberately arrest it. Figure to yourself the contortions of a body occupied in raising the table by degrees, and in overturning it twenty-four times in succession, so stealthily as not to be remarked!

course. The motion, on the contrary, is perfectly uniform, and continues as it commenced.

Add to this, that the three feet rise successively, which requires a large proportion of violent, fraudulent operators, scattered all around the table. Add that the posts attributed to the different operators change continually, and yet do not prevent the elevations without contact in the various combinations. Add that the *personnel*, even of the members of the chain, varies from one sitting to another, which, yet, does not prevent each sitting from having its contingent of success in its way.

In truth, I return to my first supposition, that all the inhabitants of Valleyres must have given themselves up to jugglery. The dexterity of our hands must equal the vileness of our characters. The explanatory hypothesis must needs make us very wicked and very adroit. Unfortunately, that does not yet suffice. Fraud could not succeed in imitating our motions without contact.

Have the goodness simply to reckon up the number, and ask yourselves to what extent you will be obliged to multiply the already startling impossibilities, which a single experiment presents. On the 26th of September we have a rotation without contact; on 29th of September, several rotations and several elevations; on 6th of October, several rotations and several elevations; on 7th of October, ten elevations; on 8th of October, two elevations; on 27th of October, several elevations; on 9th of November, five rotations and thirty elevations; on 21st of November, three rotations and nine elevations; on 28th of November, five elevations; on 2d of December, three rotations and sixteen elevations. Behold more than eighty elevations, without counting twenty rotations. Endeavor to represent to yourself, your fraudulent fingers escaping a hundred times in succession, the eyes of the witnesses and of the honest experimenters. How many violent impulsions must we have produced by stealth! If it be preferred to admit the agency of circumspect fraud, there must have been at least fifteen hundred well-managed manœuvres; fifteen hundred, not to speak of three or four thousand! Or, indeed, if any one inclines to the

more charitable supposition of involuntary touch, those unconscious touches must have varied from five thousand to fifteen or twenty thousand.

If perchance there exist men whom such enormities do not make recoil, I should like to submit to them two or three supplementary considerations.

You suspect us of fraud ! Whence comes it then that we do not succeed when we are fatigued ? Fraud, at such times, would be as easy, even more easy to accomplish. The less amount of force and vivacity there is among the sincere operators, the better is the opportunity for the impostors to make their particular impulsions prevail.

The question is embarrassing, is it not ? Have the goodness to examine the following, which has already been briefly indicated : When the elevations without contact are successively effected by each of the feet, can you represent to yourself three bands of impostors advantageously posted in front of the three feet ? And can you account for the fact that the displacement and replacement of the various members of the chain invariably interrupts success ?

A third question which I pray you not to consider indiscreet : Will you have the kindness to tell me how it is that fraud does not succeed in effecting either as often or as well that which is mechanically most easy to perform ? The force required for a rotation is small, yet fraud accomplishes but few rotations ; the force required for elevations is great, yet fraud accomplishes many elevations. This becomes all the more strange, when we call to mind that the same fraud falls into the same contradictions when required to elevate a table charged with a considerable weight : it does what the muscles are unable to do, it has trouble in doing what the muscles effect with facility.

To proceed still further. You know the moment when the elevations take place. If fraudulent pressure is the cause, the motion will be produced when that pressure can be exercised with most efficiency. Behold the chain of hands in movement. Let your suspicions be aroused the instant the part

that pushes, returns to the surface of the table, for at that instant, the fraudulent fingers will doubtless arrange with each other to communicate a shock ; be especially on the alert when the part that draws, shall attain in its retreat the border opposite the foot which is called upon to act, for then the fraudulent fingers will certainly have resumed their power as a lever. Now, things do not turn out thus. These two moments are precisely those in which the elevations are never produced. The ascensional motion, I pray you to understand, never commences before the hands that push have passed beyond the edge : it is never expected except when the hands that draw are approaching it. The muscular impulsion from both these sources has become impossible before the table decides to leave the ground. It foresees your suspicions, and I hope you will render justice to its sentiments of delicacy.

Jesting aside, there are few facts better authenticated in the study of the phenomenon of the tables than the difference between the intensity of the fluid action which is exercised, and the intensity of the mechanical action which is supposed to be exercised. When involuntary pressure or fraud might have a fair game of it, you obtain nothing : when they become impracticable you succeed in everything. Thus, the elevations without contact ought to be obtained more easily with the chain remaining motionless above the edge of the table than with the chain in movement reduced to the elongated form of an oval, and of which the portion destined to act as a lever finds itself lost in the centre of the table ; nevertheless, the passes succeed better than the motionless chain, although the latter also succeeds.

I have just pronounced the word *pass*, which may have awakened in the reader's mind the idea of Animal Magnetism. In fact, nothing more resembles the magnetic operations than the march of our chain, with all the hands extended and seeking to determine the elevation of the table. I point out the analogy in passing, reserving to myself the right of returning to the subject. For the present, my object is to destroy all doubt as to the capital fact of motions effected without contact. A last

consideration is the crowning argument I have to offer in this relation. Our proofs will not submit to be slaughtered like those poor Curiatii of old, who separated from each other in pursuit of the enemy ; they remain together for mutual support and protection. The elevation of weights stands side by side with the elevation without contact ; it is there, to reply to all the accusations of fraud, for all the frauds in the world must give their expiring groan on the edge of this table. Practise fraud openly, practise it in concert, practise it in getting rid of your hesitations and fears which weaken secret fraud—practise it as you will, you cannot succeed in raising this mass which fluid action so easily puts in motion.

Thus, the fact is established. Multiplied experiments, various irrefutable proofs, mutually supporting each other, give to fluid action an entire certainty. Those who have had the patience to follow me thus far, will have felt their suspicions vanish one after the other, and their faith in the new phenomenon progressively strengthened. They will have experienced what we ourselves have experienced, for no one has opposed more difficulties to the Turning Tables than we have, no one has shown himself more curious and exacting in regard to their manifestations than each one of us. Attacks from without could not have failed to produce their effect, and to add a stimulus to an investigation prompted by our own interest in truth, and conducted with the utmost rigor.

It is not our fault if the results have been more and more conclusive, if they have reciprocally confirmed each other, if they have finally taken upon themselves the form, and acquired the character of perfect evidence. To study, to compare, to begin and begin again, to exclude in short, everything that remained in any degree contestable, this was our duty. We have tried not to fail therein. I affirm nothing here that I have not verified several times ; I have scrupulously abstained from admitting that which appears to me probable, not certain—that which has often, but not always succeeded.

I will forthwith give a striking example. I am still persuaded of the action of the glass ; multiplied experiments have shown it to me as arresting or weakening the rotation, even ordinarily opposing an obstacle of sufficient power to cause the table, as it comes in contact with it, to give a sudden jerk, as though it had encountered in the midst of its course an insuperable inequality in the floor. I think that ere long the demonstration will be complete ; that it has not yet reached such a point suffices to exclude from this work all that part of our researches relating to the glass. When I first spoke of it, I had seen nothing which did not conform to the opinion then expressed ; what I have since seen is much more favorable than contrary to that opinion, notwithstanding we have made some observations which seem to contradict it. It would, therefore, have been both imprudent and disloyal for me to reproduce my assertions without having removed the doubts legitimately engendered in connection with this fact. When the glass did not act, was it prevented by undue excitement, or by the envelope, which, in concealing it from view, suppressed, at the same time, its immediate contact with the table ? Is its effect especially manifested in the vicinity of the most powerful operators ? And many other questions to which I dare not make a positive response. Two or three times other objects besides glass seemed to arrest the motion of the table. Was it imagination that produced this result ? Did the table stop merely because the operators conceived the idea that it ought to stop ? Still another point on which there is not yet much light. There is here a real difficulty which partakes of the mixed nature of our subject of study. With a phenomenon purely physical, we should soon clear up our doubts ; so long as the scientific conditions of the experiment were maintained, the result would be invariable. With a phenomenon purely moral, we should have no embarrassment, since there would always be found in the will of the operators, a natural explanation. But with a phenomenon at once moral and physical, in which the intention of the members of the chain plays a preponderating part, without excluding the

influence of material agents, it is impossible to avoid facts apparently contradictory. At one time, the material agent will have prevailed, at another, the authority of the human thought. Ordinarily, the glass impedes the rotation I wish to produce, and yet it sometimes happens, that willing more strongly, perhaps, I triumph over its resistance ; it sometimes also happens that supposing the glass be applied when it is not, and thinking the table ought to stop, I provoke, most *mal-à-propos*, the cessation of its motion.

Thus, that which gives interest and originality to our researches brings an equal amount of difficulty. I confess it all the more cheerfully, since, in spite of the intervention of material agents, either to aid or oppose, the essential act remains incontestable. The will alone determines the elevation of the table charged with one hundred and fifty pounds ; also, the elevation of the table that is not touched. This being clear and certain, I compromise nothing when I admit that the collision of our fluid action with certain physical obstacles, such as the glass, gives rise to some observations which have not yet acquired sufficient clearness.

They will acquire it, I do not doubt, and by observing two conditions. It will be essential, first, not to undertake the experiments of the glass until after having reduced the chain of operators to the number strictly necessary to produce the rotation, in order that the party may be equal, and the material obstacle make itself generally felt. It will be essential, in the second place (and this is less easy), not to confide to the operators what is to be done, in order that their imagination may not speak to them either of the glass put on the table or taken away, either of rotation or checks.

Be that as it may, I maintain my opinion ; in the present state of our researches, my duty is to abstain, and I abstain. The respective rôles of the will and of the glass are not defined. At one time, I thought they were, but I was mistaken ; new studies have brought about some negative experiments, and although they may be in very small numbers, compared to those

which have succeeded, I have lost the right of presenting them to the public as actually affirmed.

I am likewise unable to present a positive affirmation upon three other points which have their interest, but which a prudent and serious man will consider only with extreme reserve. They are these :

Everybody has made hats turn, and everybody understands that if the rotation of the tables cannot by itself furnish a solid argument, the rotation of hats has still less value. It cannot be demonstrated that mechanical, involuntary pressure may not be the sole determining cause. It is then advisable to pass that over in silence. I go still further ; I likewise suppress our observations relative to the adhesion which seems to be established between the table and the hat, when the operators order the latter to fasten itself upon and draw the table. Although we frequently succeed in obtaining a rotation from the table put in motion by the hat, although we have a consciousness that the hat has really attached itself to the table, and that we should find it troublesome to draw one without the other, we have as yet been unable to demonstrate this. It is certain, indeed, that by leaning with much force upon the hat, we may mechanically determine the rotation of the table, and it is not less certain that the traction effected by each person upon the portion of the hat under his hand, gives the perfect illusion of a resistance resulting from adhesion. It is a fact to be set aside for the present.

I shall set aside with no more ceremony, another fact of which we have been many times witnesses, the rotation communicated to a man by hands forming a chain around him. There will never be anything in that resembling the character of proof, because we never have been able to do away with the suspicion that the person thus experimented upon yields the coöperation of his will. In vain would be the attempt to convince others as I am myself convinced, that the suspicion is groundless, in vain would they see very characteristic and curious signs of the impression produced by the fluid ; convictions

of this nature are condemned to remain personal, they cannot be imposed upon others. I shall, therefore, be content to mention in passing, some results bearing on this point. We have seen the man whom we willed to put thus in motion, grow gradually pale, and fall into a sort of stupor ; we have seen him turn, commencing at his head, and not deciding to detach his feet from their resting-place until absolutely compelled to do so ; we have seen him obey an order to rap a certain number of blows, and actually producing them by balancing himself on the right and on the left without stirring his feet. He has affirmed to us that no pressure dictated his various movements, and that the fingers lightly touching his body, made themselves felt only as burning points. We know his integrity and do not doubt his declarations ; insufficient for the public, they are very sufficient for us. But that which suffices for us only, cannot figure in the rank of proofs, therefore, this is set aside.

The sconces and small pieces of board have been omitted for the same reason. It is in itself very curious to observe the little piece of board armed with a pencil which passes through its centre, first putting itself in rotation under two or three hands as they form the chain above it, then tracing characters on paper in compliance with the order issued by the operators, and ordinarily translating their thought into quite readable writing. It is a matter of course, that this little board has been one of the great instruments of divination among those who believe in spirits. To write is much more prompt than to pass in review thirty or forty times in succession all the letters of the alphabet. The oracles thus promulgated are only the reflection of what is in the heads of those who direct the motions of the pencil ; they are in no respect the result of divination, properly so called, and this we have established to the very point of evidence. One phenomenon still remains which enters exactly into those furnished us by the tables ; fluid rotation, a reproduction of the thought by inert matter. I do not insist upon such a phenomenon, because the little boards, differing from the phenomenon of the tables, furnish no result that cannot be accounted for either by fraud or mechanical impulsion. It is easy to

guide the movements of the pencil so as to form various letters, and hence the confidence inspired by the character of the experimenters imports but little. The public knows no one ; esteems no one ; the public believes only in facts which complicity, either voluntary or involuntary could not produce ; and the public is right.

I have related the facts. I have established and discussed the proofs, I have set aside those of which there could be any question ; it remains for me to say but one word more before closing this part of my work. I wish to complete my narrative of the facts by adding some details in regard to the method to be pursued in order to arrive at them.

For want of practical directions, the number of persons who enter upon the scientific study of the Turning Tables is entirely too limited. One of my ambitions in taking up the pen has been to determine others to follow my example, trusting that the results they may obtain will shed still further light on this most interesting phenomenon. It is to be expected that the inherent difficulties in such researches should be an insuperable obstacle to many of those who might, under other circumstances, wish to engage in them. It does not depend, in fact, upon procuring furnaces, retorts and chemical agents ; it is necessary to procure companions in labor, companions whose complaisance never wearies, who feel the seriousness of their task, who persevere, who are never repulsed by failure, who dread neither fatigue, nor raillery, nor calumny. This is difficult, less difficult however, than may be imagined ; and I should also add that the fluid power, if it be very diverse, is also very general. There are few people who do not bring their useful proportion of it into the chain.

Let the scientific men earnestly desire it, and they will find co-laborers, among whom there will, doubtless, be some whose authority over the table is particularly marked. I long to see them at work and to learn that my poor suggestions, full of ignorance as they are, have given place to veritable discoveries.

Here then are some directions that I would offer to those who may wish to enter upon a course of experiments.

Let them select a room with rather an uneven floor, in order to avoid a too easy rotation, and also in order that its roughness may offer points of support for the feet of the table during the elevations.

Carpets do not absolutely prevent success, nevertheless they are an obstacle.

Tables with rollers obey, but tables without rollers are better. We find that the action manifests itself in the latter with more promptitude and energy.

Dry, warm weather appears to have a favorable influence ; I think that success is generally poorest in winter. On the other hand, it is necessary to guard against overheating the room in which the experiments are conducted. In general, the exertions of the experimenters suffice, and more than suffice, to procure a great heat. Too high a temperature induces lassitude which soon becomes impotence.

I have just spoken of lassitude ; this leads me to insist upon the physical and moral dispositions which are necessary. No one can firmly control the table except on these two conditions, he must be in good health, and he must be sanguine of success. Bring hither all your intelligence, and all your attention ; do not bring a spirit of doubt, of analysis, of ill-natured suspicion in regard to things or persons ; you will yourself be frozen, and your atmosphere will freeze your companions. The tables require to be taken gaily, and with spirit ; they demand at the beginning, singing, with amusing and easy exercises ; they detest people who are constantly becoming irritated, whether for or against them ; if they are met by preoccupation or nervous excitement, they are very apt to get *sulky*.

Avoid especially all drawing-room experiments. Serious success is there impossible. In the midst of objects calculated to divert their attention, with conversation and jokes going on around them, the operators are certain to lose their fluid power. Resorted to as evening amusements, the experiments

lead to nothing. The same may be said of exercises conducted noisily, sittings announced in advance. We lose our simplicity and freedom of action, a sense of restraint is upon us, we cannot succeed, we become susceptible and anxious ; in other terms, nothing is accomplished of any importance.

Gather about you at each sitting only a small number of witnesses, scientific men and others, and then, with the doors carefully closed, act as though you were alone. Engage the witnesses to keep their eyes well open and to take notes, but do not authorize them to participate in the sitting, or to make a single observation in a loud voice.

It is because unreasonable interference has been admitted, and because the operators have not reserved the right of acting according to their judgment, allowing the witnesses the privilege of drawing their own conclusions ; it is because experiments have been transformed, now into disputes, now into puerile diversions, that the rotations or knocks have been arrested, and parties in despair of accomplishing anything better, have resorted to the convenient pastime of the evocations of spirits. There, at least they could regain in piquant revelations what had been lost in scientific results.

I suppose that, in the present instance, a different course has been pursued. The point in question is a real study ; discipline reigns among the operators ; they desire to advance, and they do advance ; they are no longer in the first elements. How shall they manage to enter advantageously upon decisive experiments—numbers reproduced from the thought, the elevation of weights, motion without contact ?

It is essential to undertake these things only in moments of great animation. Ordinarily, they should not be thought of, either at the commencement of the sitting, before the enthusiasm is awakened, or at the close of the sitting, when the strength is exhausted. There are, nevertheless, exceptions, and the suitable moment may arrive when it is not expected, either at the beginning or the end. It is important to know how to profit by the occasion, not venturing to undertake motions without

contact, so long as the table is languid, and does not turn with energy; so long as it does not bound to meet the fingers, or anticipate, in some sort, the orders that are issued.

These dispositions are sometimes to be waited for, and the operators are then called upon to display one of their essential virtues—their perseverance—without which they will succeed in nothing. To persevere in spite of repulse, in spite of fatigue, in spite of appearances to the contrary; to know how to interrupt the operations, or stop them entirely in case of necessity, then to resume the sitting cheerfully, to elevate the moral condition by other experiments, and finally, when the commands are being executed rapidly and with vigor, to go back to the first; such is the conduct that will ensure success.

Having thus stated the principles, I turn now to their application. I trust that the pedantry of my didactic forms may be overlooked. I shall proceed by precepts, for the sake of brevity.

Let there be ten operators, whose fluid action has been tested; add to these, three or four assistants as a *corps de réserve*, their duty being to take the place of those members of the chain who shall become fatigued.

Let the operators place themselves around the table, crossing all the thumbs and little fingers—in such a way, for instance, that the thumb of my left hand shall repose lightly on the thumb of my right hand, and the little finger of my right hand repose lightly on the little finger of my neighbor's left hand.

Let one of the experimenters be charged to direct the operation, and to him only must be intrusted the signal of command. If every one is allowed to interfere, nothing can be obtained. Contrary wills will cross and annul each other. Anarchy is of no more value here than elsewhere.

Repeat with unanimity the orders proposed by the chief. It is, of course, taken for granted that these words, simultaneously uttered, are without action on the table, but they are not without action upon the members of the chain; they collect and

concentrate the thoughts, and success is only to be obtained by their concentration.

Do not allow yourselves to get angry ; do not become impatient ; give the orders gaily, and with a feeling of confidence, which the facts will, by their appearance, soon fortify.

Begin with rotations, and return to them whenever the motions of the table show symptoms of flagging. It is in turning that the fluid is produced and developed. It is important not to get disgusted, because we may have been unsuccessful in obtaining energetic blows, elevations such as to overturn the table, or rotations almost impossible to follow.

In the next place, exercise all the feet one after the other, and assure yourself of their prompt obedience. This requires much perseverance. Keep turning and demanding blows as long as there remains the least thing to be desired in regard to the docility of the table.

If either foot obstinately refuses to act, endeavor to find out who is the individual that impedes the fluid communications. Ordinarily, this person will be found in front or at the side of the foot ; that is to say, in the precise situation where muscular action would be impossible for him. Induce him to withdraw, fill his place by another operator, and the spell will be broken. In vain is one a partisan of the tables, and convinced of the reality of the phenomenon ; in vain is he strong and zealous ; with all this, he may be a hinderance to experiments which demand neither zeal, nor muscles, nor nerves, but which do demand fluid.

Resume the rotations from time to time, in order to renew, in a measure, the provision of fluid which the experiments tend to exhaust.

Replace the wearied experimenters by others, and take care in doing so, not to break the chain. For this purpose, the two persons on each side of the one who quits the chain, should join their hands until the new member of the chain takes the place destined for him.

Avoid as much as possible, a rupture in the chain, even when

required to pass from one table to another. The fluid power is thus better preserved, and the concentration of the will maintained ; that is not to say, however, that we cannot separate momentarily, and afterwards recover a great portion of our authority over the table, for it is in the persons, not in the table, that the fluid resides.

Become animated in difficult moments. Loud talking, shouts and halloes, are then of use. Ardent and repeated commands do not, certainly, act on the inert matter ; but they provoke in all the operators the greatest possible development of the will, and prevent inattention. We have several times tried the effect of issuing orders in a low tone : what was the result ? That our thoughts wandered, and the sitting was a failure.

In the midst of all this noise, maintain order, and (as I have already said), exclude all diverging ideas. Everybody is called upon to act, but the initiative pertains only to the chief.

Do exactly the contrary when numbers to be reproduced are in question. Then, but one person is in the secret of the number, and the others cannot do better than to forget the table ; if they allow their thoughts to wander upon the different figures, they run the risk of counteracting the experiment, even without being conscious of it.

A few more words in closing, on the motions without contact :—

Be first assured that the table is in full vigor ; that it turns and strikes with almost passionate force. Then begin.

If it be required to continue the rotation, the hands are united in advance, by completely crossing the little fingers without disjoining the thumbs ; then, at a given signal, the chain, raised a short distance above the edge of the table, pursues its course, drawing the table after it. It, however, too often happens, that the rapidity and inequality of the course, break the fluid adhesion, when it becomes necessary to produce, instead of to continue the motion, as in the following case :

If required to create the rotation, we stop the rotation, crying : Halt ! Then, forming the chain above the table, as

has just been explained, with the hands extended horizontally, we begin to turn slowly around the still motionless platform. Each person fixes his eyes successively on the various spots in the plane of the table, endeavoring to draw them to him by the force of his will. After two or three turns, the motion manifests itself, and each individual fastens his mind on the spot he has selected. From this moment it is essential not to break the sort of fluid cord which binds the various portions of the table to the end of the fingers; consequently, the movement must not be too rapid, and care should be taken to maintain the distance between the spots and the experimenters. Unfortunately, it soon happens that some one by his precipitation, breaks the cord, and thus the rotation is stopped after two or three revolutions, sometimes before having achieved a single turn.

If required to continue the elevations, the table is ordered to strike eight blows. At the third blow all the hands are raised, and maintain the chain above the table, which accomplishes all or a portion of the five remaining blows, isolated from the fingers, but impressed by the force of the fluid directed by the energetic wills.

If required to produce elevations from a state of immobility, two methods present themselves.

The least sure, that which produces the most limited results, is the one first employed by us. The chain is formed, as usual, a short distance above the table. Then, one of the three feet is emphatically called upon to rise. When it has done so, we repeat the experiment until the commands have evidently become useless, and we seem to have exhausted our moral and physical vigor.

The second method is less uncertain in its results. Employed on unfavorable days, it has, at one time furnished us fourteen, at another time thirty, successive elevations. It is as follows:

The foot to be raised is designated. The chain leaves the table, and the portion required to impel fluidically, places itself a few inches outside the edge of the table, while the portion re-

quired to draw fluidically, advances quite near the edge to be elevated. The chain is then no longer round but oval ; its centre is formed by a particular spot placed near the edge to be raised, and upon which each person fixes his mind, some impelling it from, others drawing it towards them, by the power of their will. The hands extend horizontally. As soon as the command has been given by the chief, all the operators repeat it with increasing energy, and immediately the chain is put in motion. The hands outside of the circumference insensibly approach it, and those which have penetrated within its limits, retire not less insensibly, in order to regain their normal condition above the opposite border. The hands which impel, return within the plane of the table, and those which draw, attain its centre in their retreat. The table is allowed to pursue its course ; it rises and continues to rise ; we wait until it is almost ready to overturn, before we attempt to arrest a fall that would disturb the chain, and compromise the immediate renewal of the experiment.

The reader will have remarked how carefully I have confined myself to the verification of facts, without hazarding any explanatory theory. If I have employed the word *fluid*, it has been to avoid circumlocution. Scientific rigor would have required of me, always to write: "The fluid, the force, or the physical agent, whatever it may be." I trust I shall be pardoned for having been a little less exact in my language. It was sufficient for me, that my idea could not be misunderstood. Whether it be a fluid, properly speaking, I cannot absolutely affirm. I affirm that there is an agent, that this agent is not supernatural, that it is physical, communicating to physical objects, motions determined by our will.

Our will, I say, and this is, in effect, the fundamental observation which we have gathered on the subject of this agent;

this it is which characterizes it; this, also, which compromises it, in the minds of many. They would resign themselves, perhaps, to a new agent if it were the necessary and exclusive product of hands forming the chain; if certain positions, or certain acts assured its manifestation. But the case does not stand thus, the moral and the physical must combine to give rise to it. Here are hands that exhaust themselves in forming the chain, and obtain no manifestation; the will does not interpose. Here is a will that commands in vain; the hands are not in a suitable position.

Our readers are aware that we have demonstrated these two essential sides of the phenomenon. The fingers crossed in the most regular manner, have never sufficed of themselves. Is the will absent? Nothing stirs. Does the will issue a command to arrest the motion? The rotation ceases on the instant. And, on the other side, communicate to the table a mechanical rotation, persevere as long as you choose; your fatigue, and your entreaties will be a dead loss; from the moment the muscular impulsion ceases, the obedience of the table will also cease.

Another fact has been noted by us, and should enter into the description of the physical agent in question. It resides in the persons, not in the table. Let the operators, when they are in good health and spirits, transport themselves round a new table. They will exercise over it immediately, all their authority; their will will continue to dispose of the physical agent, and will make use of it to rap out numbers indicated by the thought, or to effect the motions without contact.

Such are the facts. The explanation will follow.

It is very natural that we should now seek it, and that we should represent the hypothesis, if not as true, at least, as possible. I have ventured to do so, and I do not regret it. Ought we not to prove to our adversaries that they have not even the pretext of a scientific impossibility? Hypotheses are justifiable and of use, although they may be inaccurate. It is sufficient that they are, in themselves, admissible, for the facts to which they apply are thus shielded against the accusation of

monstrosity. No one has any longer a right to demand the previous question.

Seeing that it has been demanded of me from every quarter, I deem myself called upon to say this much :

You pretend that our assertions are false, for the simple reason that they *cannot be true* ! well, then, permit me, at all events, to propose to you some suppositions. And first, suppose that you do not know everything, that moral nature and material nature, each and both have obscurities for you. Suppose the smallest herb growing in the field, the smallest grain of seed, reproducing its plant, the smallest twig bending in the direction you give it, that even these inclose mysteries which exceed the wisdom of the academics, who nevertheless would declare them absurd, if not compelled to recognize them as real. Secondly, suppose there are men, who at will, and when their hands communicate with each other in a certain manner, give birth to a fluid or a particular force. I do not ask you to admit that it is so ; you will only grant me that it is possible. There is no natural law in opposition to it, that I am aware of.

Now, let us take one more step. The will disposes of this fluid. It gives this *impulsion** to exterior objects, only when

* If I have here supposed a fluid *impulsion*, it is without prejudice to that of attraction. So long as the circular position of the experimenters shall appear to be one of the essential conditions of complete success, so long as the rotations and the elevations without contact are with difficulty accomplished while the hands are in a state of rest, it will be natural to admit that the table is attracted by the hands, and that the table also acts in that direction. The only experiment which might entirely have done away with the idea of attraction, is an experiment which seems not to have succeeded. It was required that the experimenters, placed on a movable floor sustaining the table, should in obtaining its motion, determine their own. Attraction could evidently have nothing to do with such a result. Place, in fact, ten persons, armed with ten magnets, around an iron table, which cannot move without dragging with it the movable floor on which they stand, nothing stirs ; but let the persons run round the table, it will follow their magnets.

I have said that the experiment *seems* not to have succeeded, because I am acquainted with a person endowed with a very considerable amount of magnetic power, who assures me that he has obtained several rotations of a table placed on a pivot, and which of itself carried, astride of cross-pieces, the experimenters charged with making it move. The result, however, is not conclusive, because scientific precautions were not taken to render the table perfectly level. Now, it may be conceived

we will it, and in the parties to whom we will it. Would the impossible be here? Is it an unheard of thing that we should transmit motion to matter exterior to ourselves? But we do it every day, every instant, and our mechanical action is nothing else. The horrible part, doubtless, consists in the fact that we do not act mechanically! But mechanical action is not the only force in this world. There are physical sources of motion which are not mechanical. The caloric which penetrates bodies, produces in them an expansion, that is to say, an universal movement; the magnet, placed near a piece of iron, attracts and causes the iron to overcome the distance.

"Yet," exclaims one, "we should have nothing to object to all this, if your pretended fluid did not obey a direction in its course. If it emanated from the person, a blind force, it would be well enough. Therein, it would be similar to caloric, which expands everything it encounters in its path: it would be similar to the magnet, which attracts indiscriminately, and towards a single point all the particles of iron in its vicinity. But you, you invent a theory of a rotatory fluid, and this theory applies equally well to the explanation of the narcotic properties of opium." A greater mistake could never have been made. No one dreams of a rotatory fluid. We are content with maintaining that the fluid being emitted, and having communicated a lateral impulsion or attraction to a piece of furniture resting on feet, a very simple law of mechanics transforms the lateral action into rotation, because of the successive resistance offered by the different feet, as they adhere to the inequalities in the surface of the floor. When the motion communicated is opposed by a resistance of this sort, it cannot but produce a rotation; and this is so true, that if I press my finger against the table,

that the least difference in the level might lead to the beginning of a rotation, which the impulsion of a heavy weight would serve to prolong.

It is then rigorously true, that nothing yet demonstrates the impulsive action of the fluid or force in question. Its attractive action seems better to correspond with the general character of the facts known. Moreover, nothing would prevent this force from communicating by turns, according to the mandates of the will, impulsions and attractions. As yet, we know scarcely anything. Let us be in no haste to define it.

and continue to press in following it, I shall make the table turn as well as the fluid. If ten persons placed around it, should press their fingers in the same direction, the table would also turn.

This, on a small scale, is what is continually taking place in the celestial mechanics. The foot, retarded by the asperities of the ground, represents the centripetal force; the attraction or impulsion exercised by the fingers or by the fluid, represents the centrifugal force; the combination of the two forces produces a rotatory motion and change of place.

With the tables also, there is rotation and change of place; they are far from turning exactly on themselves, and the curves they describe vary according to the adhesion, more or less prolonged, of the various feet which serve in turn as a pivot of circular motion. Let no one attribute to me the ridiculous intention of exaggerating a comparison, which, in some respects, lacks exactness. I have wished simply to indicate, that in the motion of the tables, as well as in that of worlds, there is no other force than that of attraction or impulsion, counteracted by obstacles. The rotatory fluid figures no more in our evolutions than in those of the celestial spheres.

I do not say, "the tables turn because my fluid is rotatory;" I say "the tables turn because, receiving an impulsion or submitting to an attraction, they cannot but turn." It is a little less *naïf*. Consequently, nothing could induce me to take in hand the cause of that poor knight of the *Malade imaginaire*, and defend his famous response: "*Opium facit dormire, quia est in eo virtus dormitiva.*" Nevertheless, I cannot but acknowledge that I find the response excellent. I doubt if the scientific men have found a better one since; it is my advice to them to sometimes resign themselves to the necessity of reasoning thus: Opium produces sleep, because it produces sleep; things are, because they are. In other words, I see the facts, but I do not know their causes. "I am ignorant, I am ignorant!" Terrible words, and with how much difficulty are they pronounced! Now, I strongly suspect that the malice of

Molière is pointed at the doctors, who claiming to apprehend everything, imagine explanations that explain nothing ; who do not know how to accept the facts within their reach, while waiting for something better.

We are not yet at the end. The hypothesis of the fluid (a pure hypothesis, do not forget) has yet to prove that it is reconcilable with the various circumstances of the phenomenon. The table does not merely turn, it raises its feet, it strikes numbers indicated by our thought, in one word, it obeys the will, and obeys so well, that the suppression of contact does not suppress its obedience. Lateral impulsion or attraction, which accounts for the rotations, cannot account for the elevations !

Why not ? Because the will directs the fluid, now upon this foot, now upon that. Because the table identifies itself in some sort with us, becomes one of our members, and executes the motions conceived in our minds, in the same way that our arm does. Because we have no consciousness of the direction communicated to the fluid, and govern the table even without representing to ourselves that a fluid or any force whatever is in play.

I grant you that we are not conscious of the direction given by us. It is the same in all our acts, in all without exception. When you shall have explained to me how I raise my hand, I will explain to you how I make the foot of the table rise. "I willed to raise my hand !" Yes, and I also willed to raise this foot of the table. As regards the execution, as regards the putting in play of the necessary muscles for the first act, as regards the putting in play the necessary fluid in the second, I have no consciousness of what is passing within me in that relation. Strange mystery, in which it is our duty to engage with a little more modesty ! There is within me, an executive power, a power which, when I have willed this or that motion, addresses the orders in detail to the different muscles, and causes a hundred complicated motions to be executed, in order to bring about a final result—a single thought and a single will ; this takes place within me ; I know nothing, I never shall know

anything about it ! Do you not admit that the same executive power can give to the fluid the direction which it gives to the muscles ? I will to execute a sonata, and something within me, commands, independent of my consciousness, hundreds of thousands of muscular actions. I will that the foot of this table shall rise, and something within me commands, without my knowledge, the attractions or impulsions of the fluid towards the spot designated.

The hypothesis of the fluid is then tenable ; it accords with the nature of things and with the nature of man. I make no pretence of going further, and bringing forward at present a positive explanation. But I am not concerned. Let the facts be admitted, and the explanations will not be wanting. That which appears impossible now, will then appear very simple. In unquestionable facts, we no longer find difficulties. We are so constituted, that, passing from one extreme to another, after having proclaimed impossible all that we did not understand, we declare comprehensible all that we have recognized as real. Most people shrug their shoulders when we speak to them of Turning Tables, but they find it very simple to believe in the infallibility of the electric telegraph, and in the fact that physical and moral resemblances are transmitted from them to their children ! The tables could not escape the common fate. Absurd to-day and evident to-morrow, they will have their theory, a theory, scientific and official, before which I respectfully bow in advance.

CHAPTER III.

THE OBJECTIONS.

My positive work is terminated, my negative work commences. A mere demonstration of facts would amount to but little, were we not afterwards to place ourselves at the point of view of those who reject them, and take up one by one their difficulties and their aversions, patiently endeavoring to overcome them. Moreover, time thus occupied is not lost; the study of facts itself gains by it, for we are led to consider them under new aspects. And then, we all have our positive expressions, our favorite phrases, by means of which we condemn, without appeal, everything that displeases us, pretexts, under cloak of which we dispense with examination; now, should we not endeavor to estimate all these at their true value? Is it not our duty to burst these inflated balloons, and show that these grand words conceal only emptiness?

The work is not so foolish as it may seem. In such matters, a review of objections is almost a review of manners which introduces the observer into different phases of society, and brings him in contact with the various currents of opinion there prevailing. He meets, by turns, the objection of the scientific men, and that of the unlearned; the serious objection and the frivolous objection; the laical objection and the clerical objection. In short, he finds before him (and this is not his least embarrassment), the objection which is not an objection, the objection which is only an exclamation—a shrug of the shoulder, the objection which he cannot vanquish, for it does

not reason, it will not understand, it will not know ; the objection at everybody's service, the eternal objection about which wise men make up their minds, reserving to themselves the privilege of a laugh.

What guarantee do you offer us ? Your word ! Your good faith ! But the most honest people in the world are subject to error, and a man may deceive himself without ceasing to be honest. The champions of the tables have mistaken their course, in imagining they will prove anything by putting forward their sincerity, by proposing to their adversaries the old dilemma : "either call us liars, or acknowledge that we are right." They will be met by the answer, that they do not lie, but are deceived. Innumerable examples will be cited to them, of very stupid, and yet very loyally attested fables.

In fact, these fables are very abundant, and the objection might have a real value, were we to permit it to state itself in the vague and axiomatic terms in which it delights. It remains to be seen, if there be any relation whatever between the testimony I have presented, and that to which allusion is made ; if my assertions repose definitively on testimony, if I say to any one, "Yield the point or accuse me of falsehood."

And, first, what is the absurd testimony with which our opponents would arm themselves against us ? Let us pass it in review, and compare its different points.

The Fathers of the Church accept and transmit the most apocryphal anecdotes of the Saviour and his Apostles ! But we all know how rapidly history becomes distorted, even in our enlightened days, and we can therefore easily imagine in what manner legends were formed at an epoch when communication of one part of the world with another was difficult, and tradition essentially oral.

Again. A professional man of science—a Pliny, for example—introduces into his Natural History, whales four acres in extent, fish with heads of bulls, which daily leave the sea to pasture in

the fields ! But neither Pliny nor any other ancient men of science have positively established what they affirm. Their evidence is from the second, third, fourth, or hundredth hand.

In modern times, it still happens that memoranda and journals relate strange things which are often accepted by the gravest historians. But where are the serious investigations to which these various assertions should have been submitted ? Does it not generally happen that, whenever we attempt to inquire into their truth, and get hold of the eye-witnesses, the pretended prodigies vanish like smoke ? Even in my own experience, since I have given my attention to the tables, have I not heard the most astonishing wonders confidently related as truths ? They were incontestable facts ; they were obtained from an ocular witness, or from a friend of the ocular witness ! Did I wish to have a clear conscience, and arrive at the primitive authors of the tradition, I could find no one disposed to vouch for it.

The annals of the people are full of cures effected by the touch of sovereigns. Pyrrhus and Vespasian of antiquity, the emperors of Austria, the kings of England and France have not ceased to cure after that fashion, or rather, I mistake, they have ceased now that we look at them a little more closely.

The same remarks apply to the sorcery which is daily practised in the country villages, at our very door, under our very eyes. Nothing is better attested. Grass woven into a crown causes beasts to perish ! The evil eye decimates families ! Bees emigrate when a member of the household is about to die ! Misfortune to those who overturn the salt ! In short, is there any end to these superstitions ? Are they not all based on obvious, concordant, and innumerable proofs ? Nevertheless, if we have the patience to examine and arrive at the truth, if we look at the register, if we notice the woven grass, the swarms flown away, the salt-boxes overturned, we succeed in demonstrating that no relation whatever, exists between the prognostications and the events.

Those who attest that the relation is unquestionable are not

impostors for all that. They yield to that immense enthusiasm which attracts us towards the strange in matters which give scope to the imagination. How explain otherwise the conduct of the sorcerers and sorceresses of the Middle Ages? Certainly they believed in their own witchcraft, they who avowed it before the judges, and rendered testimony against themselves which led them directly to the stake. One might count by thousands those who related their visits to the nocturnal revels of the fiends, their journeys through the air, their transformation into *loups-garous*,* and the murders they in that condition committed upon very young children, who furnished them with the most delicious repasts. But here opens a vast category of singular things, the explanation of which is furnished by the imagination whenever the ideas that act most on human credulity are in question, whenever these ideas impregnate the atmosphere, ever increasing as they circulate; when superstitious contagion exists, ignorance prevails, the holy Scriptures are unknown, a particular state of opinion is formed in which the faintest appearance transforms itself into reality, and what yesterday, we thought we saw, to-day we are positive to have seen; to-morrow, we persuade ourselves and others, that we have seen it twice!† At such periods, miracles, sorceries abound; and their fear of the light is sufficiently well proved by the fact that as soon as we begin to know, to read, and to reflect, sorcery and miracles become more rare; they are no longer talked of except by stealth in the country, they are no longer publicly circulated except among nations upon whom the light of modern civilization has not yet shone.

Imagination, absence of inquiry, or ignorant and prejudiced

* A name formerly given by country people to a very dangerous evil spirit, or to a sorcerer disguised as a wolf, and who was said to wander about at night. This superstition still subsisted in France at the close of the sixteenth century, and it has even yet not entirely disappeared from the neighborhood of Saintange, Limousin, and Auvergne.—*Trans.*

† In the second part of this book I shall fully investigate the grave questions upon which I can at present only touch. I shall inquire into the precise value of testimony in regard to the supernatural; I shall examine the most curious and very frequent phenomenon of individual or collective hallucination.

inquiry : this is the key to many astounding facts. There are still others, which we may succeed in comprehending when we remember the extensive and ill-defined *rôle*, we have hitherto assigned to the nerves. Yes, there is yet one whole side of physiology, of which science is almost ignorant, of which she has even hardly indicated the boundaries. What is it that in certain cases, under the influence of certain moral epidemics, produces nervous excitement? No one can exactly tell. Prodiges of strength, of dexterity, of physical insensibility utterly confounding, a sudden development of certain faculties, a sort of transformation of the moral, intellectual, and physical being, these are sometimes the consequences of an extraordinary nervous condition. In fact numerous phenomena, which the world charges to the account of magic or of spirits, are of themselves, about to take their place in a more natural category, a category suppressed or very nearly so by the unlearned, because the scientific men are generally afraid of it.

And now, what conclusion shall we draw from all this? That men are often deceived, that they are the dupes of their imagination or of their nerves; that they are also the dupes of assertions carelessly made and incompletely verified; that there has been, there is, there will be throughout the world a frightful mass of rigmarole; that certain solemn attestations prove nothing; that one may be sincere and yet yield to a propensity bordering on the fantastic; that one may be worthy of esteem and not worthy of faith! I promptly subscribe to this. Then bearing in mind that the question now before us is that of the Turning Tables, I ask what there is in common between our experiments, and that unsightly mass of tradition badly digested, of wonders badly observed, of witchcraft and of superstitious or nervous contagions.

I have here presented a series of facts reproduced five months in succession, in presence of numerous voluntary witnesses. Far from becoming weakened in proportion as they have been submitted to a close examination, they have continued to develop themselves under new aspects. The imagina-

tion is a stranger there, for it loves a very different pasture, and the monotonous succession of rotations or elevations offers no very tempting bait to its appetite. The nerves are strangers there, for our authority over the tables disappears the moment nervous tension shows itself, and is only compatible with a state of calmness, confidence, and gaiety. Besides, neither imagination nor nerves are called for; they cannot explain the execution of numbers indicated by the thought, the elevation of a mass which defies the muscular action of the fingers employed, the motions communicated at a distance. In short, the results here obtained will be obtained everywhere; they will not be regarded as isolated events, related by those who have seen them, but as a regular, permanent phenomenon, which all the world may likewise reproduce.

And yet, in opposition to us are brought up the nonsense of the Fathers, the ignorance of the ancient naturalists, the well-meaning lies, the conscientious illusions of the times and of the people who had neither the knowledge nor the wish to investigate the marvellous! We are told of the very grave and very insufficient attestations with which history is filled! we are reminded of the *rôle* reserved to the nerves and to the imagination!

One single thing astonishes me, that our opponents should pause midway, and omit to compare our repeated, verified, harmonious and public experiments, everywhere easy to reproduce, with certain anecdotes related by travellers. In them lies another mine of capital stories that might be used with advantage. The most honest and scrupulous traveller has neither time nor opportunity to verify the truth of all that is shown to him. He examines as well as he can, makes notes in his memorandum book; then he publishes, and the reader looks upon his account as entirely reasonable.

A traveller has seen something far better than turning tables; he has seen flying tables. A Buddhist lama places his hand upon a table (very light it is true) which weighs less than half a pound. At the end of half-an-hour, the table follows the hand, rises with it, traverses a considerable space in the air, and falls

in the direction we would naturally seek the stolen object in regard to which the operation is performed. What conclusion shall we draw from this? that perhaps the lamas have recourse to the phenomenon which is produced with us in the motions without contact; but perhaps also, that the facts have been badly observed, having been witnessed only a single time; that fraud, little complicated it may be, assures the transportation of the small table.

Have we not heard of revolving dervishes, who end their performances by revolving in the air without touching the feet to the ground? Does not legendary lore abound with saints who sustain themselves in the air, several feet above the earth, and is it not all proved by certificates made out according to rule?

Travellers and witnesses certify to many other wonderful things. The moment we leave the ground of regular experiment and authenticated accounts, that moment do we become a prey to those brave people who believe they have verified that which they have only partially seen, who take rumor for facts, and their own eager fancies for realities. What has not been seen by the ancient pilgrims who visited the Holy Land? They have discovered impossible animals, which will never be known to zoological science, marvellous plants and fruits, which will never figure in any herbarium, daily and incontestable miracles enough to fill fifty lives of saints; nothing is there lacking. The blunders of credulity and involuntary complacency are unspeakable, and the *bâtons flottants** are always to be met with in this world of ours. Approach them and the extraordinary disappears.

I remember the day on which I contemplated, at Jerusalem, the abominable jugglery, the odious profanation which is named the ceremony of the sacred fire. The pilgrims were there by thousands, in the greatest state of excitement, waiting for the miracle, uttering howls and throwing themselves into the holy

* Allusion to one of La Fontaine's Fables, in which what seemed at first to be a large ship, turned out to be nothing but oars floating on the water.—*Trans.*

flame the moment it gushed forth from the tomb. The stratagem certainly was as gross as possible: A little opening through which a small lighted wick suddenly projected ! And yet, nothing more was necessary; the spectators were all convinced, satisfied, transported even. And what, I asked myself, will be the sincere account given by these men, on their return to the distant countries from which they came to the Holy Sepulchre ? They all will affirm, affirm without hesitation, and without lying, that they have seen—it is called seeing—seen and touched with their hands the great miracle. They will represent the tomb-stone as splitting apart to give issue to the flame.

What they affirm to-day, pilgrims more learned affirmed in the Middle Ages. They wrote it down. Historians gathered all the concordant testimony on the same point, and thus was established a universal belief as immovable as a rock.

In our times, these melancholy parades which expose us to the contempt of Mussulmans, no longer venture to approach within a reasonable distance of the intellectual centre. If the blood of Saint Januarius still liquifies at Naples, for the edification of the Lazaroni, there is little danger that it will edify the rest of the world, especially since the day when the tardy miracle was accomplished at the moment fixed upon by a certain French General.

As for the prodigies produced by nervous excitement, they have over and over again, been compelled to cease. Many convents and hospitals, invaded by this contagion, have been freed from it, by the threat of certain remedies—an application of red-hot iron, for example.

The reader will not reproach me for having weakened the objection drawn from sincere but erroneous testimony. The objection is very strong in itself, but unfortunately, it is perfectly inapplicable to the present case, in which I vainly seek for any trace of those superstitions, that credulity, that enthusiasm, that careless and incomplete evidence which have engendered and protected so many fables. Singular superstition, this, which has excluded even the smallest particle of the arvellous, and

which prosaically confines itself to the study of a physical phenomenon ! Singular precipitancy this, which renews its experiments hundreds and hundreds of times ; which for five successive months submits them to the scrutiny of witnesses, many of whom openly avowed their bitter hostility ; analyzing, diversifying, completing them, obtaining little by little, results un hoped for at the beginning ! Look at the reports from our journal, our modes of proceeding ; you can do and you will do what we have done. What relation, then, is there between our testimony and that which you so justly attack ?

We have just seen to what extent the abuse of the most sensible general formulas is carried. Mistrust all sorts of testimony : it often reposes on illusion. The axiom is excellent, unfortunately it has no relation to the present controversy.

Such is the vice of false objections. They have their origin in incontestable truth ; the fault lies in the indiscrimination with which they are applied. It is the same with the new objection of which I am now about to say one word. Its point of departure is so certain, that the error lies, perhaps, in its being a little too true. There are truths so true that they excite a smile, and of which a disrespectful custom towards one of our national illustrations assures the monopoly to M. de la Palice. Now, there are men, very intelligent men, moreover, who exclaim, when we speak to them concerning the tables : " You know nothing about it. It is very possible for you to have been hoaxed. Some rascal or other has made them perform these various exploits, and cheated you before your eyes. Consequently, we can never be sure of anything, for proof is positively impossible."

Really, some rascal has made them perform their various exploits ! This is your discovery ! I assure you that this thing was done before we occupied ourselves with the Turning Tables. All the world knows that by taking a very light, round table, one that will allow of but three or four experimenters, the

action of the fingers of one person will suffice to determine both rotation and elevation.

Now, what do we infer from this? Two things: In the first place, it is necessary, at the outset, to set aside the light tables, and choose such as exact a chain of eight or ten persons at least. In the second place, it is necessary to set aside all experiments which muscular action is capable of obtaining. Whether the table turn or not, whether the table strike or not, whether the table dance or not, no one shall present it as an argument to the public. We would even comprehend the numbers reproduced from the thought in the same sentence, if the dimensions of the table are so small, and the number of operators so few as to make it possible for one of the party to obtain control over the rest.

Certainly, it is not difficult to execute whatever we wish with a round table, if we are alone, or have only one or two companions. I have assured myself on twenty different occasions of that fact. Here are two attentive, conscientious persons, whose fingers scarcely graze the surface of the table; and here is a third, who, without seeming to do so, communicates to the round table a series of motions. There is no appearance of fluid, everything is mechanical. Once more, the discovery is not new, and the hoax has little merit, even supposing it to be in good taste.

But, take a large table with four feet, or even a table with three feet, which is strong enough to bear the weight of a man, place yourself in the midst of a chain of ten persons, and I dare guarantee that your tricks will be less successful.

This is not all. Leave elementary experiments, continue the hoax to the point of causing numbers from the thought, comprising cyphers, to be rapped out by the different feet of the table, and particularly by those over which you can exert no action, either to lift them or to arrest their motion; hoax us by raising a weight of 150 pounds; execute motions without contact, and with all the hands separated from the table, find a

way of drawing it towards you by a gradual rise, ending in a complete overturn.

I do not insist. It would be unjust in me to take such insignificant little jokes seriously. Those who have claimed to hoax us, do not pretend to prove anything; they have only sought their own amusement, and we all take our pleasure in our own way.

There are other and graver men, however, who after their own fashion, seem to contest the possibility of our ever attaining the point of positive demonstration. "Science," say they, "is interested not to compromise her authority, she would see clearly." And, starting with that very legitimate declaration, they each add on their own account, "I will believe when I shall have seen."

In other terms, you will never prove it! your proofs are valuable only to the immediate witnesses; you have, perhaps, had fifty or a hundred such witnesses; well then, there are fifty or a hundred persons who can believe you; when a thousand persons shall have seen, you will have a thousand partisans; if the forty millions of France and Switzerland shall visit your hall of experiments, the French and Swiss may be gained, while waiting for the other nations who have not yet *seen*!

Those who hold this language confound things with time. As long as the question concerned only a few, isolated assertions, lacking examination and consequently confirmation, it was natural for the world to declare that it would not believe until it had seen; even we, ourselves, were of the same opinion. But when these assertions have assumed a consistency, when a series of experiments has brought facts to light, when these facts are produced harmoniously, continuously, and are gradually developed in the presence of numerous, distinguished, and most incredulous witnesses, who came to these sittings armed with a great amount of professional learning, when results such as the elevation of weights and motion without contact have

been verified hundreds of times and cannot be refuted except by hypotheses much more improbable than the phenomenon itself; then the time has gone by for saying, "I will believe when I shall have seen."

If it were justifiable always to preserve such an attitude, no discovery could ever take its place as an established fact. Positive and direct vision is by no means the regular condition of belief in scientific matters. An astronomer observes alone and by night, a celestial phenomenon which leaves no trace; would it be right to reject his written description of it, under pretext that we had not seen and wished to see? This, however, is an extreme example, and I acknowledge that the affirmation of one man may not be admissible, especially if it seem to contradict the harmony of astronomical laws and anterior observations. The case is different where the discovery is attested by those who are qualified to judge of it, and where the verification may be established by whomsoever is curious in such matters. Under these circumstances the discovery has a claim to be regarded as certain. Thus, a navigator finds a new island in the polar sea: he declares the fact, his whole crew confirm it. Shall I reply, "I will believe when I shall have seen?" By no means. Their combined attestations produce faith. I have only in my turn to venture among the ice, to meet the island in the latitude and longitude indicated.

Our situation is that of the navigator. I relate to you what we have found on our voyage; I would add that the entire crew joins its testimony to mine, if there were here captain and sailors, if our equality were not perfect in every respect. Our assertions bear upon facts regarding which illusion is impossible. It were as easy to mistake a fog for an island as to mistake a hundred motions with contact for as many motions without contact. In short, the sea is free; let any one embark on it; let him follow our directions, and he will arrive at the port at which we have arrived. The island is there; the motions without contact are there; they await their visitors.

I have not seen America, yet I believe in it. I have not seen

the Northwest passage, yet I believe in it. I have not seen the satellites of Jupiter, yet I believe in them.

I believe in them, and I have reason to believe in them. What is, in reality, the general principle that presides over the acceptance of scientific facts? We believe without seeing when all those who wished to see, have seen, and when we know that we may see in our turn.

Reject this principle and nothing is left but universal skepticism. Now, let me here be well understood. When I declare that any one may see the motions without contact if he chooses to see them, I suppose him to fulfill the conditions of our experiments. If a man proposes to go to America, and yet does not put himself on board of a vessel, he most assuredly will not arrive there. So also of those who, proposing to obtain the motions without contact, do not adopt the method by which we obtained them. Are there not many who utterly fail in obtaining a knock or even a revolution from the table? They do not observe the conditions of the problem, and then are surprised, nay, almost scandalized at being unable to resolve it. Still ringing in my ears, methinks I hear the tones of a new order of scoffers, who, pausing on the shores of the ocean, exclaim: "They tell us of an America, but we cannot reach it in a carriage!"

It is so reasonable to take into consideration experiments seriously performed, that I should be unwilling to say even to the evocators of spirits: "I will believe when I shall have seen." I would, however, declare that there is not a single one of their observations which cannot be accounted for, either by means of the simple calculation of probability, by means of the intervention of the physical agent, or by means of the hallucination which so often presents itself when such ideas are in vogue. There is not one atom of the supernatural in the facts established. It exists only in the impressions of the spectators, and in their theory, which is quite a different matter.

Will it now be objected that, as yet, everything rests on my positive affirmation, and that my affirmation reposes on the simple evidence of the eyes?

I reply, first, that my affirmation has its value. Men of science are not the only ones who possess their dignity ; I also have mine ; and I have the vanity to think that a certificate signed by my name will not be taxed as an act of levity or an imposture. It is known that I am in the habit of weighing my words ; that I love the truth, and will not sacrifice it to any other consideration ; that I always prefer to acknowledge myself in error than to persist in it ; and when, after a long examination, I maintain my ground with a firmer and more profound conviction, those who know me will not misunderstand the import of my declaration.

I reply, secondly, that the testimony of the eyes has for me a real, scientific value. I am not ignorant that this is a heresy : the more the pity ! I shall risk it. Independently of instruments and figures (on which I place the greatest value), I think that the sight may serve, if occasion require. I think that it also, is an instrument. If a reasonable number of good pairs of eyes have proved ten times, twenty times, a hundred times, that a table is put in motion without contact ; if, moreover, the explanation of the fact by involuntary or fraudulent contact exceed the limits of the most credulous incredulity, the conclusion to be deduced therefrom is clear. No one has a right to exclaim, " You have neither fluidometers nor alembics ; you do not bottle up your physical agent ; you do not indicate its action by a column of mercury, or by the inclination of a needle. We will not believe you because you have only seen !"

" I will not believe you, because you have only seen ! I will not believe you because I have not seen myself !" The objections are as numerous as the men of science themselves. What signifies it that there is a want of harmony between these objections ? To them everything is good that opposes the tables.

This disposition they plainly showed the day they clapped their hands at the disks and needles of M. Faraday. It was very evident that the needles ought to incline and that the disks ought to touch, not only because these are the necessary effects of the rotation, but because a certain degree of involuntary pressure will always be exercised. To establish this inevitable, mechanical action, was nothing; it should have been weighed; it should have been compared with the force exacted by the velocity of the table. For want of such a comparison the needles and the disks are reduced to the necessity of demonstrating something of which nobody is ignorant; that there are pressures exercised by the operators, and that especially, if they are discouraged by the aspect of an accusing sign, they cease to will the rotation, which is, in consequence, arrested.

Let it be maintained that the rotation is proof neither for nor against: very well! I have always acknowledged it, admitting that if we had obtained only this phenomenon, we would have done well to keep silence. But we have progressed beyond; and I ask what figure is at the present day, presented by all the various apparatus which undertake to prove that involuntary pressure explains every thing? Involuntary pressure explains everything; yet the table resists all our commands, although it turns by virtue of a single mechanical impulsion; yet the rotation must be waited for, or is sometimes refused, in spite of involuntary pressure! Involuntary pressure explains everything; and yet an article of furniture which no person touches follows the fingers held above it, it rises, and is overturned!

I do not forget that at the time when M. Faraday invented his disks, no other action of the tables had yet been spoken of. In presence of a phenomenon so insufficient—and, let us freely avow it, so worthy of suspicion—it was to be expected that scientific men should show themselves skeptical, and should be content with unsound refutations. They selected their arms with reference to the apparent strength of the enemy. Of their whole number, M. Chevreul has shown the most penetration, and has offered the most plausible explanation. His

theory upon the tendency to motion is incontestably true. It suffices to explain how it is that the objects suspended to our finger vibrate in the direction impelled by our will. I am not astonished that it should also have been believed sufficient to explain the manner in which the experimenters communicate a rotation to the table, and participate in it themselves. I need not add that the elevation of weights and motion without contact will not in future permit him to have recourse to a similar explanation. All the tendencies to motion combined will not produce an impulsion at a distance, nor will they disturb the immobility of an inert mass, when mechanical action cannot disturb it. No one will better comprehend this than M. Chevreul; with that loyalty which is the appanage of strength; with that candor which always accompanies true science, he will not hesitate to confess that his objection has not the value it was natural for him to attribute to it in the beginning.

And yet this objection has already given rise to a mass of others that are hardly worthy to be mentioned; objections thrown out at random and at all hazards, in which their inventors do not believe, although they none the less fulfill the duties of their office in furnishing a pretext of some sort, no matter what, to those who must have one. They speak mysteriously of a vibratory motion emanating from thousands of little nervous branches! They relate familiar experiments on the communication of motion, the two clocks, the wooden cases of which are united by a cross-piece, and which are so connected that a motion communicated to the pendulum of the first extends also to the pendulum of the second.

Such anecdotes rarely fail of their effect. It matters little that they have no relation to the phenomenon, the explanation of which they pretend to indicate. There are so many minds that are satisfied with vague insinuations!

Their satisfaction is complete when to these are added scientific considerations upon the great effects produced by small

forces. These effects are incontestable. If you, with the end of your finger make your glass vibrate, the glass will lengthen ; now a similar elongation can only be obtained by the employment of a force equivalent to 200 lbs. at least.

Here is something quite remarkable ; and the motions of the table, including even the elevations without contact, are very near being explained ! It might be well to add, however, that the elongation in this instance, is due, not to a force exercised, but to a molecular modification. Looking upon it in that light, I am ready to enlarge the list of prodigies produced by the end of the little finger. In bringing about a change in the arrangement of the molecules, or a combination of various substances, my little finger will do much better than to determine the elongation of a glass. My little finger will press the trigger of a gun, my little finger will fire off a twenty-four pounder. But, once more. What relation is discovered between these facts and the obedience of the tables, the wood of which does not, to my knowledge, submit to any interior revolution.

Men of science should not confine themselves to throwing before the public explanations which explain nothing ; it is their duty to set at work in earnest, and show us, in fact, by what means we can directly and mechanically raise a weight of 200 lbs. without applying to it a force of 200 lbs. It is pretended that the variation of the compass has been obtained, and it is affirmed that philosophers get rid of the difficulty thereupon, by supposing that the heat of the hands, which makes itself felt in the vicinity of the instrument, modifies the magnetic current ! The response is easy : " Estimate that heat by the thermometer, produce an equal amount of heat in the neighborhood of your compasses, and obtain the same deviation."

Such a way of meeting the question is too simple. The world prefers ridicule and abuse, it prefers to invent a theory, no matter what, whose only wrong consists in being utterly false. The recent article of M. Babinet in the *Revue des Deux Mondes** is the *chef d'œuvre* of its kind. If my assurance of the

* 15th of January, 1854.

reality of the phenomenon of the tables had needed strengthening, the perusal of a refutation like this would have been most *à propos*.

In the eyes of M. Babinet, this phenomenon offers no difficulty ! Happy physical science ! happy mechanical science which has an answer for everything ! Ignoramuses that we are, we thought we saw something very extraordinary, and we did not know that we were obeying two of the most elementary laws of the world, the law of unconscious motion and especially the law of incipient motion ; motions whose power appears to surpass that of developed motion.

In regard to unconscious motions, M. Babinet adds nothing to previous explanations, nothing but the history of a certain Lord (an *English* lord, he says,) whose horse was so admirably trained, that it was sufficient merely to think of the motion one wished him to make, for it to be realized on the instant. I am perfectly convinced as well as M. Babinet, that the lord in question acted upon the bridle in full confidence, and I am not less convinced that the experimenters whose hands touch a table, can exercise a pressure of which they are unconscious. I think, however, that between the cause and the effect, there should be a proportion ; in vain are the motions unconscious, they are none the stronger for all that. It remains to be proved that the same fingers which, by exerting all their strength, cannot raise a weight of 80 lbs. will raise double its amount simply because we are unconscious of any effort.

Here naturally comes in the theory of incipient motions and their matchless power. " If there is anything established in mechanics and in physiology," writes M. Babinet, " it is, that incipient motions are of small extent but irresistible." And he cites in their support, the invisible muscular expansion, by means of which jugglers make objects disappear, the rules of fencing, the electric girl,* the insensible vibration of the wings of eagles. I have no wish to contest with M. Babinet his discovery. It will

* The author here alludes to the case of Angelique Cottin, a native of France, who, in the year 1846, being then 14 years of age, was the subject, it was said, of some curious electrical phenomena. For a fuller account of the affair, see Rogers' " Philosophy of Mysterious Rappings."—*Trans.*

be glory enough for the tables that they have provoked it, and the establishment of such a law will console us for the loss of that which we ourselves, thought to establish. Thus, we are to understand, that, since the incipient motions have a peculiar energy, since they explain the most impetuous evolutions of the largest tables, humanity is about to be relieved of the rude labors which overwhelm it. The woodman will fell the trees without expending the sweat of his brow ; the husbandman will bury his spade in the ground without protracted labor ; the blacksmith will beat his iron by means of the incipient motions of his hammer, and M. Babinet, on his part, will elevate by a commencement of unconscious pressure, a table charged with a weight of 150 lbs. or one which he does not touch !

My honorable and learned adversary here interrupts me. He will have no one speak to him of motions without contact. "Everything that has been said of action exercised at a distance, should be consigned to its proper place among fictions." The judgment is summary ; fortunately M. Babinet condescends to assign his reasons. The motions without contact are a fiction, first, because they are impossible ; secondly, because powdered isinglass has prevented the rotation of the table ; in short, because perpetual motion cannot exist.

The motions at a distance are impossible ! In good logic, M. Babinet should have held to that, bearing in mind the reply of Henry IV. to the magistrates of a certain city, who had thus commenced their harangue : "We have not discharged the cannon at the approach of your Majesty, for three reasons. In the first place, we have no cannon—" "That reason is sufficient," replied the king. We must believe that M. Babinet himself slightly doubts their "impossibility," and that he has not judged his reason sufficient. In that, he has acted wisely, for this pretended impossibility reposes entirely on a circle. "Is there a solitary example of motion produced without an active, exterior force ? No ; but the motions at a distance are effected without an active exterior force ; hence, the motions at a distance are impossible." I would say to M. Babinet, in the language of

the schools, that his major is true, and that his conclusion would be legitimate, if his minor were not a simple begging of the question. You claim that there is not here a force acting exterior to the table which is raised without contact of the hands ! but this is exactly the point we are debating. A fluid is an active, exterior force. It is very convenient to begin by establishing this axiom : There is no fluid (or analogous physical agent), since thence results the manifest deduction : Because there is none, neither can there be any of the effects which such an agent would produce !

M. Babinet's second objection has a more conclusive air. "Under the fingers of the operators, placed on the table, was put some powdered isinglass or small blades of mica, which destroyed the adherence of the fingers to the table and thus prevented the communication of the motion. The table then remained motionless. They have not omitted to say that the mica arrested the motive power of the fluid, just as it arrests electricity ; but as the leaf of mica clung lightly by its edges to the table, the impulse was communicated, although the pretended fluid should have arrested it, as in the preceding instance." I propose to M. Babinet a means of arresting the motion, even without having recourse to the leaves of mica or the powdered isinglass. Let him make a simple chalk line across the plane of the table, in such a way that it may seize hold of the imagination of the experimenters, and thus prevent a confident exercise of the will ; there will be no more motion of any sort, notwithstanding the adherence of the fingers to the table, notwithstanding the power of their incipient and unconscious motions. By the powdered isinglass, we well know that the rotation would be impeded ; by the adherence of the leaves of mica we know that it would not be. Hence, two moral situations as different as possible. We are in the midst of mixed phenomena, we must all take sides.

In relation to perpetual motion, I have yet to ask, in virtue of what analogy, or on what authority, M. Babinet has thought himself justified to give it a blow over our shoulders. We entirely abandon it to his tender mercies. The constant destruction of atmospheric and other resistances, of the force engendered,

will not allow us for a moment to maintain that inert masses can move themselves perpetually in this world of ours. It would be necessary for them continually to replenish their losses ; now, as matter does not move except by virtue of an impulsion, of course, the motion must be communicated to it. Very well, but what has this argument in common with our tables, touched and impelled by a fluid, even when not in contact with the fingers ?

If I have expressed myself a little warmly, it is because I think it deplorable to see discussions degenerate into supercilious and scornful tirades. In the eyes of M. Babinet, all the partisans of the tables are attacked by and convicted of gross ignorance ; they have not the faintest glimmering of even the first elements of science. M. Babinet should have remembered, distinguished man of science as he is, that other men of science, not less distinguished, admit the existence of a fluid directed by our will. M. Séguin, to cite only one example, is not precisely ignorant of the first ideas of mechanics.

Let us direct to the study of mechanics a portion of the ardor we expend in anathematizing our adversaries. We all stand in need of indulgence. What would M. Babinet say, if attempting to criticize his inaccurate expressions, I should accuse him of scientific ignorance because he has written : "The sum total of the motion that is in the world is unalterable, since no material being whatever, can augment its own, at the expense of surrounding bodies, neither lose it without restoring it to the bodies upon which it reacts ;" if I should remark that my arm raised in virtue of my free will, introduced into the world a force, which my free will could have hindered from being introduced there, that the birth of a flesh-worm introduces motion into the world ? He would reply with reason that his phrase did not fully render his thought, and that in speaking of the unalterable sum of motion, he had no intention to include therein the voluntary acts of men or animals.

It would ill become me to insist. The positive tone is in such matters less fitting to me, than to any one else. My object is only to give a piece of advice to men, who like M. Babinet

have a right to treat scientific subjects with authority. Let them consent to approach new ideas without laying down as a principle that they know everything. M. Babinet invokes the laws of nature, and maintains with reason that she cannot contradict them. But have all these laws been revealed to him? Has human science no longer any limits or errors? The "laws of nature" have been successively opposed to all discoveries, awaiting the time when these discoveries, definitely admitted, should themselves be ranked among the "laws of nature." Let us be careful not to pervert the use of words.

The men of science do not confine themselves to objections drawn from incipient or unconscious motions, from small causes producing great effects; they have still a mode of proceeding, the efficacy of which is incontestable. If an experiment has once succeeded, its value is immediately lost. If they could only effect another, it would be all very well! So that the new experiment once performed becomes, in its turn, insignificant, and cedes its place to another *desideratum*. These opponents express themselves something as follows:

"You do such and such things; that is very well; but now we require you to do something different. You employ such and such means; we pray you content yourselves with those which we prescribe. To succeed after your manner is not to succeed; you must succeed according to our mode. Your manner is not scientific; it contradicts tradition; we shut the door upon facts if they are not clothed in *les costumes de rigueur*.* We will not even look at your experiments if our machines do not figure in them."

Strange method of establishing the result of experiments; they begin by changing the conditions into those of their own creation! They might as well say to a man who has seen the barley harvest gathered in upper Egypt during the month of January, "I will believe it when I have seen it here in Burghundy." It may be well enough to adopt this style of treatment

* In fashionable costume.—*Trans.*

in relation to the wonders seen by a traveller, but experiments have quite another character. In presence of facts as conclusive as the motion without contact and the fluidic elevation of weights, both of which set mechanical action at defiance, in presence of facts that give no handle for fraud or illusion, it is hardly to be believed that there should be a disposition to impose on us engines, needles, complicated mechanism, without even inquiring if the simple, moral effect of certain kinds of apparatus and certain modes of observation, will not be to make phenomena of a mixed nature, wholly disappear. Yet our opponents will consider our experiments as not having taken place, and in compensation, they will invent for us new ones. In absolute ignorance of the physical law, the effects of which we have examined, they will determine, in advance, its applications. Since it produces this, it should also produce that !

What a quantity of *sinces* and *thens* introduced into an investigation where the real nature of the agent is a mystery to all the world ! In truth, I perfectly comprehend that the tests should be varied at all hazards, that we should have our eyes open in every direction, that different instruments should be placed in contact with the tables or with the operators. That is natural ; it is thus that discoveries are made and rendered fruitful ; it is thus we have ourselves proceeded. There is but one rock to avoid, and it is precisely that upon which everybody splits : the failure of new experiments must not be opposed to the success of old ones, nor may we, under the strange pretext that everything is not known, contest what is already established. Let us, for the present, content ourselves with looking ; we will reason by and by.

Such is, in my opinion, the true philosophical and scientific course. All mere experiments, I repeat, considered simply as such, and resulting in nothing certain, should be discarded. As for ourselves, we have been grateful to scientific friends who have kindly suggested to us the idea of similar experiments, and we have promptly lent ourselves to them, even when the principle involved seemed different from that previously observed by

us. Thus we attempted, as has been seen, to raise and maintain in the air, a table, the weight of which had been diminished by means of a counter-poise, although nothing in the course of our experience had authorized us to expect a result from the moment that the fluidic impulsion could no longer dispose of a point of support.

We followed these suggestions of a friendly and ingenious science, because it was agreed that the checks foreseen by us should not be considered as furnishing a conclusion of any sort. Of any sort, I mistake ; we might conclude from them that we had been seeking in a false direction, which is neither a great crime nor a great misfortune. Strange, therefore, as it may seem, we must know how to seek where there is nothing ; it is one way by means of which we finally bring something to light. I have no objection to it, provided we are not infected by the insupportable pretensions of those who reject at the outset everything that has not been established by their instruments and their modes of proceeding.

I might add, by their men. Yes, indeed, and here has been committed a crime, which I fear, will never be sufficiently expiated. The profane have trodden upon holy ground ; the ignorant have tampered with facts which the initiated reserve to themselves ? Now, it rarely happens that the clergy approve the theology of the laity. *Laïcisme* (pardon the word) is and will be dishonored in all time. Do you believe that the academies will pardon the laity of science ? Certainly not. What the latter see, is not seen ; what they verify is not verified. Little becoming is it in them, indeed, to recognize a physical agent upon which men of science have turned their backs, or to regard with their eyes, a comet which the telescopes of the *observatoire* have not yet condescended to notice !

Odi profanum vulgus, et arceo.

Speak not to us of those vulgar fingers stupidly placed upon

round tables ! Speak not to us of those experiments in which our consecrated apparatus does not figure !

There is cruelty in making us feel so intensely our incompetency, our unworthiness. I, for one, am deeply sensible of it, and would by my prayers, hasten the time when I shall have it in my power to yield the place to a man of science, a man who has taken orders. Not only will he do much more and much better than I, but he will have an inestimable advantage over me in another respect :—what he does will not be sacrilege. With what happiness shall I return to the silence so agreeable to me ! Consecrated hands, proceeding according to sacramental forms, will obtain results which we may at last be permitted to appreciate without compromising ourselves. Mechanism, formulas, will lend their aid to dignify experiments too ignoble in their own nature ; people who respect themselves will consent to give them their attention, and will exclaim as they congratulate themselves on their prudence. “Now it is a different thing.”

Oh Molière, why are you not still in existence ! But thou art here in effect. Thy genius has marked with ineffaceable lines this eternal malady of special corporations : contempt of the laity, respect for compeers, idolatry of the ancients. Singular malady which is reproduced in all ages, under all forms, and in the bosom of all branches of human activity, now in the name of religion, now in the name of medicine, now in the name of science and art. Yes, even beyond revolutions, even in the walls of academies which participate in the great movement of modern innovation, one thing survives ; it is the attachment to brotherhood, to tradition, to the superstition of forms.

It might truly be said that it still every where inclines a little to oaths like that in the ceremony of the *Malade imaginaire*. M. Foucault likes this scene ; he will therefore not be displeased if I recall to his mind the following passage :

"Essere in omnibus
Consultationibus
Ancien! aviso
Aut bono
Aut mauvalso.

— Juro!

"De non jamais te servir,
De remediis alcunis
Quam de ceux seulement doctæ facultatis,
Maladus dût-il crevare
Et mori de suo malo.

— Juro!"

Raillery aside, the spirit of brotherhood and the spirit of tradition perform prodigies in order to escape any modification in physical laws. *Leur siège est fait.** I have nowhere been so impressed by this, as in the remarkable objection to which I now direct my attention. It is the creation of the physiologists; they have generously come to the assistance of the natural philosophers. "Since it is necessary to sacrifice something," they seem to say: "since important facts are established; since we are thereby reduced to the extremity of taking Animal Magnetism and Turning Tables into consideration: since, in fact, a revolution is inevitable, let it be accomplished in the study of man, and not in the study of material nature; let us save the holy ark; let there be no new fluid and we are content!"

This system has several advantages; it pretends to lend itself to study and even to reforms; it passes the Rubicon, and the flag of science advances into a country she has heretofore refused to enter (I speak now of our disciplined science, of our French and English science); it has recognized several truths, to them an unexpected and astonishing honor; it proclaims the actual success of several experiments hitherto strongly decried. It has a bold step, a blustering air, and consequently

* This refers to the answer of l'Abbé Milo, author of a history of the Siege of Malta, to those who, after his work was finished, brought him further information on the subject. "No," said he, as he rejected their contributions, "my Siege is finished." The expression has become a by-word.—*Trans.*

it would ill become us to complain. To be disdained by men so advanced, so accommodating, is not a good sign !

Add to this, that these accommodating men are, at the same time, intelligent men; that their psychological analysis is worthy of the most serious attention ; that their physiological explanation, if it be absolutely inapplicable, is nevertheless very ingenious. Add, again, that they take a ground on which the various adversaries of the tables will cheerfully meet them. Read, for example, the distinguished work of M. Chevreul upon the rod of divination, upon the exploring pendulum and upon Turning Tables (*Journal des Savants*), you will be amazed to see that he resorts to the psychological solution. His explanation, he himself declares, " does not pertain to the physical, but to the moral world." With the tables, as with the pendulum and the rod, " the effects cannot be attributed to any blind cause, but to a free agent, and we shall presently say to the thought of man."

What M. Chevreul thus indicates, M. Braid, Sir H. Holland, and M. Carpenter have sought systematically to establish. An important article in the Quarterly Review, September, 1853, sets forth a theory, which, if I may judge by the flourish of trumpets that welcomes it, seems destined to be very successful. It is true that the same trumpets have already resounded several times since we have been engaged in the quarrel of the tables ; we particularly remember the cries of triumph which burst forth in regard to the poor disks of M. Faraday. Who speaks of them to-day ? A few friends, faithful to their illustrious compeer, and determined to consider his demonstration demonstrated. Outside of his coterie, there are none who do not comprehend that in the development of a mixed phenomenon, visible signs of suspicion are always unfavorable. The enthusiasm has therefore passed from M. Faraday, and M. Carpenter, while it passes to a third, to a fourth conqueror. When the victors multiply to such an extent, we are compelled to distrust their victories.

I am, then, about to examine with particular care, the explanation of M. Carpenter. It merits attention; its author is a

man of authority, and it is little probable that anything more plausible than his theory will be discovered against the fluidic motion of the tables. It is as follows:

Electro-biology, a branch of Animal Magnetism, several years since announced and demonstrated, to the great admiration of the public, that certain persons (one out of twelve on an average), could not fix their attention for a given period of time on a small disk of metal placed about ten inches from their eyes, without falling under the absolute government of the magnetizer directing the experiment. They are not asleep, and yet they entirely lose the control of their thoughts; it has passed into the hands of another. The magnetizer presents them a glass of water, affirming that it is wine, milk or spirits; they taste it and are really convinced that they have drank spirits, milk or wine. The magnetizer declares that this liquid is boiling hot; they cannot support its contact. The magnetizer tells them that his cane is a serpent, they shrink from it with horror. He tells them that a piece of lead is very light; they raise it without effort. He informs them that a feather is tremendously heavy; their strength is not sufficient to sustain its weight. He gives them to understand that they cannot withdraw their hand from the table on which it is placed; all their exertions are unavailing to detach it.

Such is the fact. It is not long since the world laughed and shrugged its shoulders when we ventured to speak of it. Now, our scientific men, the most skeptical, admit it. They admit it because they believe themselves prepared to explain it without injury to official physics. A hint to the reader! The same experiments pass suddenly from the category of absurd assertions into the category of demonstrative assertions, the moment they seem to enter within the consecrated limits. Consequently, our adversaries do not go from facts to theory, but from theory to facts. We have long suspected as much.

Be that as it may, they are here in possession of a very interesting observation: the automatic condition to which the intel-

lectual man is at times reduced. What inference do they draw from this ?

The mind, thus deprived of the control of the judgment, no longer distinguishes between false and true ideas, between sensations purely subjective and those which have a real object external to it. It is thus delivered up to the absolute empire of *suggestions*.

I have just written the great word, that which serves to label the system. The *principle of suggestion* will furnish a solution to all the difficulties. We are so disposed to be satisfied with words. There is nothing which suggestion does not henceforth explain. Are you astonished at biological phenomena ? They are the result of suggestion ! Has magnetism its mysteries ? Suggestion ! Do the tables obey the will ? Suggestion ! And everybody celebrates the wonders of suggestion, the evidence of suggestion. The ignorant portion of the community will not be the last to confess that nothing is clearer and better reasoned.

Let us, however, examine the subject, and follow the argument to the end ; for it does not, at first sight, appear so evident to us that the physiological condition of persons under the influence of biology or magnetism, is that of those who turn the tables, that there is everywhere equal abdication of the judgment, automatic passivity and obedience to suggestions. Now, if the explanation is to explain anything, all this should be true.

But we are not long in perceiving, that in the theory of Messrs. Braid, Carpenter, and their adherents, they have brought together, pell-mell, facts which have not the least relation to each other. Having pledged themselves to explain everything, they have, by means of analogies often puerile, piled up everything in one confused mass ; then, depending strongly on the reality of the first observation, and forgetting to prove that certain consequences result therefrom, they arrive at the conclusion.

What they forget to prove, is precisely the point in controversy. Do we contest the automatic condition, and the power

which suggestions then possess? Not the least in the world. We contest the assertion that this automatic condition is that of our experimenters. You arrive at passivity by a concentration of the attention upon an object, in itself insignificant. Granted, although I do not know whether the action of the magnetic fluid does not determine this curious modification of the human being, and the dependence resulting therefrom. You do more, you produce the *hypnotism* of M. Braid, or the somnambulist sleep, properly so called. Does this advance you in regard to the tables, or even in regard to a great number of biological and magnetic facts? I think not.

In order to make one step towards the solution you seek, you are compelled abruptly to change your thesis, without seeming to do so, and without being yourself conscious of it. In place of the automatic condition and suggestion, you substitute the dominant idea and the developments of intelligence, or of force which it produces. Between the first thesis and the second, there is no bridge. Such chasms are never cleared except in making the perilous leap, the *saltus letalis* of the old logic.

Direct and avowed suggestions of Biology, indirect suggestions, subjective questions of magnetism, I suppose, with you, they may be all true; what trace of the dominant idea do you perceive in the passive man, in the vacant mind devoid of ideas?

You try to translate your dominant idea into the expectant idea, which is less clear, but more appropriate to the general thought that is reputed to reign throughout the system. Nevertheless, you do not return to your first position. The man who makes a ring oscillate at the end of a string, finally communicating to it the direction willed, is by no means an automaton, and obeys no suggestion; he has a fixed idea, which, doubtless, acts, unconsciously to him, upon his nerves. I would say the same of the divining wand, and in this respect, M. Chevreul appears to me vastly superior to M. Carpenter, for his tendency to motion has at least the merit of being in harmony with the phenomenon of which it pretends to give the physiological interpretation. As for the principle of suggestion, I seek

it here and do not find it. I comprehend the concentrated attention and the muscular tension it provokes ; but that the man of the wand is an automaton in whom the will has abdicated, and who yields to suggestions, I do not in any way understand.

It is probably my fault, for every one else understands it astonishingly well, going into ecstasies over its luminous explanation of the phenomenon of the Turning Tables, an explanation which consists in placing in juxtaposition two dissimilar and even contrary theses, that of automatic passivity and that of the concentrated will !

I have said that the theses were dissimilar and even contrary. It remains for me to prove it, and I will do so without pausing at some contestable details of the system which seem occasionally slightly to confound the will with the judgment, almost inducing the belief that it is the part of the will to effect or to assure the control of ideas, and that we only distinguish the true from the false when we *will* to distinguish them. Let us pass over the details of a psychological analysis, remarkable as it is in more than one relation, and which becomes exact, the moment it re-establishes, in place of the will alone, the connection of the will, the attention, and the judgment ; let us proceed at once to that which bears on our special discussion.

Does the dominant idea go hand in hand with automatic passivity ? On the contrary, the man dominated over by a fixed idea, does not lend himself to any *suggestion*. I affirm that M. Carpenter, when he wrote his essay and became absorbed in his principal idea, bore little resemblance to an automaton, to a man delivered up to the biological power : his will had not abdicated, and still less his judgment. Vain would have been any attempt to *suggest* to him opinions different from his own.

What is true of the concentration of the mind in intellectual labor, is equally true of its concentration in a moral effort, in a sentiment, in a material act. The blacksmith, who occupies himself exclusively in giving to a bit of iron the desired form, the watchmaker who is intent only on filing a delicate bit of machinery, are not automatons whose passive souls can be made

to submit with impunity to suggested directions. It may be affirmed, on the contrary, that they are souls so occupied with a single object, that there is no room for any others.

Do strong affections make us automatons? Does the love of God, which, according to his will, should reign in our hearts, reduce us to a state of passive stupidity. Are men of genius, inventors, poets, orators, philosophers, stupefied or benumbed by their ideas, and consequently open to all suggestions from without?

It is precisely the opposite of this which takes place, as every one knows. Strong affections, intellectual meditations and creations, the love of God, all these develop and animate the human being; he is more alive, more active than ever. He submits less than ever to influences which he has not appreciated and freely admitted as in accordance with his sentiments and convictions.

Are we told of the abstraction of scholars? That would be absurd. If a man preoccupied can accept, on secondary and indifferent points, a notion which does not interest him, he is better armed than others against the invasion of ideas which may claim to exercise over his mind an entire control. Dominant ideas are also exclusive ideas; nothing can equal their jealousy of power, and a state of absorption, of abstraction, of preoccupation, is surely that in which you will be least likely to succeed in rendering yourself master over a man, in making him submit to a treatment, in some degree approximating to the biological crisis.

Those who have reared children are not ignorant that their obedience ceases from the moment their abstraction commences. The most submissive child remains inaccessible to orders or suggestions, as soon as he becomes absorbed by a dominant idea. His, is a house into which we can no longer enter; the doors and windows have been shut.

And behold, with what meagre solutions the adversaries of the tables, I mean the enlightened and intelligent adversaries, allow themselves to be satisfied. Feeling that the theory of

the dominant idea and involuntary motions is henceforth insufficient in presence of established facts, they endeavor to trace a connection between the dominant idea and automatic passivity, in order to be able to speak of the *principle of suggestion* to a public who begin to tire of the *tendency to motion*.

The principle has indeed met with the most brilliant success. Is it not true that the biological condition seems to be obtained by a concentration of the attention upon an object? is it not consequently certain that every act of attention destroys the control of the judgment and reduces us to a state of biological dependence? What signifies it that in the first case, the power of action is precisely the absence of idea, concentration in a vacuum, while in the second, that the mind dominated by a principal idea obtains its maximum of activity!

The thought suggested, governs despotically the man reduced to biological passivity; he can then be assimilated to all men possessed by fixed ideas, and whom this exclusive preoccupation has rendered fools or very nearly such. The assimilation may be carried still further, so as to range in the same category, all those who eagerly pursue a discovery, a work, or any project whatever! What signifies it that in the second case, we find that which is directly the opposite of passivity and suggestion!

In the new system all is good, provided we arrive at any explanation, no matter what, of the phenomenon of Turning Tables. It would appear that by dint of piling together the the most absurd analogies, the most incongruous observations, the originators of this system, hope to stumble on a solution. They reckon upon dazzling the reader, who will, of course, esteem the tables condemned, when he shall have seen them mixed up with the facts of biology, the eccentricities of somnambulism, with dreams, ecstasies, convulsions, and epidemics of demoniacs or of sorcerers. It is rare that such formidable accumulations fail in their effect. We hear of thinking automatons, of mechanical obedience; of extraordinary excitements, of nervous crises; of the strange development of the faculties in moral preoccupation or in magnetic sleep; we hear it said that man is equally placed

under an exclusive influence, whether by the creation of a vacuum in his mind, whether this mind belongs to its proper dominant thought ; and we conclude therefrom, that the phenomenon of the tables is explained by the principle of suggestion. Is there not expectant attention ? Are not the experimenters preoccupied ? " Behold, therefore, the reason that your daughter is dumb."*

The problem of the tables would have caused little embarrassment to Sganarelle.† There are chains of ideas which rule us unconsciously ; a certain child who had learned both English and German, was in a measure compelled to employ the first language with his English mother, and the second, with his German nurse ; hence it is all very simple that the tables turn ! Certain impressions and certain associations continue during sleep ; the physician starts quickly at the sound of the night bell, although the voice of his wife in vain endeavors to arouse him ; the wife is awakened by the cries of the *baby*, although she does not hear her husband as he speaks to her ; thence, it is all very simple that the tables turn ! Somnambulists, awake or asleep, resume from one crisis to another the same series of thoughts, with complete forgetfulness of the intermediate sensations and events ; the persistence of the same preoccupation and an insensibility to everything else, are reproduced in certain states of the human mind ; thence, it is all very simple that the tables turn ! Somnambulists write with great regularity even when unable to see what they are doing ; separated from their paper by a screen, they correct an entire page, dotting the *i*, and crossing the *t* ; their susceptibility to odors detects the proprietor of a pair of gloves ; they accurately repeat an improvisation from Jenny Lind, forgetting neither a note of the music, nor a syllable of the verses composed in a tongue unknown to them : thence, it is all simple enough that the tables turn !

I am met with a remonstrance. " We have not argued

* A quotation from Molière's *Médecin malgré lui*.—*Trans.*

† The principal hero in *Le Médecin malgré lui*.—*Trans.*

after that fashion," say they ; from the biological or somnambulist state to Turning Tables, we have established numerous transitions ; you suppress the intermediate steps.

I suppress nothing but confusion ; my perfidy is that of clearness. What concern, indeed, have we in knowing if there be a relation between somnambulism and ordinary dreams, between ordinary dreams and the reverie of a man awake ? These analyses (often subtle and ingenious, sometimes also inaccurate, for the domination of a single idea, connected and uniform, is far from being the habitual character of dreams), these analyses of the state of mechanical absorption in its various manifestations, will never have anything in common with the energetic activity of an excited intelligence, or a will which pursues its object. Never will they succeed in establishing the thesis that has just been produced under sanction of the respected name of M. Carpenter, and in which, all the facts relative to electro-biology, to mesmerism, to somnambulism, and to Turning Tables, are due to the exclusive empire of a dominant idea, and to the absence of a sufficient control of the will over the thought ! The different parts of the thesis do not hold together ; they lack continuity.

I insist upon this point, because here lies the question. If our adversaries had wished only to oppose to us the possible results of a dominant idea, as it exists both in the automatic condition, and in the condition of activity arrived at its maximum ; if they had wished only to derive advantage from the exclusive preoccupation created in some minds by suggestions introduced into a vacuum, in others, by the occupation of the entire soul with the thought and the will, they would not have had recourse to this great psychological apparatus, they would have limited themselves to establishing with M. Chevreul, that the over-excited thought induces a muscular tension, an unconscious tendency to motion. But no, something newer, more striking, more philosophical, was required. They have put forward the *principle of suggestion*.

It possesses the advantage of classing us among automatons,

invalids, and almost among fools. It is something to be able to look down with pity upon our adversaries, and to insinuate under a parliamentary form, that they have lost their wits ! The tables, in your opinion, turning only because we do not more entirely possess the control of our ideas and actions, you are, in consequence, authorized to assume the high tone with us, to make us remember how important is the rôle of the will, how essential it is that the automatic tendencies should be subordinate to it. You invite fathers of families to develop the will in their children, lest they may one day fall into mental alienation, or at least, into that enervation of the activity proper which delivers the turners of the tables and their congeners over to the domination of a sovereign idea—which makes them move mechanically without their knowledge, poor, disabled, rudderless vessels, driven about at the pleasure of the wind !

I do not deny that a dominant idea may be introduced into a vacant mind, that, for instance, of a man, whose absence of will or judgment renders him a prey to suggestions; but I do deny that our experimenters, in any way, participate in these very special dispositions. Far from being reduced to the state of automatons, they have their own conviction and maintain it, in spite of outside *suggestions*. Far from lacking will, they seem to have too much. Come and see with what energy they pursue their study, with what vigilance they investigate the smallest details, and then tell us if that is the attitude of your abstracted dreamers, asleep or biologized, whom the action of a magnetizer, accidental coincidences, or the association of ideas, places momentarily under an exclusive impression.

The principle of suggestion then, has nothing to see here. Let us no longer hear of it, and let us hear no more of the miraculous effects which, it is said, are produced by moral and muscular excitement combined with simultaneousness of action among the experimenters. This is quite another thesis, but as it has, right or wrong, been tacked on the preceding, it is proper also to demonstrate the inutility of this prudent appendage.

That the concentration of the attention augments our power, that individuals deprived of one of their senses, learn to use to better advantage those that are left them, I, in nowise, contest. Neither do I contest that strong enthusiasm or great terror occasionally develops in us extraordinary forces. In short, that the harmony of movement established between several persons, permits them to obtain results to which they would not reach if their acts were in opposition, is a fact of daily experience. Let us mention also, if you please, an example taken from the biological experiments, of the resistance that is opposed by a feeble arm to a very heavy weight. What application will you make of these uncontested observations.

Biological rigidity does not exist with us, nor the biological phenomenon in any degree whatever, since we are at the antipodes of the automatic state and the torpidity of the will.

Neither have the enthusiasms and the terrors which create exceptional powers (I try to reply to the objection without laughter), any existence in our chain. Sometimes we do not even succeed in effecting simple rotations, and in our moments of greatest success we vainly seek to accomplish that which is mechanically most easy.

The principal argument yet remains, the only one which bears the semblance of probability :—the operators develop an immense force when the concentration of the attention meets with perfect simultaneity of motion.

An *immense* force ! No. It is a force the measure of which is perfectly well known. Every day we see laborers at work with a concentrated attention and with irreproachable unity of purpose ; sailors, employed at the capstan, accompanying themselves with songs or shouts in order to assure harmony of effort ; now, these men know almost to a fraction, what power they will develop, notwithstanding their concentrated will and their harmony. They do not expect prodigies, and they are right. Not only do they act within the known limits of human powers, but they perfectly appreciate the work they are

called upon to perform ; their muscular tension in nowise escapes them, and it is the same with the most animated blacksmith as he strikes his anvil ; he pants for breath, sweat stands in drops upon his brow, he can do no more. What we add to an ordinary power by attention and harmony, what we take from it by a consciousness of effort, is confined within such limits as to compel us to renounce the idea of prodigies from it. It would be otherwise in the biological or somnambulic state, in a state of hallucination, of convulsive excitement, of mental alienation, properly so called ; in these conditions, phenomena are accomplished which suppose an extraordinary power and insensibility. But such is not the condition of our experimenters ; I refer to my fundamental distinction and pass on.

Besides, our adversaries would have made but little progress, even though they were able to demonstrate that concentrated attention and simultaneity of motion could account for the rotations of the table and the elevation of weights with which it is charged. They do not account for that, more than for other facts not less certain, but which have been carefully excluded. I will cite the numbers indicated from the thought and the motions without contact. It would be far too convenient to be allowed to declare as true, all the facts which we believe ourselves capable of explaining, and to declare as false or entirely pass over in silence, all those of which we can furnish no positive explanation.

I have been anxious to reply with care to the most minutely and distinctly stated objection, and which is, in many respects, the most ingenious of any offered against us. This I owed to the distinguished men who have drawn it up, and recommended its serious discussion. And now that I have sought to appreciate this remarkable theory, I desire to present two general reflections upon the attacks which have been directed against us by the men of science.

The first will apply to a claim they seem to put forward since they have perceived that the violent attempt to sup-

press the discussion is not entirely successful. From a sentiment which does them honor, they would persuade us and persuade themselves that they have not refused to study the Turning Tables. "Behold !" they exclaim, "the most eminent men are occupied in the investigation ; several members of the Edinburgh University have deigned to examine the thing ; Doctor Holland, Doctor Carpenter have written on the subject ; M. Faraday has invented his indicators ; M. Arago, M. Babinet, M. Mousson, M. Chevreul have published special treatises thereupon.

Yes, M. Arago has spoken of Animal Magnetism ; M. Carpenter has admitted the Turning Tables into his biological considerations ; M. Chevreul reserves a place for them in his work on the divining rod ; M. Faraday and M. Babinet have proclaimed our absurdity. That is true, and we should, without doubt, feel a lively gratitude for the honor. Might they not have purely and simply condemned us without judge or jury ? Methinks I hear the wolf reproaching the stork for his ingratitude :

" And is it not enough
Your neck is safe from such a gulf?"

That is indeed something, and it would be ungrateful in us to complain.

If, however, I might venture another observation, I would remark that essays written in refutation are not studies ; they are, ordinarily, quite the reverse. When persons who have seen nothing, who have not consecrated any considerable portion of their energy and time to the experiments, who have, perhaps, only assisted at a few ridiculous rotations of round tables, when such persons take up the pen and set themselves at work to expose theories and rebuke those who have fairly experimented, I do not think that they study.

I believe that no one ever studies that, which *à priori* he declares to be stupid. If attacks are studies, then I grant you

studies are not wanting, and I may add they never will be wanting. At the period when the Academy of Medicine buried the report of M. Husson and proclaimed what the whole of Europe is obstinately bent on calling a refusal to examine, there appeared every morning an article against Animal Magnetism, every morning it was declared that the partisans of Magnetism were imbecile, and explanatory systems were proposed. If that was to study, I will admit that the Turning Tables also have been studied, for they have not been spared either abuse or theories. Everything has been granted them except the favor of observing, of experimenting, of listening, and of reading.

At two different times, with an interval of a month between, have they been notified (without opposition from any quarter), that *l'Institut* would cast aside among the rubbish, all communications relative to the tables ; that it is not obliged to occupy itself with nonsense, that there is a place reserved for lucubrations of this nature, the place to which are consigned the papers on perpetual motion.

If that is not called a refusal to examine, I no longer know the signification of words in good French. I would really like to be informed to what point our adversaries would find themselves at liberty, in a case where their own works were thus treated. Would they be strongly persuaded that the rights of discussion were respected, because the trouble was taken to refute or abuse them without examination, without reproducing their experiments ? For my part, I doubt it. Books and articles written against the tables do not prove to me that they are studied. They prove only one thing, that their opponents know them to be full of life and vigor, in spite of the anathemas hurled against them. They have often been killed and they will often be killed again. *Studies* of this description will multiply. I have no fear in predicting it, and I add that we shall persist in affirming of people who study after this fashion (behold our obstinacy!) that they are determined not to study.

We come now to my second remark :

Explanatory theories have a marvellous power of admitting facts at pleasure. Those, even, which but yesterday excited the smiles of a supercilious incredulity, those, the recital of which could not be endured, and at which we scarcely consented to glance, those which were regarded as radically and necessarily false in spite of proof, become certain the instant we believe ourselves prepared to explain them, without introducing into Holy Science, that abomination of desolation, fluids directed by the will. The doors, so long closed, turn all at once on their hinges ; the magic formula has been pronounced, the *Open Sesame* has resounded. As soon as facts come within the pale of systems, they are permitted to exist.

A year ago, scientific men would have laughed heartily, if any one had spoken to them of biological phenomena, of the man who becomes incapable of acting because told that he is, of the man who remains glued to his chair, because given to understand that he cannot detach himself from it—of the man who feels that he is burnt, because some one declares to him that the table he touches is burning hot ! At present, they no longer laugh. Why ? because the things are better proved ? No ; because they are explained.

Under the liberal influence of this sentiment, they accept some of the assertions of Animal Magnetism : they believe, for example, in the somnambulists, who repeat the whole of a song in a tongue the first word of which they do not understand, in those whom an absolute insensibility protects against impressions foreign to their dominant preoccupation, in those who correct an entire page of writing from which they are separated by a screen. If, to-morrow, some one shall succeed in reconciling the displacement of the senses, sight at a distance, and the penetration of the thought with orthodox theories, the day after to-morrow, it will all be held as demonstrated and evident.

The question then, is not one of experiments but of doctrines. Those whose experiments have been thrown into the basket will find some consolation in this thought. Their assertions are less considered than the tendency of those assertions. Who knows

if there will not soon spring up some explanatory theory, under patronage of which these very assertions will in their turn be admitted?

Meanwhile, the *principle of suggestion* has rendered us a true service; with a blow of its wand, it has made evident that which before passed for absurd. I am almost disposed to testify my gratitude by acknowledging that it is in itself, truer than I had at first imagined. Seeing the preoccupation of our adversaries on the subject of the tables, and the facility with which they lend themselves successively to all the ideas which have been *suggested* against them, to the disks of M. Faraday, the incipient motions of M. Babinet, the tendency to motion of M. Chevreul, the automatic passivity of Messrs. Braid and Carpenter, I am tempted to confess that they furnish an illustrious but unique example of a relationship between the dominant idea, and the principle of suggestion.

The suspected branches of science then have taken one step forward, and it will not be the last. Men as distinguished in character as in talent, men whose word carries authority, have introduced the enemy within the walls. The most valiant defenders of Ilion have taken the wooden horse and dragged it as a trophy across the breach. They have not remarked the sound of arms issuing from the flanks of the monster. They have not remarked that the phenomena now received with honorable alacrity, embrace perhaps, the proscribed doctrine of the fluids at the service of the will.

I am sorry to be always thus compelled to recall the mixed character of the new phenomena. This is the great scandal, this is the stumbling-block. I am not ignorant of it—but what can I do? Is it my fault that the question is not one of simple exaltation of the nervous system? that the physical agent developed obeys, independently of us, the direction of our thought?

Here follows the inevitable objection: “You cannot act except in willing, you cannot will except in believing; conse-

quently, you exact that we start from faith to arrive at faith. This is arguing in a circle."

There is no sentence more triumphantly and more frequently repeated ; nor is there one more false. We know wonderfully well, that the only legitimate point of departure is doubt. We commenced by doubting, and we neither direct nor counsel any one to commence by believing. When have we pretended that our experiments were arrested by the presence of a single incredulous witness ?

We have stated, and this is a very different thing, that in a phenomenon where the moral plays an essential rôle, success is difficult or impossible in proportion as the minds of the operators are tinged by skepticism or discouragement. Our own experience corroborates this assertion, for at the commencement of our sittings, we were never able to obtain even a simple rotation, until the day, when friends worthy of credence announced to us that they had obtained it.

What consequences then should be inferred from this susceptibility which so much afflicts our adversaries ? That incredulous people ought not figure in the number of witnesses ? Certainly not. On the contrary, their place is marked out for them, and it is there they are converted. But it is proper that their presence should not be considered of any importance, that it should even be ignored as much as possible. It is proper that they should look on without speaking ; especially, that they should not enter upon any controversy with the operators, or set themselves up as public censors and directors of the operations, from which they are afterwards to draw whatever conclusion they may deem legitimate. Do we demand too much ?

It is likewise proper that no one, on his entrance into a chain, should become an actor until after having seen enough of the manifestations to prepare him to admit the reality of the fact, or until after having firmly resolved not to oppose the experiments, but to co-operate in them right loyally.

It is plainly to be seen, then, that there is nothing here resembling a circle.

The mixed character of the phenomenon gives rise to still more difficulties. We are reproached for not always succeeding, for not succeeding with everybody.

I might indeed have the satisfaction of replying, that to succeed occasionally, is in itself something ; that to elevate masses, and to communicate motion at a distance, little as it may be, it is by no means an insignificant result. I might answer like that prisoner whom the Baron d'Adrets reproached with having three times shrunk back from the fatal leap over the rocks of Mornas : " M. le Baron, I give you ten times to do the same thing."

We would give ten or a hundred times to our spiritual scoffers. It would, without doubt, be agreeable to us that things should proceed more regularly, that everybody should have equal success, that the operators should every day possess equal power, that at the precise instant when the hands are placed upon the table, we should always obtain as many motions without contact as we desired ; that the state of the health, the moral condition, the impression produced by the witnesses, should have no influence. If the phenomenon were different, it would manifest itself differently. But, it seems to me, that not being able to change it, we shall do well to take the thing as it is.

There is, moreover, nothing strange in these modifications, since the question concerns an agent that comes from man. Man is not a thermometer, rising and falling according to the temperature of the weather ; he is not a magnetic needle, which turns invariably towards the same point. Doubtless it is a pity, and it would be well to find a remedy. At the rate in which things are progressing, I do not absolutely despair ; originality is disappearing, and spontaneous convictions are taking their departure ; the individual vanishes behind the species, we approach the man-machine as nearly as possible.

Nevertheless, let us not delude ourselves. Man runs a great risk of preserving to the end some few of the inconveniences of his mixed nature ; his functional operations will never be

performed with mathematical precision ; he will never equal a thermometer or a mariner's compass. His physical acts will continue to be modified by moral sentiments ; bad news will interfere with his digestion ; an emotion will accelerate the beatings of his heart.

It is not, then, so scandalous as has been represented, that the liberation of our physical agent should be impeded by analogous causes, and science would with a bad grace make of it a pretext to exclude from its studies the facts we have signalized. These variable facts are none the less facts. Even the exceptional facts are none the less facts. The fluid, though it were emitted by only one person in ten, and one time in ten, would lose none of its rights to figure in the number of physical agents. Science worthy of the name would grant it a place ; she would not believe herself authorized deliberately to maintain a hiatus in the enumeration and description of phenomena.

What would become of us were we always to discard the phenomena which are not always produced in the same manner ? Remark, moreover, that I have singularly exaggerated the inequalities opposed to us. Far from there being but one person in ten who possesses influence over the table, I think there is not one person in ten entirely devoid of it. And what I say of persons, I say also of sittings ; those which fail are few in number, and the most unsuccessful, furnish in themselves results to confound all their opponents.

This is not a question of isolated cases, accidents, chance encounters ; it is a question of phenomena, the normal and universal character of which we cannot contest. Take, in fact, ten or twelve persons at random, it is probable that, if they are believers and have perseverance, you will at least obtain the rotations and elevations without contact. As regards the more difficult experiments, which exact a very abundant fluidic power, they will doubtless not succeed unless the chain includes some experienced operators ; the fluid, however, exists in the ordinary as in the extraordinary experiments, and the success of the last, has precisely the effect of reacting on the first, and guaranteeing their reality.

As a general thing, young and very healthy men develop an appreciable quality of fluid. Is that a fact to neglect? Neglect then, and for a stronger reason, the electricity with which certain animals are furnished, the torpedo, for instance ; it is exceptional ! Neglect or deny the electricity developed in the hair of some persons, but which does not show itself equally in all ! Reject the anesthetic action of ether because there are persons whom you have not been able to etherize.

Nothing would be less philosophical than to reduce science to a few invariable phenomena. M. Husson said this at the time of the great discussions on magnetism, much better than I can say it. It is pleasant for me here to shelter myself behind the authority of one of the most distinguished and most excellent men whom I have ever known. The Academy of Medicine had discoursed out of sight the failure of two experiments ! M. Husson, therefore, begged his colleagues to inform him how long it had been permitted to draw from two particular facts a universal conclusion. "It is well known that nothing is more variable and inconstant," added he, "than magnetic effects ; and it is this inconstancy, this variableness, which prevents so many persons from turning their attention to the tables. What, might we ask, are the facts in the practice of medicine, in therapeutics, in physiology, that are always fixed and immutable ?"

I, in my turn, ask the same question ; and as our results are infinitely more uniform and more general than those of the magnetizers, I have little fear that any one, after reflection, will insist upon the irregularity of the phenomenon.

We are in the heart of the debate ; let us not yet dismiss it. The mixed character of the facts which I establish gives rise to a new objection. It would seem, indeed, in view of these invincible repugnances, that we are not ourselves mixed

beings, and that my opponents do not carry within them the problem of the reciprocal influence exercised by the physical and the moral ! It is not worth your while to expel the tables, if you keep this influence within you.

Now, look at it closely : your brain, your nerves, your muscles, have they never any action over your thought and over your will ? Your soul, is it not united to a body ; so united, that, although it may have an independent existence between death and the resurrection without the body, yet it constantly aspires to complete itself until such time as the whole man, the physical man and the moral man, shall find himself for all eternity in presence of the Saviour, in whom he has believed ? Take, then, your part in a reconciliation which must endure eternally. It is well to recall this to the minds of the not very Christian Spiritualists, who desert the Gospel to return to philosophy, who substitute the immortality of the soul for the resurrection, and who, identifying the flesh with evil, almost succeed in making salvation depend on the separation of the soul from the body. "The body returns to the earth and the soul to God : " this is the fashionable funeral oration. To break with sin, nothing more is required of us than to die !

It is thus that false Spiritualism abolishes or nearly abolishes the necessity of faith in a Redeemer, by rejecting the immortal union of soul and body. The mixed phenomenon every where intruding, is proscribed, first, in the domain of science, then, in the future life. As for me, who am more materialist, and who am so with Jesus Christ, I simply bear in mind, that man such as God has made him, and such as God wills that he should forever be, is composed of a body and a soul. The scandal then is by no means ready to cease.

"But," they remonstrate, "we acknowledge the existence of man and his interior constitution. That the physical and moral there meet, and may even there combine for all eternity, is not the point we contest. What revolts and terrifies us, is that a relation should be established between the moral nature

of man and the physical which is external to and independent of him. Here I am in presence of inert matter, and my will communicates to it a motion.

Is that very extraordinary? Let us examine.

I begin with inviting you to observe that the matter external to us acts upon our moral nature. * The dispositions of my soul are modified by peculiar conditions of the atmosphere, its heat or cold, its dryness or moisture. Electricity, Animal Magnetism, exercise over us an influence which is not to be contested although as yet badly studied.

This is not all. Our will makes itself felt by the material objects with which we are surrounded. Here is a poor steel pen, inert and inanimate, conducted by my fingers in every direction, because my will exacts it, and because my thoughts furnish to me a series of arguments wherewith to oppose you. Is this less "terrific" than the impulsions communicated to my table? I cannot believe it. We are more accustomed to the one than to the other, that is all. The muscles are not more easy to put in play than a fluid, and I freely declare to you, that if I am unconscious of the emission of a fluid and the directions given to it when it raises a table, neither have I the least consciousness of the numberless orders addressed to my fingers, orders, in virtue of which, the inert matter of the pen obeys my will in a manner absolutely incomprehensible.

"But you pretend to produce a motion, to produce it even at a distance!" Very well! does not the electric fluid make needles move that are quite distant from it? Is not attraction exercised at a distance? Do we not all submit to its influence? does it not even make itself felt between our globe and the stars, the light of which takes several years to reach us? Does not Animal Magnetism stiffen bodies, and render them insensible without touching them?

My opponents seize hold of my last example. There lies the difficulty! They understand material action exercised near by or at a distance: they cannot understand material action engendered by the will. Listen to M. Foucault. "If the day should

come when a bit of straw could be made to stir by the action of my will alone, I should be frightened . . . If the influence of mind upon matter does not die away upon the surface of the epidermis, there is no longer any security for us in the world. . . ”

Let us well understand this. “The action of my will alone,” will never move a bit of straw, and I should participate in the terrors of M. Foucault were the thing otherwise. We need give ourselves no uneasiness : we are only called upon to move a bit of straw by the impulsion or attraction of a fluid. This is the manner of the operation : I will a certain elevation of an inert object ; my will determines the emission and the direction of the fluid ; the fluid effects the elevation.

This is a little less frightful, my will, in no case, breaking through the surface of the epidermis. It is true that the fluid sent by my will, is permitted to pass through it ! This is the constant history of our action upon exterior objects. It is not more improper for the fluidic force that is in me to act externally, than for my muscles to communicate a motion which is transmitted by degrees. I strike a blow with my fist, and inert matter is shaken ; I breathe, and inert matter is blown away ; I impel or attract fluidically, and inert matter obeys. In each case, my will has commanded, and exterior objects have been reached ; they have been reached by an agent, not by the will itself.

And this is not limited to mechanical impulsions. Other forces traverse the epidermis, and communicate with what is external to it. I place my hand upon a bit of ice ; immediately, the caloric within me, provokes in the ice a universal movement of expansion and disaggregation. Yet my muscles are not in play.

Now, that I have reassured M. Foucault, I have a great mind to make him afraid. “There is no more security for us,” has he written. * To-day, you make the tables turn : to-morrow, you will shake the foundations of my house, and thus you may go on step by step, until the jest of the four invalids attacking the column on the *place Vendôme* will not even have the merit of

exaggeration." Alas ! these calamities have been threatening us longer than M. Foucault imagines. Long before the Turning Tables made themselves known, the column *Vendôme* was exposed to the treachery of the invalids. That they may lift it by means of a vast fluidic chain and wills sufficiently concentrated, I do not deny, but they may also shake its foundations by sufficiently powerful kicks, or better yet, by means of a magnet, sufficiently large. Our houses, our strong boxes, and our very persons, run similar perils ; the absolute impossibility of displacing them has never existed and will never exist. Our security is not based on the pretended impenetrability of the epidermis, but upon the disproportion between the forces that continually penetrate beyond it at the call of the will, and the bad deeds to be undertaken. I venture to affirm that the new phenomenon will not seriously disturb those relations, and that fluidic action no more than muscular action, will compromise the stability of the monuments which embellish our public squares.

The terrible reply I am about to draw down upon me, already sounds in my ears. "Hitherto," say they, "we have been willing to humor your fancy, or compassionate your ignorance : we have allowed you to speak of fluids. But now, you must know that this is old and has passed out of fashion. Some years ago, indeed, our treatises on physics enumerated the four imponderable fluids : terrestrial magnetism, electricity, light, heat ; but *we have changed all that*. Men of science, at the present time, have a marked disposition to do completely without these fluids, and ere long, their removal will be decided upon. Thus all your reasoning amounts to nothing, we take away its base. You have chosen precisely the moment to argue for fluid action, when all fluid action is going out of existence. You must admit that you are unlucky !"

It is thus I am to be crushed, and an end put to these troublesome discussions.

"Traitor, you reserved that blow for the last !"

The blow, however, is not so formidable as it seems, and I shall endeavor to submit to it with becoming fortitude. It is impossible for me not to remark, in the first place, that the very expediency of the scientific revolution thus announced, causes it to be suspected. Its authors were menaced on all sides by the fluids; their work was always to be done and done again; yesterday, the fluid of the magnetizers—to-day, the fluid of the turners of the tables—to-morrow, perhaps, the single fluid, of which all others will seem to be only transformations. It is natural enough for them to say, "We will remove from our path all these disquieting and inconvenient theories. They have one thing in common, that they put forward the fluids; well, then, let us roundly deny the fluids, and we shall hear no further from the rest."

I regret to disturb such dreams of quietude and delightful security; but a change of words will not create a change in things: real phenomena will obstinately continue to be produced, and in erasing the fluids from your dictionary, you will have gained absolutely nothing. You will employ the term *force*, we will employ it with you; you will say, *agent*—we will also say *agent*; you will have recourse to this paraphrase, *particular state of inert matter*—we willingly adopt it.

"It is not that," exclaim our adversaries; "in abolishing the fluids, we intend to do more than get rid of a word, we deny the thing itself; now, you have need of a *substance*, of a distinct, material object which is disengaged in certain circumstances, which is communicated and acts externally; consequently, the new theory gives you the mortal blow!"

I reply that this is a complete error. A *force* suits us as well as a *substance*, a *state of matter* as well as a *force*. What signifies it to us! A force analogous to those which have been hitherto called by the name of magnetic fluid or electric fluid, communicates motion to distant objects, we do not need more. Matter within us is enabled, under certain circumstances, to exercise at a distance an attraction, or communicate an impulsion; thus modified it acts upon the nervous system of such persons,

or moves such tables as our will may designate : this is perfectly sufficient for us.

It is even possible, and I frankly confess it, that this language is more conformed to the truth than that we ourselves have selected, and that there is indeed something incorrect in the idea generally associated with the word *fluid*. It is very true, that in thus speaking, we ordinarily form the idea of a particular substance, a subtle, imponderable body, which proceeds from, enters within us, travels and works. I am not unwilling to think that nature is less complicated than we make it, that matter submits to modifications, acquires properties, exercises powers, and that the nervous system, on its side, becomes capable, under certain conditions, of acting independently of us, upon persons or upon inert objects.

This established, I declare myself indifferent to the choice of arms—to the choice of words, shall I say? Substance, force, vibration, let it be what you choose, provided it be something. And upon this point I am at ease ; the phenomena of magnetism, or those of motion without contact, will not be transformed into a myth.

And in the mean time, while waiting for the new language to become fixed, I will continue, if I may be allowed the privilege, to make use of the old. The reader who meets everywhere in this book the expressions, *fluid and fluidic action*, will know that I do not attach to them any decidedly heretical idea, or any idea suspected of heresy. I am satisfied with a shorter and equally suitable term which designates the physical agent, whatever it may be, whether a particular body or a simple force, the presence of which is occasionally manifested in us, and which our nervous system puts at the disposition of our will.

But, 'tis exactly there lies the evil ! Precisely there do they detect the marvellous, that which departs from the ordinary laws of the physical world. I have heard men of superior intelligence, men who were convinced by our experiments of the

truth of our assertions, yet express a sort of apprehension of this order of facts. They preferred not to raise the veil ; inert matter submissive to the human will, was instinctively repugnant to them. It seemed to their eyes that the independence of the moral being was put in jeopardy, and that we were about to launch ourselves upon a sea where everything would be confounded, bodies and souls, natural and supernatural.

I have great respect for scruples of this nature ; they spring from a noble jealousy for spiritual things. And I also, should experience similar feelings, if this were not a question of purely physical phenomena. I should have a horror of enlarging the empire of the human will, by means of rotations and crossings of the fingers, for to enlarge it thus is to diminish, to deny it. I should especially have a horror of encroaching the least in the world, and by similar processes, upon the ground of acts which exceed our power. This would be an entire subversion of the moral and Divine order.

But I cannot refrain from a smile, when certain adversaries, not content with expressing the vague apprehension to which I have just rendered homage, and which it will not take long to dissipate, exclaim with an air of defiance, " Well, then, perform miracles, cure the palsy, raise the dead ! "

Those who hold such language have probably never read an account of a miracle. I invite them to cast their eyes upon the eleventh chapter of the Gospel according to St. John. " Then they took away the stone from the place where the dead was laid. And Jesus lifted up his eyes, and said, Father, I thank thee that thou hast heard me : And I know that thou hearest me always : but because of the people which stand by, I said it, that they may believe that thou hast sent me. And when he had thus spoken, he cried with a loud voice, Lazarus, come forth. And he that was dead came forth, bound hand and foot with grave-clothes ; and his face was bound about with a napkin. Jesus saith unto them, loose him, and let him go."

" Lazarus, come forth ! and he that was dead came forth." " Let there be light ! And there was light." The two acts are

of the same character, and the same voice proclaimed the two orders. A miracle is a manifestation of the Divine will, which is immediately obeyed. He speaks, and life follows His words. Now, with what face, under what pretext, in what way (if I dare thus express myself), will they bring about a relation between our experiments and miracles? My will disposes of a fluid which God has put within me; this fluid obeys my directions, just as my muscles obey them; like them, it communicates an impulsion to an exterior object. I seek the miraculous, I do not find it here.

For a long time past, many more surprising things than this have been done, which are yet not miraculous. Although galvanism may animate a corpse, yet its miserable starts are not life; and when the operation is terminated, we see plainly that death is still there. Although ether and magnetism act on the nervous system, suppressing the suffering or even curing the malady, have we any right to infer that the remedy is miraculous? Most assuredly not. Miracles would indeed be numerous, if all the curative acts, from medical treatment properly so called, down to simple words (for good news often brings about a salutary revolution), could be classed under that head.

Between miracles and curative processes of all descriptions, there is an abyss; for a miracle is characterized by the absence of every curative process within the range of man. A word of God, a will of God, that is its only origin.

If you now call upon me to abandon common-place notions, and reason philosophically, I will acknowledge that in relation to God, miracle is everywhere (or nowhere if you prefer it). A remedy does not cure except God wills it; our harvests do not ripen except God wills it; we are only protected against the thousand dangers of ordinary life, because God wills it. To pray to God, to ask his protection, to recommend the sick to his tender mercies, to implore his benediction on our projects, on our country, upon mankind in general, is to demand miracles, that is to say, sovereign acts of the Supreme will. But the distinction which could not exist in relation to

God, does exist in relation to man. God even ordained it when he willed that miracles should be one of the signs destined to establish to ocular witnesses the mission of his prophets, of his apostles, of his own son. In relation to man, miracles begin where the application of ordinary laws and means put at his disposal, ceases. Man has never raised the dead ; man has never opened the eyes of one blind from his birth ; man has never by a single word restored health to the palsied. In reference to this, you may consult the annals of medicine, of magnetism, and throw into the bargain, the prodigies, present and future, of the Turning Tables.

There is not only a difference of degree, there is an absolute dissimilarity. Does any one wish to be assured of this ? Let him take the trouble to read some of the books written by Paulus, or by other rationalists who sought to expunge the miracles from the Gospels. They represented Jesus as a well-meaning impostor, endowed with prodigious ability and unheard of medical skill. In each case the curative processes of official medicine are charged with the work of explaining the miracle or finding the substitute for it. Jesus foresaw the moment when the lame man would recover the use of his limbs, and a few magnetic passes, under pretext of an imposition of hands, completed the crisis ; Jesus comprehended that the dead man was not really dead, and divining the near termination of his lethargy, he profited by his knowledge to make it coincide with his command ! In short, the evident result of so much labor so poorly employed, is to substitute for the miracles of the Gospels, miracles much more impossible and incredible, concerning the penetration and infallibility of an impostor whose diagnostics and remedies at a distance are never at fault.

This does not bear examination ; rationalist interpretations are judged, and no one at the present day commits himself to their support. The alarm, however, is still kept up, and when a table is seen to rise at our order, our opponents imagine they have a new argument against miracles. Have they well considered this. Our phenomenon does not even furnish those poor

pretexts that were sought for in medicine and in magnetism. Our fluid will give no more aid to the incredulous than has been given by the magnet which acts at a distance. My will acts by means of a magnet, my will acts by means of a fluid. An impulsion is given to inert bodies. . . . What relation, I ask, is it possible to perceive between this very simple employment of a physical agent and a miraculous act? At the side of the Saviour, who orders worlds to spring into existence, or the dead to rise, at the side of prophets and apostles who effect cures by praying to God to order the cure, dare you, indeed, place a chain of operators applying their fluid to the elevation of articles of furniture?

I should blush to insist. I would add only one last observation.

I feel called upon to protest, in conclusion, against a doctrine, the traces of which, everywhere visible, are nowhere more prominent than in the objection I have just examined. I can easily conceive of it in the mouth of those who have no faith, either in the actual occurrence of the phenomenon of Turning Tables, or in our judgment or veracity; error is always pernicious, it may be the means of turning souls from the truths of the Gospel. But in the mouth of persons who believe that our phenomenon is real, the objection involves a principle to be deplored, one which has made great ravages in the midst of our generation; it talks of dangerous truths, truths which compromise other truths!

Faith in abstract truth is the foundation of faith in concrete truth; faith in truth itself is the foundation of faith in revealed truth. Without it we may have a taste, an attraction for certain parts of Revelation, we do not believe in them.

Fatal truths! truths that contradict each other! And yet God has placed them within her reach! He who admits such a theory does great injustice to the idea of truth. The true and the good are in strict and indissoluble correlation; the true is always useful, the false always pernicious. I know neither pernicious truth nor useful lies. I am not the man who with his hand full of truths, deems it his duty not to open it.

My faith in truth is so great ; I am so deeply convinced that it comes from God, and that it is destined to be useful to us, even at the price of a certain amount of suffering ; I so strongly love the broad light of day and the bright sunshine, that I cannot help looking upon the man who holds truth captive, as a robber who deprives humanity of a portion of its patrimony. Religious truths, political truths, scientific truths, all are good ; all without exception ; against none have we the right to pronounce this blasphemy : " Hide thyself, thou wilt do harm ; man has yet need of error and falsehood !"

It will be seen, moreover, if, in its application to the tables, the maxim which I maintain, does not receive a brilliant confirmation. I trust I shall show, that here as everywhere, truth alone has the privilege of destroying error. Error, combated by another error, triumphs easily. As long as we began our attacks on the superstition of speaking tables, by a denial of the truth of Turning Tables, we obtained but one result: the public rushed with all the more precipitancy to the evocation of the pretended spirits. Let us follow a contrary course ; let us avow, let us proclaim all that is true, and we shall soon find ourselves in a condition to destroy that which is false ; real facts will have their natural explanation, and illusions, reduced to the necessity of standing on their own basis, will not even bear the test of examination. I know of only one way to dissipate darkness; it is to let in the light.

After fatal truths, next in order are useless truths. Supposing that the phenomenon be real, what interest does it present? Turning Tables ! The story is as old as the world : it has always been in circulation ; it is revived from the Greeks !

Yes, the fact is certain, although incredible. Our adversaries, after exhausting themselves in declaring our assertions impossible, next find them much too trite and common-place. The objection, it must be admitted, could not clothe itself in a more original form. Let us not, however, be too much sur-

prised ; our age is seized with a mania : it makes its discoveries twice, once in the present, once in the past. It disinters an old phrase from some ancient author, whereby it proves conclusively that this author invented what the moderns foolishly think belongs exclusively to their creative domain. But there is a slight difference ; this ancient author did not follow out his ideas—from pure modesty, doubtless ! Indeed, there is more than one reason why we should not take these erudite fancies seriously. First, I recognize nothing as a discovery which does not give a result. The Danes visited America several centuries before Columbus, yet it was Columbus who discovered it ; ignorant people see the stars and the comets without discovering them. Secondly, it is ordinarily false that the expressions cited have the meaning afterwards attributed to them, and this is especially the case with those now referred to on the subject of the tables.

I read the other day an article from a journal which had attained the sublime of its kind. It proved to us, as Provençals, that it is a custom with the young girls of Provence to turn a sieve in forming the chain ! It piled up phrase upon phrase from the Spanish and Italian : *far girar lo staccio*,—*adivinar por tela de cedazo*, etc. According to this article, the people of the seventeenth century *turned the sieve* ; the ancient Greeks had the *koskinomancie*. You must admit that in asserting this to be “revived from the Greeks,” they have not asserted too much.

It seems, then, that this phenomenon, so surprising to us, has never surprised, and does not now surprise other people ! Provençals, Spaniards, Italians, all deem it a very simple matter that tables and sieves should turn without any touch to impel them ! It is so natural, in fact, and so extremely foolish to be astonished at it !

The truth is that not one of these quotations applies, in so far as we can judge, to the phenomenon in question. What relation is there between Turning Tables and those diabolical waltzes in which the ancient Druids made the trees and even

the enormous monumental stones of the Celtic land participate? What signifies it that the sieve was used by the sorcerers of ancient Rome in their arts of divination? The magicians of that period used to scatter on the ground the letters of the alphabet, charging with the task of designating them, either a goat, whose duty it was to strike them with its paw, a cock, that in wandering about, picked up the grains before him, or perhaps even a table, whose foot indicated the word willed! What conclusion should we draw from that? How do you suppose divination is performed, if it is not done with an alphabet, a round table, or with animals? Does all this prove that in the time of the Romans, rotations and elevations of tables were produced by the action of the chain formed above them? Very fortunately, a particular description of one of these ancient ceremonies has been preserved to us by Ammien Marcellin. (Book XXIX., chapter iii.) The point in question was to divine the name of the future emperor; general opinion designated Theodoric; the table also took pains to designate it by resting upon the different letters that formed this name, in which, however, it made a great mistake, for the emperor was Theodosius, not Theodore. But that does not apply to us. Let us see if the chain was formed, if the table referred to was moved by the sole impulsion of an invisible fluid, or by an unconscious motion. Not the least in the world. It was *moved intentionally*, and, what is more, not in asking it to turn or raise its feet; nothing further was necessary than to shake a little ring, suspended by a thread, and charged with mystic formulas. "The ring fell from point to point upon each letter, thus composing heroic verses, in suitable response to the interrogatories, . . . as we read the Pythian verses, or those that are uttered by the oracles of the Branchidæ."

That is assuredly something wonderful, and the erudition which discovers relations so luminous is well employed. The same remarks apply to the learning which hunts up equivocal phrases from Tertullian or ancient exorcisms, and then exclaims, "Behold the Turning Tables!" What patience do we

need! have they not also transformed Pythonesses into turners of tables, because they placed themselves on the tripod (round table)! Have they not demonstrated that the Hebrew prophet who condemned idols and reproached his fellow-countrymen with "consulting wood," likewise forbade them the use of Turning Tables! Once on such a fine road, it is difficult to hold up. The *spiritus percutiens* of exorcisms, is it not evidently the knocking spirit, that rascally American which at this moment is turning topsy-turvy so many minds? "Put to flight, Lord, all wicked spirits, all phantoms, and all spirits that knock (*spiritum percutientem*)."

It is, in fact, only one manner of knocking, and that old Catholic prayer, destined for the benediction of churches, is visibly preoccupied by small, mysterious blows!

As for Tertullian, it is only necessary to read the twenty-third chapter of his Apology to understand that our precise meaning cannot be attached to the phrase, very curious, by the way: "The tables divine, (*mensæ divinaire consueverunt*)."

The tables are there at the side of the "goats," and nothing proves that the tables and goats were set to turning; in one word, that there was the least analogy between the motions obtained from a goat, or communicated to a table, and the very special phenomenon with which we are at present occupied. I should rather understand, that making a false application of another word contained in the same phrase, our opponents render into "*circulatory* spells" that which translators with reason render "spells of *charlatans*."

Is not the term *circulatorius* very significant? Whence comes it that it has not been appropriated? *Circulatorius*! How plain is it that there is the actual rotation; it is described by the Fathers of the Church! This is a remarkable example of the confusion to which the external analogy of expressions conducts. A charlatan among the Romans was called *circulator*, because of the circle that magicians trace around them when performing their enchantments.

It is, then, not at all probable that the phenomenon of Turning Tables was known in former times; on the contrary, it seems

evident that what is with difficulty discovered in antiquity may be found without so much labor at any of the country fairs, where there are plenty of charlatans, who, for ten sous, will undertake to divine our destiny, either by means of a sieve, a needle, a table, or dice shook up in a horn. And suppose that it should be otherwise, suppose that the employment of small tables were not a process in some sort necessary, suppose that it has been met with in all times and in all places, suppose there exists an analogy between the ancient fact and the fact immediately concerning us, what conclusion shall we draw from it?—that this is deprived of interest? that it does not profoundly modify physics and physiology? that we are permitted to leave such a law without the pale of science? Such a conclusion would be strange indeed. It would seem far more logical to maintain that it is the duty of science to look into the matter, even going as far back as the time of Tertullian. As for me, I shall be less exacting. I demand only, that it open its eyes to this brilliant light, suddenly thrown on the experiments of Animal Magnetism. Motion without contact communicated to inert matter, also announces the existence of a material agent, and no longer permits us to imprison magnetism in the circle of effects purely physiological.

The discovery will be none the less important for having been revived from the Greeks.

And yet, there is no lack of those who repeat, "To what purpose do we occupy ourselves with such nonsense? What service will a physical law render to society? Of what use is it?"

"Of what use is it!" I should have been surprised if this objection had not been produced. It is entirely conformed to the utilitarian tendencies of an age in which money plays the first rôle, in which statesmen look at the precious treasure twice before letting it go, even though the Bourse of Paris and the 'Change of London knit their brows.

I shall not pause to prove that utilitarianism takes a wrong road, and that in attacking truth, it turns its back on utility. That would be to resume the preceding discussion. I simply recall the facts. No one is ignorant that the sophistry sanctioned at the present day, proclaims a long series of useless, even hurtful truths and advantageous lies. In matters of religion, for example, they entreat us not to communicate certain truths to the people, for a bad use would be made of them ! They request us to treat tenderly, certain wide-spread errors, certain superstitions, not less gross than those of the knocking spirits ; they encourage the devoutness of the peasantry, they oppose barriers to socialism, they perform the office of *gendarme* over their strong boxes !

The reader knows if I exaggerate, and if men, utterly indifferent to these matters as far as they themselves are concerned, do not become champions of creeds and practises, at which they even shrug their shoulders, but which they, nevertheless, consider as admirably adapted for the security of society.

It is impossible to carry to greater excess the contempt for truth, the ignorance of its sacred rights and of its admirable privilege. Yet it would ill become the Turning Tables to get angry, when the same treatment is applied to them as to religion. Hurtful truth, according to some ; unprofitable truth, according to others ; it should ere this have become accustomed to answer the famous : " Of what use is it ?"—the favorite argument of *practical* men.

The color rushes to my face when I hear it said. There have been periods full of enthusiasm for a religious doctrine ; there have been periods in which both body and soul have been given up to the conquest of public liberties ; there have been periods, in which the human heart has been stirred to its inmost depths by the love of knowledge, of civilization, of progress in every direction. But we, at the present day, skeptical and undeceived, we smile at these obsolete illusions, these dogmas, these liberties, this progress. Our passion is, that our income may increase, that we may make profitable speculations in railroad

stocks. Thus do we love *religion*; we accept the first with which we come in contact, that of the country: true or false, 'tis of little consequence; for religion, of whatever kind it may be, is qualified to receive the homage of the bank, and guarantees to capitalists honest security.

I really fear that Turning Tables will never render such services. I do not even foresee the moment when the physical agent that puts them in motion will have the honor of entering into the service of industry. There is no calico at the end of all this, and consequently I run the risk of being stopped in my course by the great objection: "Of what use is it?"

I might reply that electricity, at its *début*, gave no encouragement that it would be more useful. To elicit sparks from a machine, to amuse the curious, to satisfy scientific men and others whose weakness it is to love truth for itself, was not much. Now, at the present day, this poor despised electricity, this plaything of philosophical cabinets, produces an industrial and social revolution; it is restored to favor in the eyes of utilitarianism.

It would be easy to multiply examples. What was ever more useless than chemistry? What is now more useful? How many of its discoveries, which for a long time seemed only to interest amateurs of the truth, are now profitably applied in manufactures? It guides the hand of justice itself in its researches, and signalizing crimes accomplished in secret, it protects us against the deadly aim of the poisoner.

This is but a feeble outline of what has been done; but were it otherwise, would chemistry and electricity merit our disdain? Shall pure science go for nothing? Is it nothing to become better acquainted with the world we inhabit, and the laws by which it is governed? Is it nothing to open our eyes to new rays of light, and our intellects to new conceptions?

It may certainly be demanded, of what use are the perilous enterprises of the Franklins, the Bellots, and the Maclures. So many lives exposed or sacrificed in trying to open a passage that will never be opened except on geographical charts! But

it may be answered that they are more useful than the invention of a machine, or the foundation of a joint-stock company. They serve to enlarge the field of human knowledge ; they serve especially to make our generation inhale some puffs of heroism, a most salubrious and life-giving air.

Of what use is it to count the stars ? of what use to make catalogues of plants ? of what use the loquacity of the tribune ? of what use the lucubrations of thinking minds ? of what use the fancies of poets ? of what use are speech-makers, writers, men of science, theorists, "ideologists ?" Of what use is anything which produces neither coal, nor thread, nor fabrics ?

Indeed, the useless is precisely the most beautiful portion of our patrimony in this world. Make up the balance sheet of human fortune, and you will find that the great benefits, the durable benefits have come from that which is useless. Useless people, thinkers, talkers, and poets have made their country grow, prosper and endure. The most insignificant countries have become great in consequence of possessing such people. True and imperishable nationality is founded on these contemptible trifles, words, rhymes, ideas. Greece has lived because of her philosophers, her writers, and her artists ; she has remained alive even after her death, because of them ; because of them she has revived, and will revive again, in spite of political protestations to the contrary. It is true, she enrolled in her cause that other useless thing, the heroism of her children. We now find that the three hundred who died at Thermopylæ, did not make a bad calculation. Never was victory equal to such a defeat, and men who can die thus, never entirely succumb.

We make a great descent from this height in coming back to Turning Tables. Nevertheless, the question is at bottom, the same. The tables are of no use ! Be it so, they are resigned to their fate. These, for the present, are their only claims :

They have given rise to a debate which will not be lost, for a brutal suppression of the facts observed has been attempted, but in vain. As times go, this is an important result. Thought

has given some signs of life ; devotion to truth, independence of character have manifested some energy.

Behold a very real, and by no means an isolated advantage. Science has just made one step forward, one of the veils which conceal the organization of physical matter has been raised.

Whosoever has known the enjoyment derived from pure science, will not require to have the value of such a step pointed out to him. It is a real event. We shall at last penetrate into the study of those mixed phenomena, before which we have hitherto shamefully recoiled. An immense gap still exists in our descriptions of the material world ; it is about to be gradually filled up.

Now, whether our agent be Animal Magnetism or something widely distinguished from it, is of little importance. In either case, we are at the entrance of a path, on which we shall rapidly advance.

Has this phenomenon any relation to magnetism, as the greater portion of the facts observed seem to indicate ? Then a great light is shed upon magnetic discoveries, the presence of a material fluid is put beyond doubt, many contested assertions receive a confirmation as brilliant as unexpected. It becomes in truth, impossible to attribute exclusively to the nerves and the imagination, the phenomena that manifest themselves under the influence of the magnetizers ; the tables have neither imagination nor nerves, yet they obey, when they are not touched.

If, contrary to all experience, the analogy were only apparent, and our experiments consequently, had nothing in common with those of magnetism, their interest would not be diminished. We should still remain in presence of an immense fact : the human will disposing of a physical agent which it directs, and by means of which it puts inert bodies in motion.

I do not know what men of science require, if such an indication be not sufficient to excite them ! *What a field for labor and discovery ! Here all is new ; we are, I repeat, at the

entrance of an avenue, and we do not yet know whither it will lead us. This is certainly something to tempt serious investigations. The entire class of phenomena in which the moral and the physical blend and react upon each other, presents itself before them. I do not see in what respect the law in question is inferior to those the establishment of which does honor to modern science, to the laws of weight, magnetism, heat, light, and electricity. In our incompetent and inexperienced hands, the new fact could not be produced in all its splendor ; it waits for a true man of science to give it his attention, and it will recompense his efforts.

Thus the ridiculous and useless phenomenon of the tables will have given us, first a lesson of courage, in teaching us to brave the intolerances of discussion ; secondly, a lesson of humility, in teaching us that we do not know everything ; it will, moreover, have opened to us a door too long closed, the door of mixed facts, with which, true science will deem it an honor to become acquainted.

I seem to be bringing this portion of my work to a conclusion, and yet, I have not replied to the objection, *par excellence*, that which we meet every where, which will never be refuted, because it is founded on nothing, but which will survive all others. There are people upon whom the expenditure of reasoning is a pure loss, for they do not reason. They do not reason, neither do they read. They will not read this, yet they will judge it, they will judge it from the height of their grandeur, by means of an invincible argument. "I do not believe, because I do not believe !" This is simple, easy and peremptory. "I do not admit such things ! You lose your time in telling me your idle stories !"

The critics of this school are as old as the world. They always have existed, and they always will exist. In the time of Molière, they attacked *L'Ecole des Femmes*, and the most able men could not cope with them, for they had an admirable

response, unique but sufficient, to which there was nothing to reply. "*Tarte à la crème!*" But listen!

The Marquis. What Chevalier? do you pretend to speak well of this piece?

Dorante. Yes, I do pretend to speak well of it.

The Marquis. Zounds! I pledge you my word it is detestable.

Dorante. The security is not good. But Marquis, pray tell me your reason for thinking this comedy to be as you say.

The Marquis. Why it is detestable?

Dorante. Yes.

The Marquis. It is detestable because it is detestable.

Dorante. After that, there is nothing more to be said. It is tried and condemned. But still I pray you tell us of its faults.

The Marquis. How can I tell? I did not even give myself the trouble of listening. But indeed, I know perfectly well, that I have never seen anything so villainous. God forbid!

Elise. Say what you will, I can no more swallow that than *le potage* and *la tarte à la crème* of which Madam just now spoke.

The Marquis. Ah! *Ma foi*, yes, *tarte à la crème!* that is what I remarked; *tarte à la crème!* How much I am obliged to you madam for having brought to my memory *tarte à la crème!* Are there enough apples in Normandy for *tarte à la crème?* Zounds, *tarte à la crème!*

Dorante. Indeed, what do you mean? *tarte à la crème!*

The Marquis. Zounds, *tarte à la crème*, Chevalier.

Dorante. But again?

The Marquis. *Tarte à la crème.*

Uranie. But it seems to me he should explain his thought.

Marquis. *Tarte à la crème*, madam.

Uranie. But what do you find to criticise?

The Marquis. I. Nothing. *Tarte à la crème.*

Uranie. Ah! I give it up.

"I give it up," is soon said, but *tarte à la crème* is more serious than it would seem to be. It lies even at the root of the evil with which we have to struggle, the contempt for truth. In presence of *tarte à la crème*, there is nothing true or false. *Tarte à la crème* adopts what it fancies, and rejects what it does not fancy. It has no account to render of its reasons; it has no need to take into consideration, the reasons of others. Its opinion is fixed, its *siege is finished*. Venture not to argue with it. *Tarte à la crème.*

And what is saddest of all, it does not look nearly so bad as one might suppose. Its flippant and trifling tone impresses us with an idea of its superiority. Never venturing beyond the beaten track of generally received opinions, such as have been carefully examined and clearly defined, keeping in close proximity to "the wax and seals" it passes for being prudent and clear-sighted; from the height of its grandeur, it quizzes all sorts of "ideology," all species of "fanaticism."

Therefore, let us not sneer at it. It is a personage, we must reckon with him. Though we shall have many times repeated our demonstration, he will say it is nothing, he will refuse to see and hear, he will endeavor to crush us by his blustering disdain. If that be not sufficient, he will have recourse to another process, a systematic silence; he will reckon on our lassitude and natural fickleness. He will wait patiently for the hour when our ardor shall become exhausted. And he will not always wait in vain.

I have now taken a survey of the circle of objections that address themselves to the thing, but there are others that address themselves to the person, and these are not the least accommodating. I would say a few words in reference to them as I terminate this, the first part of my work.

And here, let me not be misunderstood. If I am personally engaged in the present debate, it is not that I have discovered anything, or that the honor of the scientific progress, thus preparing, in any way belongs to me. It is because I have had perseverance to study, and resolution to protest. I have thus drawn upon myself ill-will from various quarters, and, personifying in me the anathematized cause of Turning Tables, my opponents vie with each other in exclaiming: "We respect your character, we honor your intentions; but (when a phrase opens with a panegyric we should always expect a *but*), but we know you to be of an ardent and positive mind."

Ardent! positive! My sentence is pronounced, and there is no appeal from it. Others speak of a nature prone to excesses and chimerical tendencies. And I have not the least

disposition to laugh. I know these cries of old ; they resounded in my ears, when I ventured to maintain in the tribune, the religious liberty of my adversaries, the abolition of the slave-trade and slavery, the abolition of all parliamentary and electoral traffic. A man to whom the epithets of ardent, positive, chimerical are attached, is a dead man in these times ; he is as unfortunate as though he had been called aristocrat in 1793. The qualities esteemed among us are those recommended by the fashionable eclecticism of the day, which proclaims the famous theory of success, and declares by the mouth of M. Cousin, that prudence is the first of virtues.

It is true that at certain times, when the earth trembles and revolutions occur, one might like to find a little less prudence, and a little more ardor. It is at such moments that positive minds are not disagreeable, nor are we greatly displeased at meeting a few of those extravagant men who still caress the chimeras of principle, of justice, of constitutional forms. But they have been so carefully removed, that we are no longer surrounded by any but wise, sensible men, such as are in the habit of considering circumstances, of submitting to governmental *necessities*, and of accommodating themselves to all systems. We gather what we have sown ; positive men embarrass and sustain, prudent men do not embarrass, neither do they sustain.

I take pride, certainly, in being of an ardent and positive mind. Since it has been judged proper to hurl this word at me as a sufficient refutation (and it is entirely sufficient in the eyes of many men), I shall accept it as an adornment. Yes, it is with ardor that I have defended the cause of liberty, of Christianity. I am positive, very positive in my convictions, and I am chimerical enough to maintain a liberalism which has passed out of fashion. Though I may be ridiculed, I still, from the very depths of my soul, love political liberty ; I love commercial liberty ; I love religious liberty for others as well as for myself, and I have proved it. I love personal liberty ; and the Protestant slavery of the United States revolts, disgusts me still more than the Catholic slavery of Brazil or Cuba. A member of the Chamber of Deputies, I have carried this non-

sense so far as to render my re-election impossible, by refusing to solicit an interest with ministers.

I pass over many of my chimeras, lest I may show myself too modest. Have I not, moreover, irretrievably compromised myself in maintaining the phenomenon of the tables simply because I knew it to be true, without asking myself whether this opinion were of sufficient authority, whether it were received, whether it were not of a nature to compromise me in the eyes of *sensible* men ! What would you have ! Extravagant and positive minds always begin by saying what they think, and by looking promptly in the face the "what will the world say ?" It is an evil that cannot be cured. If you press them ever so little, they will reveal to you the most singular confidences. They pretend that chimerical people are those who aspire to found a society without principles, a nation of Philinthes, from which the Alcestes should be excluded, who substitute compromises for truth, who make war upon strong individualities, acts of independence, exclusive beliefs, who sign certain treaties of alliance between philosophy and Christianity, who desire a religion for the people and not for themselves, who make sovereign ability and the highest policy to consist in preserving themselves from those forcible convictions, which might, in some circumstances, be very inconvenient.

But they indignantly exclaim, "Do you talk of ardor, of chimerical or positive minds ? This is by no means the question ! It is your credulity we accuse !

I understand ; a Christian is necessarily credulous ! What an advantage is gained over a man when it can be said of him : "He is a clever fellow, but he believes in the Bible." You feel that consequently, he will have no trouble in believing in Turning Tables. "These heads, full of the marvellous as they are, everywhere see prodigies and miracles, sorceries, apparitions, angels, demons ; such heads as these are only too accessible to the fables recently imported into our midst."

All that is said, or at least whispered low in the ear. Well then, I must rob my adversaries of their last pretext.

Do they know in what it consists, this credulity that accepts the Bible ? To have sought, to have examined, to have struggled for years ; to have known the anguish of doubt, to have yielded at last in presence of proofs so strong, that a hundred times more credulity would have been required to reject than to accept them ; to weigh earnestly each word of the Holy books ; to humiliate the reason before the mysteries they reveal, but to refuse all admittance to mysteries that have another origin ; by what name should that be called ? I believe in all the declarations of Holy Writ ; I believe in them, and in them I find the peace of my soul, the immovable foundation on which reposes my moral being ; is this to say that my soul is thereby opened to witchcraft and legendary lore ? Truth, on the contrary, protects me against fables ; faith wards off credulity.

Ah ! Would that I could make the reader comprehend in what degree Christian faith is incompatible with the shameful, puerile inventions which superstition even now dares to circulate. Would that I could express as I feel, the disgust excited by these impure miasmata, in the man accustomed to breathe the pure air of more elevated regions, the air of the Old and New Testaments. The second part of this book will show if I have any partiality for the supernatural apocrypha, if I give easy credence to anecdotes of the marvellous, to false miracles, to spurious sorcery, or to apparitions.

My skepticism in such matters is so great that the pretension set forth by the tables to be a new revelation, rendered me at first obstinately hostile to the grand phenomena they bring to light. I confess to having shrugged my shoulders higher than any one, to having attempted the experiments with a desire to see them fail, to having contested them in all their details, in short, to having yielded my conviction only at the last extremity.

I am sorry for those whose hearts are bent upon representing me as credulous ; they have made a mistake in their man. I can give them no other advantage than that always to be derived from the assimilation of these two terms, Christian and weak-minded.

And now, leaving personal explanations, which ought not to engross too large a share of our attention, even though they are inevitable, I would ask on which side are the weak-minded and credulous men : on the side of those who fear the light, who will not see what it is, who reject facts without consenting to examine them, who cling to their positive science, to their physical laws promulgated in forms, signed and sealed, *ne varietur*, who recoil before a new law as though the world would fall to pieces the day it should cease to move "according to rule ;" or on the side of those who seek the clear light of day, who prove, who examine, who experiment, who love the truth, who believe in the truth, who are never afraid for it, persuaded as they are that it expands in proportion as man develops; like those large mountains which seem to increase in height as we ourselves ascend their sides.

This unreserved faith in truth explains why I have not paused to notice an objection, the gravest of all, which the reader is perhaps surprised that I have not yet presented, and which will serve as a natural transition from the first to the second part of my work.

"You should have abstained from meddling with this matter," it is said, "because you thus open the door to superstitions. That which is for you only a physical phenomenon, will be for the greater part of the world, a supernatural phenomenon. Turning Tables must lead and have led to speaking tables, 'tis impossible for it to be otherwise. It is not easy to arrest the course of a bark we have once set afloat. The surest way is to stifle in their birth truths that threaten to be dangerous."

I do not believe, and I hope I never shall believe in the theory of dangerous truths ; an infamous theory which was only invented to arrest all progress, to justify all despotism, to restore the crimes of the past and to prepare them in the future.

Indeed, Christianity, considered in that light, would have been first in the ranks of dangerous truths, those which a certain kind of worldly prudence would have suppressed, in order to get rid of defending them. To deny is more simple than to defend,

and cowardice finds its account in repudiating this rude duty of ours, the duty of vigilant guardians of the truth, combatants always armed against errors always springing up. Annihilate a principle, and you annihilate at the same time, all the consequences, good or bad, legitimate or illegitimate, which are some day to flow from it; cut down a tree and you kill with the same blow, the useful branches and those that, later, would require the pruning knife. The Gospel, I repeat it, should have been rejected in the times of the Apostles; prudent people would thus have been provided for. Was it not evident, from the very fact that this doctrine addressed itself to the deepest emotions of the human heart, that it could not fail to raise more storms than anything that had preceded it? Was it so difficult to foresee that it would be more fruitful than any other doctrine in heresies, in quarrels, in violence? What fanaticism, what imposture, what atrocious persecutions, what religious wars would have been spared to our poor earth, if, with a firm hand, we had repulsed this imprudent, fatal truth, named Christianity!

This truth and many others. Does not chemistry naturally have its alchemists, and astronomy its astrologers? Away then with the science of the stars and the analysis of matter! Away! we have found a means of guarding against further error; it is to have no more truths, no more sciences, no more ideas. Idiots are less deceived than we, because they think less.

I doubt if the recipe is so very sure. In my opinion, without chemistry we should still have had alchemists; without astronomy, we should still have had astrologers, and if ever superstition and religious intolerance are triumphed over, it will be by the power of religion. Truth can do no injury. Still more foolish than wicked is the doctrine of the *Obscurantistes*, whose cry is, "Renounce liberalism, for it makes radicals. Overturn the tribunes, for baleful discourses are pronounced there. Suppress the journals, for the people abuse them. Maintain slavery, for the free blacks will not work. Restrict religious freedom, for the heretics make use of it as much as the orthodox."

It would be a noble history to write, that of truth destroying,

by its single strength, all the follies that incessantly spring up under its feet. God has given it this wonderful power. A system of useful errors is a blasphemy and an impiety. Moral evil in our hearts, is only vanquished by revealed truth ; social evil will only be vanquished by social truths. True liberalism will triumph over radical tendencies, and it is reserved for true political economy to destroy the social dogmas that an inadequate science has accredited.

To return to the special question with which we are occupied, if the world, in the middle of the nineteenth century, would not present to Europe the shameful spectacle of a return to the sorceries of the Middle Ages, there is not a moment to lose ; science is called upon to do her work, to study and to exhibit facts, to recoil no longer before new truths. Truth, here as everywhere, now as always, will be the great remedy. The tables are abused, turn your attention to the tables ! The real nature of the phenomenon is perverted, study the phenomenon, and establish its nature. There is neither magic nor sorcery which can resist a scientific inquiry sincerely disposed to take into consideration all the facts.

We have made the experiments. There is as much superstition at Valleyres as elsewhere ; there is as much curiosity, and the temptation to try the hand at divination, to plunge into the supernatural is not less strong. This place where so many tables have turned, is not in the least haunted by spirits. Our intellects, excited by a persevering investigation, have not been for one single instant inclined to the marvellous. Why not ? Because we have looked truth in the face, and because truth, taken in earnest, has protected us. The more strongly our faith concerning the physical agent that impels the tables, was confirmed by facts, the less inclined were we to believe in diabolical explanations. Whoever shall have seen with his own eyes, the development of a natural law, will consider the idea that demons, in any way, participate therein, as utterly absurd. But if we had followed a different course from the one pursued by us, if we had yielded to academic suggestions, if we had attempted to

deny the action of a fluid ; then, the facts subsisting in spite of our denial, it would have been necessary to resort to another method of accounting for them. We should have had our mysteries and our evocations.

Far from this being the case, we have not been able to comprehend how it is, that men, in other respects enlightened, could have abandoned themselves to such aberrations. Everything is so natural, so physical in the experiments of the tables ! when we take them in their true relations, we feel ourselves, we see ourselves in the midst of material science. Strange spirits, you must admit, they whose presence depends on a rotation, on heat or cold, health or sickness, on the animation or lassitude of a troop of unconscious magicians ! I have a head-ache or the *grippe* (influenza) ; then we shall have no visit from the demons to-day !

There is something more powerful against newborn superstitions than the mandates of the bishops, which have so long abounded ; it is to study and proclaim the physical truth that manifests itself with so much brilliancy. If, pursuing a contrary course, the world shall persist in contesting without having seen, in scoffing without knowing why ; if it multiplies scientific and religious anathemas without deigning to cast its eyes upon facts ; if it envelop the whole in a dense cloud of vague terrors and badly defined suspicions, the flood of ridiculous credulities will at last succeed in overwhelming us. The history of the past few months can leave no doubt in this respect, and nothing but the intervention of the police can protect us against the establishment of a faith in these new prodigies.

Such is the conviction that has sustained me in my opposition and in my researches. Without it, I should not have acted, spoken, written ; I should not be writing now. But I knew, and I know that pure and simple truth can alone draw us out of the slough into which we are fallen ; in it is a power which neither police, nor bishops, nor academies possess.

APPENDIX.

It seems to me proper to republish here the few pages that I have previously published on the subject of Turning Tables. Manifesting, as they do, the progress of my thought, they will show that I adopted my present position in the beginning, and that I have never deviated from it. The certainty and importance of the physical phenomenon, the absurdity of the supernatural fact, such was already my theory, at the time I addressed the following letters to the *Journal de Genève*, to the *Journal des Débats*, and to *L'Illustration*.

PLATE I

The first of the three figures is a small, round, brownish object, possibly a seed or a fruit, with a smooth surface and a small indentation at the top. The second figure is a larger, more elongated object, also brownish, with a more textured surface and a small indentation at the top. The third figure is a small, round, brownish object, similar to the first, with a smooth surface and a small indentation at the top.

APPENDIX.

JOURNAL DE GENÈVE.

MAY 26TH, 1853.

VALLEYRES (VACD), May 12th, 1853.

GENTLEMEN,

Impelled by a sense of *duty*, I address myself to you. Our obligations to truth make it always our duty, under all circumstances, to protest against that strange and convenient disdain which certain scientific men, not to speak of the unlearned portion of the community, oppose to facts that they cannot explain.

Such is the sentiment that urges me, notwithstanding my scientific incompetency, to transmit to you an account of the experiments which have just been made here. Far from participating in the idea which inspires M. Foucault's last article in the *Journal des Débats*, I maintain that nothing is less philosophical than to lay down *a priori*, the impossibility of things we refuse to verify. When I see M. Foucault congratulating the academies for having given no attention to the *Turning Tables*, I ask myself two questions :

1st. Do the academies pretend to understand all that they admit ? If the transmission of my will to a piece of furniture which has become in a manner my member, is incomprehensible, is the transmission of my will to my leg or my arm much better understood ?

2d. Is it allowable to treat as a subject of pleasantry the question, so serious in itself, whether the human mind is or is not about to lift one of the veils which conceal from it the great divine laws, and to confess once more its prodigious ignorance ?

I believe that one of these laws has just been discovered. Of that, however, public opinion will judge. It will judge, in spite of the shrugs of the shoulders, or the concerted silence of those who seem disposed to contest with simple mortals the right of observing facts and appreciating

them by means of their good sense. If a diploma be required to authorize one to speak of this law, I ought to be silent, as the laity of the Middle Ages were silent in presence of the theologians. But perhaps you will think, gentlemen, that we have not yet quite returned to that point, and you are willing to admit into your columns the statement I have to make, together with the reflections which have induced me to send it to you.

We took a table made of ash, its top of about two and a half feet in diameter. It was supported by a heavy column of the same wood, terminating in three feet, a little more than two feet apart.

The persons engaged in these experiments were two scientific botanists, MM. Muret and Reuter, M. Tachet, the clergyman, M. Boissier, several domestics, three children from eleven to fifteen years of age, my wife and myself.

We had much difficulty in putting the table in motion, and nearly an hour had expired before it began to turn. The motion, greatly impeded by the inequalities of the floor, was nevertheless finally effected in two opposite directions, according to our will. This will was also sufficient to bring it to an abrupt stop.

I do not insist, however, upon this point. The phenomenon of the rotation if it stood alone, would not appear to me entirely conclusive. I am distrustful, although I am not an academician, and I admit that it is within the limits of strict possibility for a mechanical impulsion to be involuntarily communicated to the table, thereby producing the rotation.

But the rotation serves to prepare us for the phenomena, the explanation of which it is impossible to base on any muscular action whatever.

Each of us in turn, addressed orders to the table which were punctually obeyed, and it would be difficult for me to describe the strange character of these motions, the distinctness and solemnity, if I may so speak, with which the blows were struck.—“Strike three blows, strike ten blows. Strike with your left foot, with your right foot, with the foot in the centre. Raise yourself on one of your feet, stand up perpendicularly, resist the effort of those who, placed on the side where you rise, shall endeavor to pull you down to the ground.”

The table obeyed each command. It effected movements which no complicity, either voluntary or involuntary, would have been able to provoke, for we afterwards vainly attempted to bring about and maintain them by pressure of the hands upon the table when supported by a single foot; it resisted in the most positive manner, all our efforts to force it down.

We each gave orders with equal success. Children, as well as grown persons, made themselves obeyed.

Still further. It was agreed that the person who gave the orders should not pronounce the number of the blows, but, after communicat-

ing them in the ear of his neighbor, should content himself with thinking them, and, indeed, the table obeyed. In no instance was there the slightest error.

Each person ordered the table to strike as many blows as should correspond to his years, and it invariably struck them according to the number in our minds, even hurrying over the blows in the most comical manner when the number was considerable. I must admit to my shame that I received a gentle reprimand, for having involuntarily diminished my age. The table struck forty-three blows instead of forty-two, because the true number was present in the mind of my wife.

In fine, after having continued for more than an hour, these experiments in which the neighbors and several farm laborers participated, I felt that it was time to bring them to a close. All my orders to the table to rise, to rise again, to turn upside down had been promptly and satisfactorily obeyed.

Your most obedient servant,

A. DE GASPARI.

JOURNAL DES DÉBATS.

AUGUST 30th, 1853.

VALLEYRES, (VAUD), *August 13th, 1853.*

SIR:

It is absolutely necessary that some one should reply to your article of the 15th of July on Turning Tables. With all due respect for the cleverness of M. Foucault, it is incumbent on us to oppose facts to the assertions he has uttered. Those whom he ranks as simpletons, or of the Illuminati,* have doubtless a right to be heard before submitting to their sentence. A right! I mistake. In the present instance it is more than that, it is a duty to fulfill, and this you must have foreseen when you inserted in your columns the judgment, hastily, as well as feebly pronounced, which is calculated to prejudice many of your readers. In default of more competent antagonists, I venture to present myself, and I believe I should do you an injustice were I to solicit you to

* The name given to certain associations of men in modern Europe, who were said to have combined to overthrow the existing religious institutions, and substitute reason, by which they expected to raise men and society to perfection. It has been denied however, that this was their object.—*Robison.*

give this letter a place in your columns. Your impartiality is my guarantee for its admission.

The article in your paper of the 15th of July was a public prosecutor's appeal to the court. After such an address it is usual to allow the accused to speak. It is not my business to discuss the opinions of M. Foucault, but it is my business to protest when the discussion of opinions gives place to the appreciation of individuals. M. Foucault has spoken of the "profound disgust," of "burlesque scenes," of "comedy," of "bands of the Illuminati." He has been unsparing of his ridicule. He deploras the imbecility of the age, and portrays the character of the man of science—that is to say, the man of exact science—he who alone preserves his reason and good sense, while his poor, ignorant fellow-creatures, lawyers, rulers, philosophers, agriculturists, political men, *canaille*, *sotte espèce*, become a prey to illusions, to the most shameful superstitions, are perfectly incapable of observation, or of reasoning. Nothing can be more imposing than the appearance of this unique representative of human intelligence, as he condescends to interest himself for a moment in the vulgar herd. It is true that he is mindful of his dignity: "Beware of supposing," says M. Foucault, "that the great philosopher (M. Faraday) has humbly installed himself before a round table in order to make it turn under his own hand." *Under his own hand!* Alas! that is precisely wherein M. Faraday has failed. If he had carried his condescension towards simple mortals so far as, like us, to use his own hand, he might possibly have avoided compromising his fine scientific reputation by the discovery of a pretended demonstration, which demonstrates nothing, and which can be applied to nothing whatever.

Permit me, sir, before entering upon technical questions, to insist upon the following general observations. They have more importance than the rotation of the tables, and, to speak the truth, they alone have prompted me to take up the pen on the present occasion. Our age is only too much given up to the despotism of the positive sciences. It is only too much disposed to reserve for them alone the title of science. I would desire to have the world at last think of combating an usurpation decidedly unreasonable. There are other men of science than those who employ algebraic formulas; there are other truths than those demonstrated by theorems; there are other facts than those made evident by the telescope, or laid bare by the scalpel; there are other natural laws than those promulgated by the academies; there are laws which the academies do not choose to recognize, and which excite in them extreme repugnance, because, in extending the domain of the soul and of the will, they menace our materialistic tendencies.

Now, what comes of it? At the moment when the pride of the exact

sciences shines more brilliantly than it ever shone before, at the moment when their discoveries are multiplying, and they think to have penetrated all the secrets of creation, a small, troublesome, unforeseen observation, which does not allow of being classed in any official category, quite unexpectedly makes its appearance. Shall we remake the categories for so small a matter? Shall the scientific men renounce their infallibility? Shall they confess their ignorance and their limits? No. It is more simple to contest in advance the right of the new fact to exist. It ought not to exist; then it does not exist; there is no place for it in this world. The academics, who know every thing, and who comprehend everything, cannot tell what to make of it. Judge whether it be difficult to raise a hue and cry against it, and to stir up the mass of ignorant minds, who claim to be the sensible men, *par excellence*, and whose profession in this world consists in holding on to the "trunk of the tree," according to Bassompierre, never swerving from orthodox opinions, affirming all the more strongly the less they think, manifesting their superiority by a rigorous disdain of suspected ideas!

And this is what rouses me to revolt. In the name of the true, philosophic spirit, I denounce decisions *a priori*, and refusals to examine. In the name of the true scientific spirit I denounce the pretension to repulse a new thing, simply because it is new, and because it does not range itself under any of the conventional banners. In the name of the true spirit of liberty I denounce the oppression that smothers, either by clamor or concerted silence, discoveries that are opposed to received theories. We have the right to disdain, but only *after having studied*. The disdain that precedes study is called an abuse of power. M. Foucault has pushed it thus far, and he congratulates himself. "The Academy of Science," says he, in an accent of triumph, "the Academy of Science has, in general, replied by a disdainful silence; she has not chosen to occupy herself with the communications that have been addressed to her on this subject; she has considered them as not having been made."

On which side is the credulity, I ask: on the side of those who shut their eyes, or on the side of those who open them, who compare, who experiment, who have decided to put facts before systems, in place of putting systems before facts? It should be well known that there exists a negative credulity. Some are as credulous in refusing to believe, as others are credulous in believing. Those who fall asleep on the convenient pillow of ready-made opinions, and who never commit the imprudence of having a mind of their own, are the most credulous of men.

The most credulous and the least courageous! Our modern societies perish from lack of courage, from lack of independent convictions. We

preserve nothing because we believe in nothing, and we believe in nothing, because we adopt once for all, all the creeds of all the world. We never have ideas excepting those it is good *ton* to have, and we change them consequently, when the fashion changes.

It is the love of truth that we lack. In the eyes of the man who loves the truth, there are no indifferent truths. He feels himself urged to defend those that are misunderstood, and he does it without calculating the consequences to himself personally. He will be censured as imprudent, it will be thought that he should have been more cautious, should have had more self-respect, should have reserved himself for more serious subjects! What matters it? The defense of the truth is beneath no one. He who allows a truth to be maltreated, however small it may be, is as cowardly as he who allows a man to be ill-used in the streets. We owe ourselves to whoever has need of us.

You now understand, sir, the sentiment that impels me to address you these lines. I am as suspicious as others; I understand, I honor, I approve of distrust in such matters; I, as well as others, have shrugged my shoulders when the tables were spoken of; I have refused to believe before having seen; even after having seen, I have persisted in seeing again, time and time again, with precautions and scientific exactness; I have thrown aside experiments, the results of which can in any way be explained by muscular action, voluntary or involuntary; in short, I have been as severe, nay, more severe towards the phenomenon in question than either Mr. Faraday or M. Foucault. But I did not decide in advance that the phenomenon *must* be an illusion, and that its partisans held the dangerous principles of the Illuminati. Such is the difference between the conduct of these gentlemen and my own. The difference in the results has not been less, and it is high time for me briefly to mention them.

M. Faraday concerns himself only with the rotations! that is convenient. Is it just? As for me, I have felt that it was absurd to confine myself to the study of one fact that lends itself, whatever we may do, to the most various interpretations. When the table turns, it is impossible to prove mathematically that unconscious muscular action does not determine the motion. Doubtless, it is exceedingly improbable, and those who have assisted at the experiments in which the table remains obstinately immovable, notwithstanding the good will of the persons present, notwithstanding their repeated orders, and the excitement of their nerves, while at other times two or three minutes suffice for the same persons to induce an energetic rotation, will find it difficult to admit the explanation drawn from involuntary mechanical impulsions. It is enough, however, for us that the doubt is permitted; the doubt should prevail. You see that I am easily satisfied.

The point then, is to confine ourselves to an order of facts in which illusion is not conceivable, in which involuntary action is out of the question, or in which voluntary action and fraud itself can produce no result.

This class of facts is to be found essentially in the accomplishment of *orders not expressed*.

I took, therefore, a table made of ash, its top three feet in diameter, supported by a heavy column of the same wood, terminating in three feet, the distance between them being about two feet. Having put it in motion, our decisive experiment began.

I say "experiment," I should say "experiments;" for what I here relate was renewed and verified many times, and these experiments, separated by intervals of several days or weeks, were witnessed by a great number of persons, among whom are reckoned men, far from ignorant, credulous, or of the Illuminati.

This is our method of proceeding.

We decided that, in order to render the fact conclusive, the table should be required to obey twelve* times in succession, without the least error. One of the witnesses inscribed upon a bit of paper the number of blows that he wished the table to strike; then he secretly showed this paper to the experimenter charged with the duty of giving the order. All the other persons who surrounded the table, sat with their eyes closed and did not open them until after the operation was finished. It was therefore absolutely impossible that any of them could know or suspect the number demanded. This was not all; in order that the person who alone was acquainted with the figure, should not be able of himself, to determine the motion by pressure, either voluntary or involuntary, he was required to address his command to the foot placed immediately in front of him, and upon which he could consequently have no action.

Things being thus arranged, twelve numbers were successively communicated to the persons whose authority had been ascertained, and twelve times the foot designated raised itself and struck distinctly the figure which was known to only one of the ten experimenters forming the chain. It was out of the question for any one to foresee the figures; those who wrote them had resorted to allowable subterfuges, sometimes indicating a small number, sometimes a high one. On one occasion we were quite surprised to see that the table remained motionless in spite of the order issued; but the explanation soon followed; the figure inscribed on the paper was a cipher! Those who attribute the motion of the table to involuntary action, will have the goodness to tell us why these nine persons, persuaded that the foot ought to rise, were

* I indicate this figure twelve, which was that of the last experiment. We had on other occasions exacted uninterrupted obedience for twenty or thirty times in succession.

not able to communicate to it any movement, merely because the tenth person (without power to act upon the foot placed before him) knew that his command corresponded to the cypher.

We then experimented in order to ascertain how great was the force communicated to the table: we induced a man weighing 174lbs. to mount thereon; we ordered the table to turn, and after long delays, efforts, creakings, &c., it finally succeeded. We ordered it to strike blows and it was equally successful; we ordered it to stand erect, to overturn its burden; it obeyed.*

Here, may I be permitted to make a remark. I mention only such facts as we were afterwards not able to produce by the employment of fraud and all our mechanical force. For every experiment, we instituted what we called the *control of fraud*. We decided to consider as null all those which our muscular action, voluntarily applied, could succeed in accomplishing. We therefore, after the cessation of the phenomenon, placed ourselves around the same table, and one of us attempted fraudulently to determine the foot before him to strike the figure indicated in his mind. Useless efforts! It was not to be moved. When the other members of the chain joined their exertions to his, they, of course, succeeded; but then the motion took place, even when the number thought was a cipher. We afterwards combined all our forces in order to effect various motions when the table was charged in the manner above related; we leaned on it, but did not succeed in making it rise.

It appears to me that this really signifies something. Those who believe that a combination of force involuntarily exercised by fingers having no appearance of tension, can produce a greater power than fingers evidently strained to their utmost for the purpose of bringing about the same result; such persons, we think, are more deserving than we of the charge of *credulity*. They especially merit it, if they attribute the execution of *orders not expressed* to the integration of infinitesimal forces!

I would call attention to a last circumstance of the phenomenon, which, unites us, in a measure, with an article of furniture, which transforms it momentarily into one of our members, making this member obey our will in virtue of a law as mysterious as that which puts our body at the disposition of our soul, and transmits millions of orders to our various muscles, the intellect being unconscious of anything further than the single, positive act willed by us, entirely ignoring all the minute, particular, inexplicable, though none the less real acts, by which our will is accomplished. The phenomenon in question is not indifferently and equally

* This experiment did not always succeed. Power which varies with persons, varies also with days.

produced by every body. Moreover, it is not in proportion to the physical vigor, force of the will, or nervous excitement in the operators. There are very strong, energetic, and nervous persons, firm believers also, who gain no obedience from the table.

This fact, which seems to me of a nature to overturn many explanatory hypotheses, suggested to us the idea of measuring the action exercised by each of the experimenters. To establish the action was something; to measure it, was one step further. The experiment was conducted as follows:

We had remarked one individual, whose commands were always promptly and clearly executed. We engaged him in a struggle with each of the experimenters successively. A high number was secretly communicated to his adversary, a lower number to him. The adversary issued an order for the table to strike the number of blows indicated by his thought, and it remained to be seen if the person of whom I speak could arrest the blows when they had reached the number designated as his. Now, his will always carried it; always, at the precise figure secretly indicated to him, did he succeed in preventing the execution of the command of his adversary.

The reverse of this experiment was attempted. This person was charged with the command and the execution of the higher number, while each of the other experimenters in turn should endeavor to suppress the blows after they had represented the smaller number. The result was as foreseen. Nothing prevented the table from obeying to the end, but nothing could be more comical than the visible difficulty with which it accomplished its task from the moment the two numbers or the two wills ceased to coincide; nothing could be more significative than its vigor, its agility, and buoyancy as soon as the adversary ceased his opposition. It reminded us of a carriage descending a hill, and which, being abruptly deprived of its shoe, rolls precipitately down the slope.

We, at last, found the exact balance point of the forces. To the most powerful person were first opposed two children, who were immediately vanquished; then two men, who succeeded no better; then two others, one of whom we found almost in a condition to struggle alone. The last two cut short the execution of the command at the precise limit fixed upon by them.

I repeat, that the communication of the figures to this experimenter was made secretly and in writing, so as to render it impossible for any of the nine other persons forming the chain, their eyes closed during the operation, to suspect the number of blows required from the table.

I pass over in silence everything that has not a scientific character, as, for example, the imitation of singing, dances, the wonderful execution of

the orders, "Strike enormous blows, strike very gently; so gently as scarcely to be heard." I pause with the facts, which no complicity, either voluntary or involuntary, can explain, and which reveal a law hitherto unknown, thus lifting a corner of the veil that still, in a great measure, conceals from us the real organization of the universe.

A law, do I say; and indeed there is no question here *either of divination, of miracle, or of magic*. The tables divine nothing, and they even know so little of what is taking place in your mind, that if your will does not interpose the very instant the number indicated by your thought has been completed, they continue indefinitely, striking a hundred, a hundred and fifty, even more blows. The tables do not move except by the application of natural conditions; in order to rise, it is necessary for them to meet with a point of support, an inequality in the floor, and their motion is sliding until they come in contact with such inequality. The tables do not reveal anything that is not in the thought and will of the experimenters; when the attempt is made to charge them with other duties than to obey as members of our bodies, continual mistakes are the result.

To hear some people talk, one might really imagine that the motion of the tables is connected with witchcraft and the result of a diabolical influence! I beg to mention two circumstances, a consideration of which will calm their apprehensions. First, the horrible mystery is accomplished only on condition of a certain number of rotations; it is in turning, that the table becomes charged, replenishes its strength, and puts itself in a condition to obey. So far, this is not very infernal; indeed, it rather resembles a natural law; but we have something still better: in the midst of the evolutions of the table, its motion may be embarrassed by a piece of glass in its vicinity, and entirely arrested by contact with the glass. When the glass is placed near one of the edges of the table, the elevation of the opposite side is provoked. Magicians, so very fearful of coming in contact with glass, belong, I suppose it will be granted, to a category heretofore unknown.

Let Christians, then, be reassured! There is no danger either of violating the prohibition proclaimed by Habakkuk (chap. ii. verses 18, 19, and 20), where *wood* is mentioned only in the sense of *idols of wood*, or of renewing the operations condemned by Tertullian (Apology, chap. xxiii.), where is found the curious phrase: "The magicians send dreams, having for auxiliaries the power of angels and demons which they invoke, and by which goats and tables assume the faculty of divination." Here there is no divination of any sort, no invocation of angels nor demons. Charlatanism will seize, it has already seized hold of the new phenomenon, as it seizes hold of everything. Who doubts it? But a true phenomenon does not become false merely because charlatans seize hold of it.

Let men of science also be reassured. The point in question is not that of escaping from the order of natural facts, but of introducing therein a new fact, which appears impossible because it is new. All new facts have an odor of magic. - Wait awhile and the academies will make room for this, and once located it will seem to us the simplest in the world, as simple as the connection within us of thought and extent, as simple as the return into the ground of the magnetic current of our telegraphs, their circuit being thus completed in a manner utterly inconceivable, as simple as the circulation of the blood, declared impossible and anti-scientific at the time it was first announced.

There is something very respectable, I acknowledge, in the fear that is experienced of being tempted from the firm ground of facts scientifically observed, and left to coast along the uncertain shore of miracle. But before abandoning ourselves to fear, we should inquire, first, if there exists any relation whatever, between a miracle which gives life or health, and the momentary motion communicated to a passive article of furniture; secondly, if the phenomenon of the tables will admit of no natural explanation. Now, let me indicate one which, however, I am not so imprudent as to offer as true; I present it as *possible*, in order to show that we do not depart from the ground of physical truths. Let us suppose a fluid to be emitted by the experimenters, and principally by some particular one of them; let us suppose that this fluid has a motion, will not rotation result from it? Let us further suppose that this fluid takes the direction communicated to it by the will, and that it accumulates in the vicinity of the foot to which the order is addressed, will not the foot rise? Let us suppose that the fluid shrinks from contact with the glass, will not the motion cease when the glass is placed on the centre of the table? And in a case where the glass is nearer one edge than the other, will not the fluid flow back towards the opposite extremity so as to raise it immediately? I do not affirm that this is really so. I say that it may be so, without miracle and without sorcery. Galvanism, which has nothing of the miraculous, gives motion to dead bodies. I do not see why it should be absurd to suppose that another agent should give motion to a bit of wood.

Patience! the day will come when M. Foucault, who is both a man of science and of conscience, will regret his hastiness. He will then ask himself what connection exists between the phenomenon, such as it is, and M. Faraday's pretended refutation, which has called forth so many cries of victory. What does M. Faraday demonstrate by means of his superposed disks? That there is a force? no one doubts it. That we do not perform a miracle? we are fully aware of this. That in a rotation communicated, the superior disks precede the inferior disks? a matter of course. A

matter of course, and moreover, it proves nothing; first, because the obliquity of the motion in no way results from it; secondly, because the oblique action, although manifested, is not measured; lastly, and especially, because the phenomenon of rotation is not brought forward by us, conscious as we are that it is liable to objections, and that a new law must rest on absolutely incontestable facts.

And yet, this is the great experiment upon the authority of which it is declared that all doubts are removed, that, at last, the "bands of Illuminati" are to be ousted, and their troublesome questions avoided! Henceforth they will have nothing more to say, nothing more to answer! After this study so complete, what yet remains to be examined? The Royal Society of London, "which has thought it undignified" to occupy itself with such matters, M. Faraday, who is a little ashamed and confused at having demeaned himself so far as to offer such an explanation, other scientific bodies, who have examined nothing and said nothing, all in unison, exclaim through the organ of M. Foucault:—"We have the right to dismiss, as incurable, whoever shall remain unconvinced by this subtle analysis. . . ."

Let us take care, the representatives of the exact sciences incur the risk of becoming, as far as is possible at the present day, the inquisitors of our times, and I would, in conclusion, return to this thought, which was the point of my departure. These illustrious societies, respected by every body (by me as much as by any other), owe, as a duty to themselves and to the public, the careful scrutiny of their own conduct. Absolute authority is intoxicating, and our men of science exercise an absolute authority. If they allow themselves to abuse it, if, persuaded that they possess the only real explanation of the visible world, they shall refuse to examine the new facts that seem not to be covered by this explanation, they will peril their legitimate authority. Facts are stronger than Academies. Repulsed, denied, mocked, they none the less subsist, and it is with inexorable obstinacy that they demand their place in the clear light of the sun. They are not to be arrested by opposing to them motions not to receive, prejudiced decisions, or derisive refutations.

This is what I had at heart to say. The rest is of little consequence. I am not at all anxious to make the tables turn in obedience to the will, but I am most anxious to hinder tyranny from smothering any truth, however great or small it may be. I am bound to wage war against summary proceedings, and to maintain, with all the strength of my feeble nature, whatever remains to us of liberty; liberty in the domain of scientific thought. This sentiment has, alone, been powerful enough to transfer into a duty that which was at first undertaken as an amusement. The statements of M. Foucault have opened my eyes to the moral, the philo-

sophical, and truly serious side of the discussion. I should not have engaged in it under any other title; every man has his work, and mine has hitherto led me in a different direction.

Your most obedient servant,

A. DE GASPARIN.

JOURNAL DE GENÈVE.

AUGUST 19th, 1853.

VALLEYRES (VAUD), *August 15th, 1853.*

GENTLEMEN :

It was by no means my intention to trouble you again on the subject of the Turning Tables; but many persons are astonished that having in your columns affirmed the reality of the phenomenon, I should remain silent after the insertion you have considered it your duty to give to the last report of the *Débats*, and entitled by you, "The conclusion of the discussion on the tables."

You are much too just to contest with me the right to remonstrate against this conclusion and to maintain the certainty, each day more evident, of the experiments I have the honor of communicating to you. Do not fear, however, that I shall resort to the same mode of discussion as M. Foucault, who talks of "burlesque scenes," of "comedy," of "bands of the Illuminati," and who "dismisses as incurable," those who do not yield before the demonstration of M. Faraday! I would respect myself in respecting my adversaries, and I esteem M. Foucault too highly not to regret this attempt on his part to stifle the debate by clamor and big words. Facts will easily triumph over abuse, and to facts I return.

It is necessary, in the first place, to cast aside the famous disks of M. Faraday. All reflective minds already understand how far this illustrious man of science has taken a wrong direction. Supposing even that the point in question is the rotation (and we do not rely wholly upon that, for it has always been contested), the displacement of the disks proves absolutely nothing. That there is a force developed, is not denied, we do not pretend to perform miracles. That, in the motion communicated to the whole, the superior disks get the start of the inferior disks, is what will constantly take place, simply, as a result of the motion itself, however perpendicular may be the position of the fingers.

I see but one method of escaping the anathema of M. Faraday and his "indicator signs: " the table must consent to remain motionless.

But let us leave the rotation. As I said to you in my first letter, that alone is not conclusive. Now, in such matters especially, we ought only to rely on absolutely conclusive observations.

The obedience of the table to orders issued mentally, appears to me to possess this character in the highest degree. We have therefore conducted this class of experiments with true scientific rigor.

The experimenter charged to receive the command from the witnesses, and to transmit it to the table by means of his unspoken will, is placed before the foot required to act, in such a way that he can exercise over it no power as a lever. The number of the blows to be struck is so communicated in writing, that the nine other experimenters forming the chain shall have no suspicion of it. Indeed, these experimenters have their eyes shut during the whole operation.

The conditions being thus arranged, it is decided that the execution of the unspoken commands ought to be renewed, ten, twelve, thirty times in succession, without error, and then we begin. Ten, twelve, thirty times, the numbers communicated in writing are struck by the foot designated. It is impossible for these numbers to be anticipated, being sometimes very small, sometimes very considerable; sometimes the witnesses maliciously write down a cypher, and then it is amusing to observe the alarm of the experimenters, as they behold the table standing perfectly motionless, although it has received the order to strike the number of blows indicated by the thought. But they are amply repaid on finding out that it could not have better testified its prompt obedience than in resisting their desire.

When the experiment is terminated, we proceed to the counterproof. We try to realize by fraud and muscular action, the phenomenon just accomplished without tension of the fingers. One of the most captious and suspicious witnesses places himself in front of the foot he wishes to make rise. He orders it to strike a certain number of blows, and exhausts himself in vain efforts to bring about its obedience; the foot does not once rise. It is worse yet if the other persons around the table seek to assist him in provoking the motion of the rebel foot, for the impulsion will be given, even when the figure secretly communicated is found to be a cypher.

Such is the principal fact, to which I might add many others; but I shall avoid doing so, for it is important that the discussion should not be diverted from the real point in question. The problem thus states itself: A certain number of persons (all persons do not succeed equally well), silently issuing their commands, are sure to obtain obedience from a foot

over which they have no muscular control; during the continuance of this phenomenon, they accomplish without effort what all their efforts could not accomplish independent of it. Is this clear?

I have said that all do not succeed equally well. This observation led us to attempt a relative measurement of the force in each person: to the most powerful experimenter, we successively opposed the others. The first constantly carried the day until we united two wills against his.

Thus *a* is secretly charged with an order for 25 blows, *b* is secretly charged to arrest them at 18; *a* carries it and the 25 blows are achieved, though the force is sensibly diminished after the 18th blow. We try now the inverse: *b* is secretly charged with an order for 13 blows; *a* is secretly charged to arrest them at 7; *a* still carries it and the figure 7 cannot be exceeded. At last, *a* is secretly charged with 32 blows, while *b* and *c* united are secretly charged to arrest them at 20. It often happens that these two forces are not yet equivalent to that of *a*, and the table achieves the number 32; but if to *b* we add *c*, for example, representing a power superior to *c*, *a* is vanquished by this new coalition, and after 20, the table remains motionless.

There are some persons who will raise the cry of magic! miracle! every new law seems to them a prodigy. Now I pledge myself to reassure those who are thus alarmed. We depart not, in any way, from the domain of *natural facts*.

The best proof of the truth of this assertion is, that our sorcery vanishes when brought in contact with a bit of glass. In the midst of the most energetic rotation, while all eyes are closed, if a piece of glass is placed near the table, the motion becomes retarded; put the glass in the centre of the table, the motion is arrested; remove the glass to one of the sides, the other side will immediately rise, as if the fluid, no longer able to circulate in the vicinity of the glass, were drawn back, and accumulated in the opposite region.

Here again, there is no possibility of any illusion; for the eyes of the experimenters are closed, and in substituting, without their knowledge, a bit of pasteboard or a book in place of the glass, experimenting with it in the same manner as we experimented with the glass, no perceptible effects are produced, either by way of arresting the motion, or causing an elevation.

I do not care to hazard an explanation; that is not my business. To establish facts and to maintain a truth which others are disposed to stifle, this is my only claim. I cannot however resist the temptation of showing to those that treat us as "Illuminati," or as sorcerers, that the action in question comports with an interpretation wholly conformable to the ordinary laws of science.

Suppose a fluid emitted by the experimenters, and principally by a few of them in particular; suppose that the will determines the direction of the fluid; you will already understand the rotation and elevation of the foot towards which, at each act of the will, flows an excess of fluid. Suppose that the glass acts upon the fluid so as to disperse it, you will comprehend that the glass placed in the middle of the table interrupts the rotation, and that placed on one of the sides, it leads to an accumulation of fluid on the opposite side, which then rises.

I again repeat that I affirm nothing, I even indicate nothing; but I show that explanations unconnected with sorceries or miracles lie within the range of possibility.

Miracles, have I said; and will it really be necessary to trouble ourselves to answer those who pretend to compare the obedience of the tables with the miracles of the Bible, who do not see the abyss that separates the momentary action exercised upon a table incapable of thinking, put in play by a sort of galvanism, by a force that in ceasing leaves the table as inert as before, from the sovereign act of Him, who, communicating life and strength, calls to Lazarus: "Arise!" to the man sick with the palsy, "Take up thy bed and walk!"

I do not care to insist further. The tables do not understand; the tables do not divine; the tables are entirely passive and will strike indefinitely, notwithstanding the number indicated by your thought, if your will does not stop them. I do not know what conclusions charlatanism pretends to draw from these results; I know that our conscientious and repeated experiments have proved that they do not exceed in any respect the limits of natural phenomena. They are neither so admirable nor so criminal as they are represented:

They have merited
Neither that excess of honor nor that indignity.

Accept, Gentlemen, the assurances of my distinguished consideration,

A. DE GASPARIN.

TO L'ILLUSTRATION.

VALLEYRES, *November 18th, 1853.*

MR. EDITOR:

Your correspondent from the mountains of the Vivarais, in his letter on "knocking spirits," has thought proper to assign me a place by

the side of *l'Univers*, M. l'Abbé Maynard, and M. Victor Hennequin. After having related the exploits of these spirits, and treated them with deserved ridicule, he adds: "On the French frontier, at Geneva, they recount to M. the Count Agénor de Gasparin, the infamies of papistry."

It seems to me, that when a man is brought before the public, it would be merely an act of justice to him on the part of those who show him up, not to put words in his mouth, entirely contradictory of what he said. Now this is the language held by me on the subject of the pretended divination of the Turning Tables,

My letter to the *Journal des Débats* (Aug. 30th) contains the following phrases: "I pause with the facts, which no complicity, either voluntary or involuntary, can explain, and which reveal a law hitherto unknown, thus lifting a corner of the veil that still, in a great measure, conceals from us the real organization of the universe. *A law, do I say; and indeed there is no question here, either of divination, of miracle, or of magic. The tables divine nothing. . . . The tables do not move, except by the application of natural conditions. . . . The tables reveal nothing that is not in the thought and will of the experimenters. . . . To hear some people talk, one might really imagine that the motion of the tables is connected with witchcraft, and the result of a diabolical influence! . . .* There is here no divination of any sort, no invocation of angels nor demons. . . . *Charlatanism will seize, it has seized hold of the new phenomenon as it seizes hold of everything.* Who doubts it? But a true phenomenon cannot become false simply because the charlatans seize hold of it. . . . *The point in question is not to escape from the order of natural facts, but to introduce therein a new fact that appears impossible because it is new.*"

My letter to the *Journal de Genève* (19th August) thus closes: "The tables do not understand; the tables do not divine; the tables are entirely passive and will strike indefinitely, notwithstanding the number indicated by your thought, if your will does not stop them. I do not know what conclusions charlatanism pretends to draw from these results; I know that our conscientious and repeated experiments have proved that they *do not exceed, in any respect, the limits of natural phenomena.*"

In what manner, then, must a man express himself, if, after having thus spoken, he runs the risk of being confounded with the abused votaries of spirits, and with the evocators of the illustrious or non-illustrious dead!

I have taken a special position. Good or bad, it is mine, and I claim to hold it. I have repulsed with all the power of strong conviction and a disgust not to be surpassed, this recrudescence of superstition, of Satanic revelations and spurious sorcery, the absurdity of which will ere

long be demonstrated. With the energy of a heart entirely devoted to the cause of truth, I have denounced that scientific intolerance which condemns without examination, which seeks to smother with anathemas and sarcasms a troublesome physical phenomenon.

Between the verification of a natural law and supernatural pretensions, there is not only a distinction, there is an essential opposition. This is so true, that I have no hesitation in asserting, that the ridiculous direction taken, in general, by the experiments in Turning Tables, to be mainly owing to the refusal to examine which has been promulgated in the name of men of science. Things as well as individuals have a tendency to become what we imagine them to be. The door of scientific study once closed, we are compelled to seek in a different channel the explanation of facts; for the facts are there and nothing can suppress them.

The facts are there, I have said, and it is quite time to yield them their true place, their true character, their dignity. All this proves to me that I should no longer hesitate to publish the result of my researches. It will then be seen that we are henceforth not permitted to doubt the existence of a fluid, or some other physical agent, which obeys the will and communicates to inert bodies certain motions prescribed by it. I have a very conclusive way of rendering useless the famous disks of M. Faraday: I suppress entirely the contact, and determine both the rotation and elevation of the table, *without touching thereunto any of the hands that form the chain above it*. I suppose that in presence of such a result, our adversaries will no longer speak to us of mechanical impulsion, or of unconscious muscular action!

I suppose, also, that they will no longer speak to us of spirits or of demons, and that thus we shall at last be permitted to return into the scientific course, which it would have been more simple and loyal to take at first. We should all have gained by it. There would have been less prodigality of insult, fewer superstitions brought in play.

Accept, Sir, the assurances, &c.,

A. DE GASPARIN.

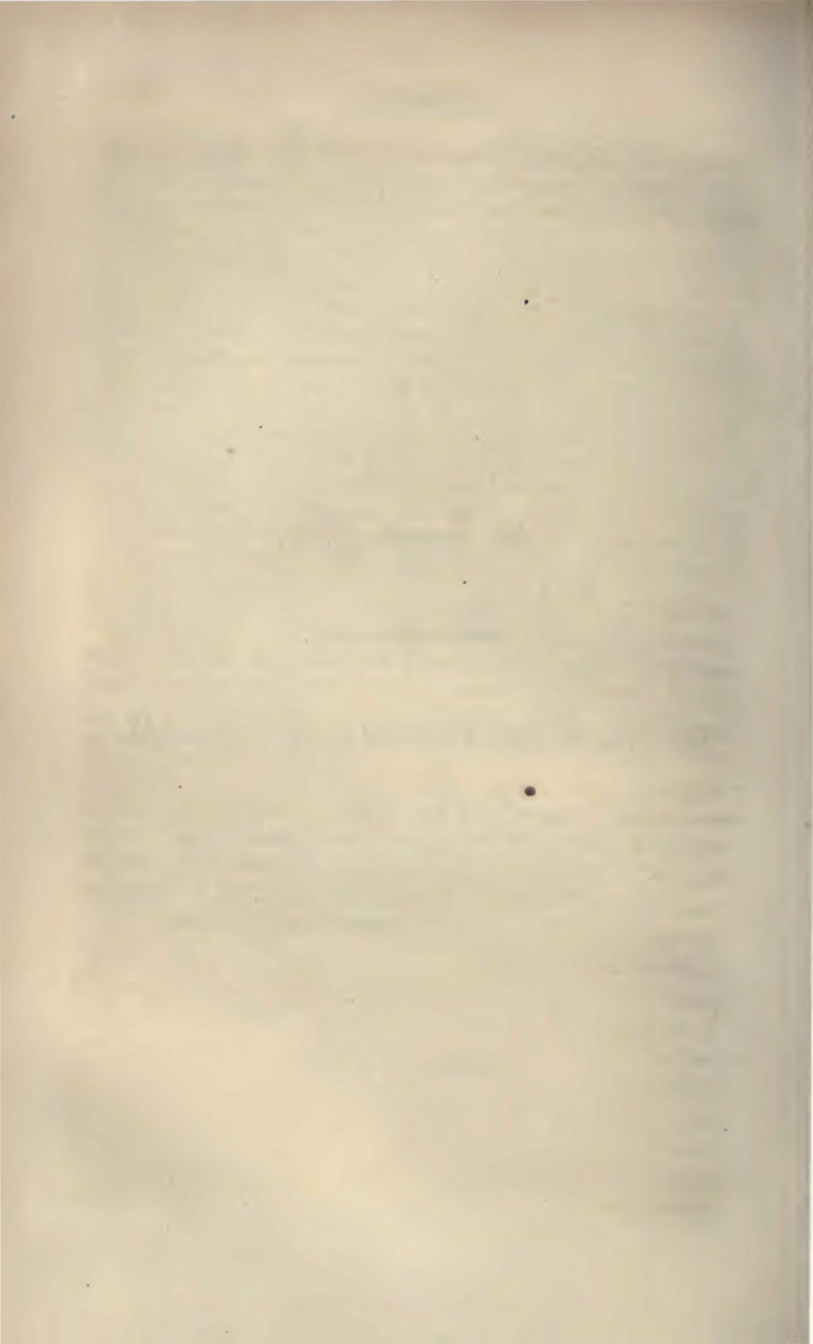
END OF THE APPENDIX.

The Second Part.



OF THE SUPERNATURAL IN GENERAL.

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PART II.

CHAPTER I.

THE QUESTION.

It has been seen at what point of view I place myself to appreciate the remarkable phenomena with which the world is at present occupied, in spite of itself. Armed by study and by the evidence which proves the presence of a physical agent, I attack supernatural pretensions. To deny everything, would have been to admit everything ; for the facts are stronger than we, and driven back from their legitimate channel, they overflow the banks and make their way in the most anomalous directions. Moreover, I never would have consented to contest what I knew to be true, nor could I have been induced by motives of expediency to participate in the silence which it has been thought fit to impose upon us in terms most haughty and peremptory.

Now, then, that the positive part of my work is terminated, I pass from it to the negative portion, which is not less important. I have proved the reality of *Turning Tables*, my next step is to prove the absurdity of *Speaking Tables*. This can only be done by first approaching the question in its general aspect. Speaking tables and their spirits shelter themselves behind an immense rampart of supernatural apocrypha. False miracles, spurious sorcery, wonders of every kind, a return to the most foolish and odious credulities of the past, a restoration of the

Middle Ages and their least respectable practises, such things as these are boldly presented to our attention, they are resolutely accepted by many men distinguished for talent and learning, they are taken up and patronized by a religious party, and public opinion, hesitating and disturbed by the brilliancy of the attestations with which it is overwhelmed, seems almost disposed to admit their truth.

I am well aware that this admission extends only to a certain point, but that is too far. The honor and the welfare of our age demand that such enormities should be firmly repulsed. It must by no means be believed that we can, with impunity, open even the smallest access to superstitions that are gross, material, and anti-Christian in character, the tendency of which is to brutalize man, vilify God, and actually to suppress the Devil, while seeming to endow him with the attribute of Omnipresence. Neither is it with impunity that we habituate the public conscience to look upon the monstrous errors, the judicial iniquities of former times without disgust and horror. In making an amnesty with the past, in glorifying it, we prepare the future ; we destroy one by one, our tutelary repugnances, the protestations of the intellect and of the heart, an inheritance painfully acquired, which it is our duty to increase instead of squander. When I behold what is passing before my eyes, I am not only humiliated ; I am appalled. All that is healthful and exalted in our natures stands in great peril ; we run the risk of descending in the scale of progress, descending rapidly. Now, nothing is more certain than the fact that each period of civilization has a corresponding regimen, which alone is proper for it ; let the notions of the Middle Ages be restored to us, and with them we shall see reappear the crimes that marked that lamentable epoch.

I wish to exaggerate nothing. It is certain that the Middle Ages in person, will not be reproduced in this period of the world, neither they nor any thing approaching them. We have learned and unlearned too much, for it to be possible to carry us back so far as that. But it is always possible, to obscure the

general conscience and disarm it against surprises. And who will say that something similar is not being accomplished at this very moment, even among those who reject the spirits, as among those who welcome them.

The manner in which they are rejected, gives me particular anxiety. Their advocates may have their own reasons for abandoning themselves to such pleasant reveries ; their ideal is behind, in the times of magicians, of possessions, and summary proceedings ; it is pleasant for them to believe what the world believed then, in order to justify the deeds of those times. In regard to the opponents of the spirits (and they make by far the greater number), I remark that they are hostile without well knowing why, a fact which does not at all reassure me. To become indignant, to shrug the shoulders, to declare the thing impossible, to appeal to the enlightenment of the age, is not to answer. I always tremble for a cause, whose friends abuse "*du tarte à la crème !*" And, indeed, when I meet these men, so irritated against cotemporary sorcery and witchcraft, what do I find ? Some declare, that they have read nothing, and will read nothing ; that they know nothing and wish to know nothing ; they refuse all examination, that is to say, they carry about with them an arrow sunk deep in their hearts ; their faith, impatient of discussion, is not sure of itself. Others have heard, have read ; they have counted on their fingers the numerous and respectable witnesses who affirm each marvellous story ; and they have rid themselves or rather, they think they have rid themselves of these perplexing thoughts. And there are still others, in large numbers, who have reflected on all these things, and who end the matter by saying : " It is very extraordinary. It must be both true and false ; there is doubtless, something to accept and something to reject. It will not do to believe everything, nor to deny everything." Nothing more wise than their just medium ; nothing more orthodox than their eclectic impartiality towards things contrary to each other. Unfortunately, it is not sufficient to shut the door of the grand entrance upon the enemy, if, from a spirit of moderation, we stealthily open to

him a small door at the side. The place is none the less invaded ; and you see, in fact, a multitude of minds, at the present day, that are ready to admit the supernatural, provided it enters through the small side door. *A little sorcery, a little of the miraculous*, that is all well enough ! They have besides, their anecdotes of apparitions, and they know not well what to think of them. We are ignorant of so many things, why should we not also be ignorant of that ?

Nothing more completely proves the imminence of the peril and the necessity of seriously studying a question which we have heretofore, been too much inclined to avoid. Under pretext of humility and the plea of human ignorance, we sacrifice the most elementary and the most essential ideas of Christianity. Revealed religion is everywhere shaken to its foundation by the blows of a new revelation ; with great strides do we remove ourselves far from the God of the Bible ; the Devil of the Bible is concealed from us by multitudes of ridiculous demons ; materialism, in short, gross materialism, the materialism of forms and ceremonies, that which associates temptation with a physical operation, and deliverance from it with a contrary operation, the materialism which characterizes the popular superstitions of the worst ages of the world, gradually invades us ; now it is obtrusive, now it is insinuating ; it weakens and unsettles the truth, where it cannot succeed in enthroning error. Moreover, self-styled religious materialism justifies and fortifies the materialism of incredulity. In the eyes of many men, the Gospel becomes responsible for these enormities which they affect to connect with it. This is the case, especially, in countries like ours, where the Bible is yet almost unknown. Having rejected the supernatural apocrypha, they enlist, more or less openly, against the Biblical supernatural.

I do not forsake, then, the ordinary subject of my labors in turning my attention to the tables. Whenever society is shaken to its very depths by a soul-stirring question, you may be sure that Christianity is brought up for trial. To disengage it from all complicity with spirit-knockers ; to show, even, how far it is

contrary to the low and debasing superstition which the depraved imagination of man has engendered, and seeks this day to restore ; to prove that there is not only a difference, but a radical opposition between the credulous and the believers ; to display once more the admirable harmony which exists between Holy Scripture, true science, and true good sense ; to extricate from embarrassment many sincere men, to whom the supernatural apocrypha is repugnant, but who know not how to refute it ; to set the public conscience at ease in presence of the epidemic wonders that are making so much noise among the Americans and elsewhere ; to divide into three parts false sorceries and false miracles ; the part of fraud and error, the part of physiological accidents, the part of physical agents which so many scientific men yet refuse to see ; in short, to emerge from the darkness into which arbitrary denial on one side, and arbitrary affirmation on the other, have plunged us ; to rise into the pure light of day, where shine all these sister truths : the truth of revelation, the truth of science, and the inmost truth, proclaimed by our moral sense and our reason, such is the end I propose to myself. I have not the vanity to believe I shall attain it ; but were I to refrain because others might do better, I should justly reproach myself with having done nothing.

It may be seen, then, that I maintain my position. It requires some energy, for, thus far, I stand almost alone. My argument sums itself up as follows : The reality of the physical phenomenon, the falsity of the supernatural phenomenon ; the error of the "Spiritualists," who believe in the intelligence of the tables ; the error of the men of science, who deny their fluid motion. And as the belief in spirits is based on the resurrection of the entire demonology of the Middle Ages, as proof and testimony have been brought to bear in its favor, I am compelled to investigate the problem of the supernatural in its length and breadth. I solve it by seeking a true theory on the actual value of testimony, and by absolutely refusing to consider as demonstrated any miraculous or Satanic wonders

which are believed to have taken place in the world since the days of the Apostles.

It is high time to face this enemy, who menaces both our reason and our faith. Reason and faith ! Violence has never been done to one without injuring the other. The Gospel, which confounds the reason, nevertheless makes itself accepted because of the reason. God, who reveals mysteries to us, and who wills that our rebel hearts should bow before the "foolishness of the cross," God, who commands us to admit the incomprehensible, does not, however, require us to do this until the palpable title of a celestial origin has been affixed to it ; so that our reason is never more reasonable than when it abdicates in presence of that which exceeds, or which seems to contradict it. The Bible, moreover, instructs only in enlightening us, in developing, in elevating us ; its method is exactly contrary to that of *obscurantisme*. How wonderfully our faculties are unfolded under its influence. Look at the man who is entirely submissive to the Divine word, who accepts all that it contains, who does not permit himself to judge any revealed instruction, who conquers his natural repugnances, and whose doubts vanish before the great argument, "it is written ;" see how he finds himself in possession of the truth on all subjects. There is not an improvement in knowledge which does not serve him ; not a discovery in science which does not confirm his faith ; not a dogma, unfathomable though it be, the truth of which is not gradually demonstrated before his eyes by the experience of its practical benefits.

If such be the method of the Bible, that of superstitious inventions is widely different. They are right certainly, in fearing the light of day, in detesting science, in mistrusting schools, books, newspapers, and the Holy Scriptures especially. They are condemned to regret the most obscure and the most corrupt pages of history ; they return to them instinctively, and endeavor to carry us back also. Between them and reason there is an absolute divorce. It is no longer the partial and

apparent antagonism which is produced between certain revealed doctrines, and which has its base in the heart, corrupted by the fall, rather than in the moral sense or in the reason. In order to believe the imaginations of superstition, one must renounce the privilege of thinking.

Religion is not responsible for superstition. Since this is in danger of being forgotten, it is important to recall it to mind. My work will not have been entirely useless, if it shall succeed in restoring to light a distinction, elementary though it be, the tendency of which is always to shrink into obscurity. Religion is never in greater danger than at these epochs of devout recrudescence, favored by fear, when a mystical, a pseudo Christianity, entirely composed of legends, false miracles, spurious sorcery, puerile practices, and an unhealthy sentimentality prevails. This is the side to which we incline in France; we are constantly at work here in preparing new saturnalia of incredulity. We are working now, save that the result will astonish us, as our fathers worked at the end of the last century.

Ere long, if we do not take care, we shall have turned into comedy all the good sense yet remaining to us. Abracadabra was less absurd than the evocation of spirits by means of rotary motion. The materialism of the Baron d' Holback was not more revolting than that of *l'Univers*, which undertakes to demonstrate that the demons have established a foothold in the United States, because the distance between the Catholic churches in that country is entirely too great; in consequence of which, argues *l'Univers*, the circle of action of each mass is unable to connect itself with that of the neighboring mass; thus leaving a gap or interval between, in which ghostly knockers can install themselves! When an important religious newspaper, one representing a large body of men, is driven to invent such formulas of belief, when the anti-Christian revolt of the American Unitarians (the real inventors and only actual champions of "Spiritualism") finds a faithful echo in the most Catholic journal of the Old World, it is time that the Evangel-

cial faith should protest, that it should distinguish itself from what it is not, that it should resist in the name of the Bible the inundation of folly and impiety.

This becomes all the more necessary that the new tendencies have now their book, as well as their journal. *L'Univers* on one side, the work of M. le Marquis de Mirville on the other, serve as exponents of this significant return to the most decried credulities of the Middle Ages. M. de Mirville does not conceal his theory; it is even found in the title of his book: *Pneumatology; Spirits and their fluid manifestations*. We thus see, at the first glance, how closely united are spirits and their fluids, demons and the accidents of matter. We feel that we are about to be carried back to the good times when the Devil inhabited certain places rather than others, when, by means of spells, we were delivered into his power, when formulas caused possessions, when a bouquet of roses delivered over the Ursulines of Loudun to evil spirits, when words of exorcism destroyed what other words had magically effected. All of them materialist inventions in the highest degree; the very antipodes of the Gospel!

But the moment for appreciating these delusions is not yet arrived. It is first necessary to expose them, and I nowhere find them more clearly set forth than in the remarkable, and in this relation, important work to which I have just alluded. Marvellous stories and their proofs are here collected with care; the theory is placed by the side of the facts; the whole animated by the most consistent thought, the intrepidity of which commands our respect. A book like this facilitates the investigation of questions, and consequently merits to be taken into very serious consideration.

According to M. de Mirville, the spirits are everywhere, the spirits and their fluids. They dictated the oracles of Paganism, they spoke to Socrates and Brutus, they effected prodigies among the ancient sorcerers; at a later period they figured in the scenes of magic and possession, with which the Middle Ages are filled; in our days they have accomplished the phenomena

of Animal Magnetism; and finally, behold them metamorphosed into knockers causing tables, pencils, and especially the tongues of *mediums* to speak, both in America and Europe. There is nothing here that can be explained exclusively by fraud, by error, by the pathological condition, or by the action of fluids; the fluids (for there are fluids) act only through demons. M. de Mirville questions nothing, criticises nothing, neither ancient visions nor modern visions, neither the witchcraft of Loudun, nor the prophecies of the Camisards, neither the "*secours*" of the Jansenists at the tomb of the Deacon Pàris, nor the phantoms of the priest's house at Cideville, neither the celestial music, nor the suspended bodies of the Americans. All is true and all is diabolical. Everywhere we meet with an *importateur*, a magician who casts the spell, who delivers up a certain number of persons to the devil; we find the spirits served by their fluids, gradually spreading themselves over the world, after the manner of miasmata; now, by means of magnetism, now by means of the tables, the tempter multiplies his conquests. We are already surrounded by sorcerers, their numbers will enlarge immensely, if we do not take care. It will no longer avail to burn them, although it may have been right to burn them in former times; but in default of funeral piles, we may, at least, oppose books, journals, and exorcisms to the modern successors of Urbain Grandier! These formidable sorcerers of magnetism and the tables will finally deliver our bodies and souls to the demons, if they are not exorcised in time! the occult world is agitated; unknown to us, it is deciding upon our dearest interests; the devils who formerly assisted at the *sabbat* * producing convulsions or wielding the wand, are at this moment confiding their revelations and their supernatural powers to somnambulists or to *mediums*; nevertheless, nothing is changed, the evil is even more serious than ever, and more than ever should we guard against "intelligences served by fluids," against "the supernatural grafted upon electro-magnetism and the nervous fluid!"

* The nocturnal revels of the demons.—*Trans.*

I do not wish to turn this matter into ridicule. I hold it to be a very serious and a very grievous thing. Religious materialism has at no epoch, adopted language so *naïvely* audacious. If we go back to the doctrines of the Middle Ages, we shall find nothing that is not spiritual in comparison. Beyond charms, amulets, spells, contracts with Satan, possessions effected by contact, and deliverances effected by a formula, there was still a glimpse of something inexpressibly sad and truly diabolical, which recalled to mind the fact that we have souls ; the impurity and the infamy even, of the descriptions of the *sabbat* and the discourses held by the demoniacs, established the moral side of the possessions. At the present time this side is effaced, whatever may be said to the contrary. I magnetize an invalid ; a spirit pops in upon us ! I form the chain above the table, another spirit hurries along ! I can no longer put a fluid in play, without making a demon move and speak ! Without knowing it, without willing it, I effect infernal prodigies, I deliver myself, I deliver my friends, my neighbors, my entire country to an invasion not less diabolical than fluid.

Formerly, we sought the explanation of extraordinary facts in some unknown physical laws, of which we did not as yet possess the key ; henceforth, you are to demand explanation of the spirits. The spirits have an answer for everything. And dare you speak of religion, of Christianity ! And do you not see that in spite of your righteousness and your intelligence, you place yourselves far below the philosophers of the 18th century ! They, at least, even in the most deplorable errors, even in the criminal war they made upon this Gospel which they had no right to deny although it had been so perverted as scarcely to be recognized, they at least aspired to a development of the moral man. But you, all preoccupied as you are in opposing exorcisms to rotations, you only drag us down into these lower regions, where huddled together in confused stagnation, are to be found materialistic superstitions, and that latent paganism, which under cover, more or less dense, of Christian forms, has not ceased to persist. There dwell the devils, with

horns, tails and claws ; devils at the disposition of those familiar with the phrases of evocations, devils that the magicians install at pleasure with this or that person, devils, in short, that the Devil himself has invented, in order to make himself forgotten, and consequently, to make himself accepted.

The theory of "spirits" could not succeed but by the support of a past full of analogous wonders. It was necessary to meet the spirits everywhere, both good and bad ; it was necessary to heap up a mountain of miracles and two mountains of sorceries ; it was necessary to re-write history from the marvellous point of view. M. de Mirville has not failed in his part, and I must render him the justice of admitting that after reading his book, one is ready to believe everything ; the Gospel alone surprises us by its elevated spirituality, and by its miracles full of sobriety. The head turns as we rise from the perusal of such a series of statements, and we do not, in fact, see why the spirits and their fluid manifestations should not have full play in our day, as they had in the temples of the idols, in the house of Socrates, in the convents delivered epidemically up to possession ; as they had among the shepherds of Labour, among the priests and among the laity occupied in turning the hazel switch ; among the honest magnetizers who have, without knowing it, been abominable instruments of Satan ; among the poor Jansenists who little thought they had made a sort of compact with the Devil.

To all this, we are bound to oppose something more than mere shrugs of the shoulders ; first, because it would be unjust to turn into ridicule a work, in several respects very remarkable ; secondly, because ideas are tenacious of life, they will suffer railery, but they do not die of it, they fear nothing but serious refutation. It is pretended that we only keep foolishness alive by taking it seriously ! I am convinced of the contrary. While some procure themselves the easy pleasure of a laugh, without well knowing why, others say that these things have not yet been answered, and consequently cannot be answered. In the meantime, the greater portion of the public adopt an intermediate position, and persuade themselves that there is something

to believe, while others, elsewhere, persuade themselves that there is something to do. Generalities are accommodating ; they lend themselves to everything. It is by general axioms such as we have alluded to, that errors are introduced, accredited, and finally predominate. The point in question then calls for argument rather than ridicule ; we are required to condescend to specialities, to consider the facts face to face, to weigh the proofs, to prove in our turn, that the demonstrations do not demonstrate, that the evidence is not attested, that the miraculous and diabolical legends do not bear a careful scrutiny, that the pretended truths brought forward contradict the most positive truths, that physiology and physics reveal to us facts that cannot be contested, to prove, in fine, that all pretext to supernatural explanations may be removed, if we will deign to have recourse to natural explanations, and admit the possibility of certain laws yet unknown.

For my part, I have all the less hesitation in entering the list, since M. de Mirville seems to enroll me, *nolens volens*, among the number of his partisans ! He does it in a spirit of kindness for which I thank him ; but yet, he does it. Without bad intentions, I feel assured, he quotes a letter written by me, but omits that portion of it which expresses my convictions of the purely physical nature of the phenomenon. This letter, addressed to the *Journal de Genève*, becomes a letter addressed to the *Gazette de France* ! It may easily be comprehended that it is not seemly for me thus to figure in a camp which is not mine. I cannot consent to lend my name in support of "knocking spirits," of sorcery, or in glorification of the atrocities of the Middle Ages.

Still further. If it be my duty, in my own name, to decline this responsibility thus imposed upon me, it is especially important that I should decline it in the name of my fellow Christians, in the name of the evangelical faith. It is important that the world should be qualified to compare the two parties and the two standards. Upon the one is written : Sorcery, exorcisms, charms, talismans, compacts, spells, horned devils, phantoms,

loups-garous, fluid manifestations of spirits, tables endowed with supernatural intelligence ; upon the other, is written : The supernaturalism of the Bible, nothing more, nothing less. If there are people who imagine they will make Christians in proving that rotation or magnetic passes produce prodigies and even foretell the future, it is time that others should be found, who seek elsewhere, the means of converting souls to Christ. The world must see that the believers are men little disposed to credulity, determined to make use of their good sense, determined also and before everything else, to make use of their Bible, and to cite in presence of its infallible tribunal, the miserable juggleries, with which, to their great shame and their great detriment, the imaginations of men have been peopled.

This is not the place to enlarge upon the topic. Everybody sees that the "ridiculous" study of the "Turning Tables" conceals some grave problems. Shall the physical agent foreshadowed by Animal Magnetism, be at last entitled to a place in the list of facts proclaimed by the natural sciences ? Shall the natural sciences, in their turn, be defended against the invasion of a theology which everywhere tends to substitute miracle for phenomena ? In short, shall Christianity be responsible for the gross inventions of the Middle Ages, that are resuscitated in the broad light of the 19th century ? The Turning Tables enable us to reply to all these three questions.

If they were to render no other service than that of acquainting us with the secret sentiments, the true sentiments of a certain school, we should owe them gratitude. Thanks to them, men, ardent by nature and too sincere perhaps, have been induced to unroll a programme which is nothing less than reassuring. We now know to what point they would carry us back, were the power entirely in their hands ; we know, at least, in what direction they would impel society ; and that, with the best intentions in the world, for the intentions are frequently worth more than the acts, the doctors, better than their doctrines. *Obscurantisme*, according to M. Saint Bonnet, intolerance, according to *l'Univers*, Christianity, according to M. de Mir-

ville ; here we have an *ensemble* that possesses the merit of homogeneousness. No one will henceforth remain in ignorance of the exact position of things ; the world will know that the infamous practices of Loudun have found approvers, and that this sort of righteousness does not seem revolting to everybody. Let it be duly noted.

I have now stated the question to which I shall devote the last two portions of my work ; I have designated as my principal adversary, the party that sustains the "Spirits." Will it be found amiss, that before engaging in the combat, I should once more complain of the support that science lends to those superstitions at which it is indignant, and to those retrograde tendencies which make it afraid ?

When a man is charged with a providential mission, he is bound to fulfill it. The mission of science in this world is by no means inconsiderable, and she may acquire a character of high morality in the accomplishment of it, provided a proper spirit conducts the guiding rein. It depends upon her to disarm charlatanism, and to deprive public credulity of its aliment. But, in order to do this, she must keep her eyes open rather than shut ; she must study rather than utter idle ejaculations ; she must not allow the fear of compromising herself to overcome the love of truth in her heart. When public discussion is suppressed, secret societies are created ; when a scientific investigation of facts is refused, superstitious explosions are prepared.

This has hitherto been the experience of the world. I shall not recur to it. On two different occasions, once in relation to Animal Magnetism, once in relation to Turning Tables ; by the interment of the report of M. Husson, and by anathemas recently fulminated, scientific men have given an immense support to credulities which it was doubtless their intention to discourage. Powerless to destroy the facts, they have unfortunately been powerful enough to make their natural interpretation suspected. The result was easy to foresee ; a spirit of

improvement, little scrupulous, has too often seized hold of magnetism ; the champions of sorcery are in a fair way to seize hold of Turning Tables.

And what gives me most fear is, that many scientific men apparently find nothing wrong in all this. They seem to say that provided their manual of physics remain intact, the rest is of little consequence. Prodigies ! granted. Prodigies are not laws ; they do not come within the legitimate scope of scientific study.

Therein lies the explanation of the cordial welcome at the present day accorded to many strange lucubrations. I am aware that a certain dignified review relates with an air of conviction, various ghostly stories, and then M. de Mirville proves to us beyond a doubt, that the journals have in general shown themselves far from severe towards his books and his reports of sorceries at the Parsonage of Cideville.

Once more, let the distinguished men to whom I appeal, well understand the importance of the part they are about to take. Their voice will have much authority where the point in question is the appreciation of a physical phenomenon ; it will have very little weight in the appreciation of a supernatural phenomenon. In combating the latter, they cannot repair the evil they will have done by persisting in a misapprehension of the former. That which they refuse to examine, they give over with their own hands, to charlatans or legend builders. In what way have they been enabled to put an end to the ridiculous rôle assigned to the comets ? by raillery and a folding of the arms ? No. By studying and by establishing the law of their motion in space. Suppose that electricity had not yet been discovered, suppose that we should suddenly hear of light produced, shocks communicated, attraction exercised, and to all this, the scientific men should content themselves with exclaiming : Absurd ! yet flames and attractions would none the less continue to be manifested. So with the present phenomena : that which is refused admittance under the title of a physical law, soon finds a place under the head of magic or miracle.

It has been, it will be thus with the tables and their spirits. We are first indignant at certain credulities, but we finally submit to their influence. Between derision in the beginning, and complete acceptance at the end, there is something in common: the refusal to examine. Let us examine for ourselves, and let us not count too much on certain vague repugnances of the public reason. These repugnances will be less strong than impulse and curiosity. It is more amusing to interrogate Henry IV. or Lord Byron, than to establish the existence of a fluid, and laboriously set ourselves at work to gather the proofs of elevation without contact.

I have insisted upon these considerations because there is still time to act, and because I trust that among men of science, there is to be found more than one who will deem it an honor to render us the inestimable service of attaching his name to one of the greatest discoveries of the age. To penetrate into the domain of mixed phenomena, to throw light upon the experiments of magnetism by experiments with the tables, to determine in this matter, the part of physics and that of physiology, is an enterprise well worthy our efforts.

The number of facts that come to take their place in the broad light of day, is so continually increasing that one of two things will happen: either the domain of natural science must consent to enlarge its limits, or that of supernatural science will extend itself beyond control.

In the mean time, while waiting for the men of science to engage in the combat, and thus make amends for the services they have hitherto rendered to superstition, it becomes necessary for the unlearned men to try their hand against it. I am thus induced to present to the reader the considerations embodied in the following chapters.

CHAPTER II.

THE COURSE TO PURSUE.

THE supernatural in general, will then next occupy our attention. It shall be my endeavor to avoid the deplorable confusion which reigns in most books written on this subject. Ordinarily, there is nothing to be found in them but an accumulation of facts and certificates made out according to rule ; then, according as the author is or is not prone to the marvellous, he summons us to believe what we are incapable of refuting, or he launches forth, almost at random, some gross jest or inadequate explanation. It results therefrom, that the attentive reader remains perplexed. Not knowing how to reply, reluctant to admit all, he most generally overcomes the difficulty by a grand summing up, by a prudent middle course. He accepts sorcery, provided there is not too much of it ; he accepts something, on condition of knowing neither why nor wherefore !

Let us endeavor to throw a little light on this grand discussion.

The reader has the right to demand, before anything else, what thesis I intend to establish, upon what principles I rely whereby to prevail, and by what series of arguments I succeed in my demonstration.

And first, what is the supernatural ? I have already replied that it cannot be defined in regard to God and the real harmony of His laws. Here, we are, and shall always be, in absolute ignorance. But in regard to man, the supernatural exists. Although the limit may be very uncertain on many points, although many facts (often by our own fault), are bandied about

between the miraculous explanation and the physical explanation into which a little more attention and a little more courage might have made them enter, there are known, incontestable laws, axioms that are invested with an evidence, immediate, entire and universal. That which is contradictory to them is supernatural ; the Bible so declares it, for it appeals to acts in opposition to these laws, as proofs of the Divine action. Let us content ourselves with this popular definition furnished by Scripture : it will suffice us, empirical as it is. Let us then content ourselves with saying, that to raise the dead, for example, to foretell the future, to possess knowledge which we have not acquired by any known laws, is to enter upon the domain of the supernatural.

This granted, I authorize any person, whomsoever he may be, to prove that any supernatural event whatever has taken place on this earth since the days of the Apostles.

Let me be well understood.

I not pretend that miracles or sorceries are in themselves impossible, for the Bible expressly attests them.

I do not pretend to maintain that prodigies, either divine or diabolical, have not indeed been accomplished since the times of the Apostles. Although strongly inclined to believe that there has not been a single instance of the kind, yet I am not so imprudent as to affirm what Scripture does not in positive terms affirm.

I maintain only one thing : whatever may be the possibility of the supernatural in itself ; whatever may have been its reality in the ages which separate us from the immediate disciples of Jesus Christ, these ages furnish no *certain* prodigies. Between the possible and the certain, between the real and the certain, I here see a chasm which no one is authorized to fill.

This is my first proposition, the second is as follows :

Not only is the extra-biblical supernatural not certain, but that which is represented to us is beyond question radically false. To admit it, would be to repudiate both common sense and Divine revelation, which with one accord protest against it.

I shall proceed, then, to combat, with the utmost hostility, all this supernatural of bad alloy which disturbs the soul, obscures the intellect, and injures the sanctifying action of faith in our hearts. My adversary is formidable, I know. The human mind has unhealthy curiosities that crave satisfaction, and the attraction by which it is impelled towards the occult sciences cannot be denied. Nevertheless, I feel myself very strong when I consider the true nature of the tendencies in question. Mystical-materialism (and it is none the less gross because it is mystical), is reproduced under various forms which scarcely disguise it, through which it is always to be perceived in all its ugliness. Now, there comes a shower of legendary miracles to bury in oblivion those of Jesus and his Apostles ; now, there are multitudes of sorcerers, who, like the Phœnix of old, literally spring up from their cinders ; now, we have revolving wands ; now, we have tables which reveal to us the mysteries of another world ; and through all these transformations, the epidemic character of the phenomenon is never effaced, it never ceases to propagate itself step by step, it never ceases to connect the supernatural with a touch, a formula, a rotation.

Indeed ! and I openly declare it : many times have I been called upon to struggle with the materialism which denies the supernatural, but it has not so much disgusted me as the self-styled Christian materialism which in this way affirms it. The great narrators of miracles and sorceries are also the great executioners of the materialists, they are with reason terrified at the discouraging theories which seem to find in the positivism of M. Comte their most logical form : yet what are they themselves doing ? They gather together the most enormous collections of anecdotes, not less impious than ridiculous. They exclaim : " Materialists, look ! This is Christianity ! " And they do not see that their Christianity, thus travestied, is precisely the cause of infidelity, nay, I might almost say its excuse ; that it made the infidels of the last century, that it makes those of our own time.

Let us not imitate the rationalists ; but neither let us insult religion by our foolishness. I own to a rationalism which I hope never to abandon ; it is the employment of my good sense, the faculties with which God has endowed me, and of which he does not cease to recommend the use. Because the cross of Christ is " foolishness " in the eyes of sinful men, we are apt to conclude that we cannot lay too many follies at the door of the Gospel, but we do not remark the admirable equilibrium which God there establishes to the contrary, between the mysteries that confound us, and the powerful reasoning, the simplicity, the sobriety, the thrilling truth of the teachings and narrations to which our intellect and our moral sense are forced to render homage. Close the Bible, open the Apocrypha, the books of legends, the lives of saints, and you will feel yourself suddenly transported into the midst of a fantastical, puerile, low supernatural, which not only differs from the supernatural of the Bible, but absolutely contradicts it.

It is complained that our generation does not believe in the Devil, and this complaint has certainly some foundation. This is one of the gravest symptoms of the malady that consumes us, in spite of certain devout recrudescences. But it remains to be seen if the faith in which we are wanting will be re-established by the intervention of a fanciful devil, a melancholy creation of the perverted imagination of the most obscure periods in our annals. And when we have succeeded in making this invention received, shall we not find it to be the surest way of concealing the real devil ? If I wished to forget the great tempter, the enemy of souls, I would try to substitute in his place, the demon with the cloven foot, who signs contracts with his victims, who deals in incantations and exorcisms, who formerly transported sorcerers to the scenes of their nocturnal revels, and who is now employed in breaking the dishes or rattling the tongs of the Americans. Circulate among men, convictions like these, and the dogma of the devil will be obliterated ; the more a man believes in your devil, the less will he believe in the Devil of the Bible.

It would really seem, as we listen to certain men, that to take from them their gross credulities, is to create a void around them ! If God does not daily effect miracles, if the demon does not manifest his presence by the incessant subversion of natural laws, they fancy that they are alone in the world, that God is no longer there, that Satan has ceased his infernal work, that the empire of this world has passed into the hands of physics, mechanics, and chemistry ! Those who thus believe, do not know then that God acts continually in our midst, that his sovereign finger is to be traced in all the events of life, in small things as well as in great ! They, therefore, require miracles to aid them in recognizing the finger of God, and sorceries to aid them in recognizing that of the Devil.

This is a most narrow and erroneous method of considering our relations with the invisible. Scripture teaches us to regard the devil not as a sorcerer, but as a tempter. Scripture invites us "to sit down with Christ in heavenly places," to visit, to inhabit our true paternal mansion by prayer and faith. A Christian fears not to fall into Deism, for lack of miracles ; his God is called, "a God at hand, not a God afar off." He has been taught to say : "Whither shall I go from thy Spirit, or whither shall I flee from thy presence ?" Jesus has promised him the Holy Spirit, "the Comforter, that He may abide with you forever." The Saviour does not abandon his redeemed : "I am with you to the end of the world I stand at the door and knock. If any man open unto me, I will come in unto him." One thing is certain, that not a hair of our heads falls to the ground without the will of our Father who is in Heaven, that the angels are ministering spirits employed for the good of those who love God.

And yet we hear of loneliness, of a spiritual void ! And in default of miracles and sorceries, we are in danger of finding ourselves alone upon the earth, delivered up to the exclusive domination of natural forces ! Far from this being the case, it is your spurious sorceries, your false miracles that isolate us, that interpose between God and us. I have need to get rid of this

hideous or grotesque supernatural, ere I can find myself again in the presence of God. This spiritual void will only disappear when I have chased away these deplorable visions, these harpies that obscure the sky above my head. I can scarcely describe the state of oppression in which I am placed after reading certain legends or works on demonology. It is an atmosphere in which I cannot breathe, I must have air, the pure and invigorating air of truth. Deliver me from ridiculous miracles ; deliver me from prodigies produced by magic, by anointment, by charms, by contact or rotation.

Deliver me, have I said ! Let there be no fear however. I do not intend to oppose violent means or summary proceedings to this odious nightmare. I have blamed the use of such weapons, I shall not resort to them. "To deny point blank," is a convenient course, which Bayle has with great reason condemned. I am fully of the opinion of the Marquis de Mirville when he reminds us that "what is, is possible," and I willingly unite with him against a skepticism little sincere, which, for want of good reasons, forges bad ones at any price. It is well known that Lavoisier, pushed to extremity in the question of *aërolites*, maintained "that the stones had been heated !" I trust I shall not bear the reproach of such arguments.

I have therefore sought to give serious consideration to the opinion of my adversaries, and to the basis upon which it reposes.

This basis is the value attributed to testimony, and I shall have no trouble in showing that therein lies the fundamental error, which explains all the others.

As for the opinion itself, it has a merit which it would be unjust not to recognize : it is logical and courageous ; it does not recoil before its proper consequences ; it traces them out through their various deductions, and with rare intrepidity to the end.

Faithful to his principles, fully aware that testimony once accepted as proof in such matters, we have no longer the right to reject a single fact properly attested, M. de Mirville admits

the most astounding anecdotes. Does he speak of prodigies obtained by enlightened magnetizers, "it is of material objects which, in the most secret places, far from all adroit or profane hands, fall from, no one knows where, upon the amazed spectators. It is of a plant, a foreign plant, *which might be sought for in vain throughout the country*, yet which comes to lay itself down on the knees of an invalid, at the very moment when its employment as a medicine has been prescribed by a somnambulist. It is of relics and bones of martyrs which have probably followed the same course, and which are borne through the air by a dove, like the sacred phial of holy oil." (P. 307.)

Does he speak of the sorcery and witchcraft which afflicted the parsonage of Cideville, he shows us "dogs pitched and tossed about in every direction, up to the ceiling, down on the floor, knives, brushes, breviaries flying out through one window and returning by the opposite." "The mayor receives a violent blow on the thigh, and the cry extorted from him by this violence is answered by a benevolent caress, that instantly removes all pain." The child reared by the curé "continually sees behind him the *shadow* of a man in a blouse." This phantom is that of the shepherd magician. "But here carefully give your attention! At the very moment the child complains of the phantom's presence, one of the ecclesiastics standing near, affirms to have distinctly perceived behind him *a sort of greyish column or fluid vapor.*"

I pass over the black hand that descends the chimney and gives such frightful blows on the ear and face. I arrive at the verification of a particularity already remarked in the ancient practices of sorcery. Some one of the individuals concerned, remembers it very apropos, and communicates his idea to the visitors of Cideville. These mysterious *shadows* dread the point of iron. Thenceforth we no longer hesitate, and at the risk of sliding a little into superstition, we instantly begin the work. We furnish ourselves with long pikes, which we thrust about as rapidly as possible, in whatever direction the noise makes itself heard. But it is difficult to strike correctly, on account of the

instability of the agent ; several pikes are then plunged into the same spot without any apparent result, and we are probably about to give it up, when one of our number, having hunted more skillfully than all the others, causes a flame to gush forth, and at the heels of this flame follows a smoke so thick as to make it necessary to open all the windows, under penalty of an immediate asphyxia. (Pp. 327 to 331.)

The smoke having disappeared, they resumed their work with the pikes, and applied them without mercy. The shepherd, also, carried the next day the bloody trace of the wounds he had received . . . on the body of his phantom.

M. de Mirville relates, moreover, the history of some mysterious stones, which, a few years since, bombarded a house in *la rue des Grès, à Paris*. "One very curious detail mentioned by him, (the master of the house) excited our wonder. This chamber was filled with stones and fragments of long, flat tiles : their form struck us. "How happened it?" we asked him. "You see, sir, that I had shut up my pigeon. Well ! carefully notice that crack." In fact, it was a very long and narrow crack. "Well, sir ! from the moment I shut up my pigeon, all the stones assumed the form you see here, and all arrived through this crack, which is scarcely as large as they." (P. 372.)

In America the spirits multiply their fluid manifestations to infinity. "We will leave the improvised concerts, men suspended in the air, caresses by superhuman and icy hands, like those of Cideville." (P. 401.) Of far more value is the history of the seven or eight phantoms perceived in the "Phelps' House," "clothed and draped with great skill, either by the aid of the carpet in the apartment, or by the aid of wearing apparel left there the night before. All these phantoms were kneeling, each with an open Bible before him." And it would not do to jest with them, for "the son of Doctor Phelps, a lad about twelve years old, was once lifted from the ground *and carried across the chamber, as though transported by the hand of an intensely vigorous man.*" (P. 402.)

I must abridge, otherwise I should transcribe the whole

volume. We meet there with sorceries of a nature to make the blood run cold, children devoured by *loups-garous*, predictions made by persons under the influence of possessions, and by somnambulists, which never fail to be accomplished. Everything is there admitted without contradiction, without criticism: the unguent of arms that cures wounds at a distance, the man who traverses Paris through the air, and who is deposited by the spirits on the *Boulevard des Batignolles*, the magic of M. Dupotet and the action of his cabalistic lines, everything, even to the stories of the Turning Tables, which astonish us not a little, unsuspecting champions though we are, of the tables and their grand facts. Now, it is a dog that whirls round and round because he has been touched by a turning table ! Now, it is a massive table which refuses to obey while the chain is formed around it. "Tired of the struggle, every body descends into the street, and behold ! in a few minutes the rebel table starts off on a waltz, as if to set us all at defiance !"

And M. de Mirville was right in excluding nothing. By what authority should he exclude anything ? The absolute value of testimony once admitted, how could he undertake to distinguish between all these accounts, equally well attested ? He shows himself a good logician, and I warn those who ridicule him, that before they laugh, it will be well to ask themselves why they laugh. Whoever shall proclaim the theory of M. de Mirville on the subject of testimony, will be obliged, under pain of inconsistency, to adopt his conclusions. The anecdote of the Cochin Chinaman exorcised by his missionary, and suspended two successive hours from the ceiling of the church, is very well attested. The anecdote of the Jesuit whose arm-chair flew through the air, is very well attested. If numerous honest witnesses have faith in such matters, we ought, also, to yield ours. After the death of the Apostles, there sprang up an effluvium of the divine and the diabolical supernatural, until then unknown, but which has since been constantly on the increase. Both are distinguished by a mechanical character, a legendary tinge ; but that is of no consequence : both are at-

tested. The mass of *bewitchers* and *bewitched* far exceeds what the most audacious imagination can conceive. In the earlier ages, entire convents and populations submitted to epidemic possessions, and were most assiduous attendants at the *sabbat*; at the present day multitudes, not less considerable, are led away by the demons of the tables, or those of the magnetizers. Still more : the number of the possessed, properly so called, is immense, and Gassner has estimated it at not less than one-third of the total amount of invalids. There is nothing here, then, that can be denied, for the certificates are according to rule ; and I am even of the opinion that, after having discovered the evil, there is no need to enter into any contest about the remedy. The health of societies so threatened will be found in exorcism. Let us exorcise the possessed, the magnetized and the magnetizers, the tables and those who make them turn ! Let us chase the fluid spirits from all their haunts, whether in tables or in houses ! That which a gesture has produced, a formula certainly can destroy !

But, before we yield, we will take the trouble to examine. Great questions are always questions of method. Is the method here adopted legitimate ? We are about to inquire for ourselves. M. de Mirville brings us continually back to his grand dilemma, either to convict the witnesses of fraud, or to believe their testimony. The question is very badly stated. Aside from fraud (which has played its part), there are many other things to take into consideration : error, precipitation, exaggeration, enthusiasm, various deviations, all of which are produced by the almost irresistible action of a general current of credulity. We are to take into consideration the metamorphoses to which stories are subjected in passing from mouth to mouth. We are to take into consideration, the testimony influenced by fear and the confessions extorted by torture. We are to take into consideration that many purely physical phenomena explain a mass of facts which ignorance ranges under the head of the supernatural. In fine, we are to take into consideration, two special observations, not generally understood : first, that

the marvellous does not pertain to our sphere, and therefore, our testimony on this subject has not the value it would have on any other ; secondly, we are subject to hallucinations, both collective and individual, the tendency of which is to produce absolute certainty in our minds, regarding scenes that have taken place only in our imagination.

I propose then to treat in the following order, the principal question to which this portion of my work is devoted :

In the first place, I shall examine into the real value of proof when it is brought to bear on supernatural facts, and shall especially occupy myself with testimony.

I shall notice in the second place, the various causes for suspicion in the stories presented us. I shall show that either delusion or falsehood are to be perceived throughout the whole of them.

In the third place, I shall submit these stories to a comparison, which will doubtless appear as decisive to many of my readers as it is to myself. I shall place them in face of the declarations of Holy Scripture. I shall prove that we must make a choice, that we cannot at the same time, admit the truth of the Bible, and the truth of stories founded on sorcery and witchcraft. The infidels themselves will find, perhaps, that between the proofs of Christianity and those of sorcery, the game is not exactly equal.

I shall, lastly, point out the very natural and very adequate explanation with which the greater part of the prodigies related to us, comport.

Such is the plan of this study. Once in possession of the solution of the general problem, it will not be difficult to apply this solution to the special problems, and to the supernatural apocrypha in its various manifestations : false miracles, spurious sorcery, the magic of magnetism ; and thus we shall be led to apply it to the spirits of the tables, the last manifestation, in honor of which all the others have been resuscitated.

CHAPTER III.

THE VALUE OF PROOF AND ESPECIALLY OF TESTIMONY.

BEHOLD us then even in the heart of the debate. According to the manner in which testimony is apprehended, do we encounter or avoid insoluble difficulties. Indeed, there is no middle course : we must either accept all well attested stories, however foolish they may be, or rejecting some, cast suspicion on all attestations relating to that class of subjects. The question of testimony then, should be boldly met, in its length and breadth ; unless this is done, the firmest intellects will be disturbed, the clearest heads will become dizzy in presence of the impossible facts which sincere and intelligent witnesses vie with each other in affirming. Lacking a theory on testimony, we should be reduced to that most dangerous moral condition in which men believe not what they have the reputation of believing, in which they reject not what they have the reputation of rejecting. The whole soul is then sick, and the various principles of spiritual life, reason, conscience, faith, are equally injured.

No one will be so unwise as absolutely to exclude testimony. Without it, we should have neither science, history nor religion ; the man who will not believe what he has seen, lowers himself to the level of the brutes.

This is not contested. The question of its limits, then, alone remains. How far does the value of testimony extend ? Are there matters regarding which it becomes particularly a subject of caution ? " I believe," said Pascal, " the testimony of

those who die for their faith!" The argument is weak. There never yet has been an imposture which has not had its witnesses ready to shed their blood in its behalf.

If dying witnesses are not irrefutable because of that reason alone, are enlightened and intelligent witnesses to be considered more worthy of credit? This is M. de Mirville's principal proposition. "See, now," he exclaims, "the most scientific men have admitted these facts of sorcery, medical practitioners have proved, beyond a doubt, the possession of the Ursulines of Loudun, the incredulous minds of the eighteenth century yielded their belief to the prodigies of the cemetery Saint Médard, the most skeptical Americans declare that they have heard and seen spirits; henceforth, we have no longer the right to doubt.

Nevertheless, it is a right in which I still persist, which I am not yet willing to renounce. I assert that the incredulous are often very credulous, that the world has always been filled with people who do not believe in God, although they believe in apparitions. I assert that the 18th century, all occupied as it was in demolishing Christianity, indemnified itself by cordially welcoming the most ridiculous superstitions, the most impudent charlatans, Saint Germain and Cagliostro, soothsayers and necromancers. Even among those who reject sorceries and who pass their life in battling against them, I might cite examples of some, who, without criticism and without examination, adopt facts regarded as certain by their cotemporaries. Read the letters of Saint André on magic; you will see that this grand doubter, who so well shows the puerility of the fables he has undertaken to examine, does not hesitate to admit the marvelous virtues of the *white magnet*! "A sword, a knife touched by this stone, pierces the flesh without spilling a drop of blood, without inflicting the slightest pain on the wounded person."

The reason of this inconsistency lies in the fact that a man of science, though skeptical, does not see all that he attests, and does not see perfectly all that he actually sees; that, suspicious in regard to certain assertions, he is very complaisant in regard

to certain others ; that he frequently affirms on the faith of another ; that he submits especially, to reigning opinions and credulities *à la mode*. It is by such a current as this that many of the most enlightened, the most independent minds are controlled.

The fundamental error of M. de Mirville, then, lies here : when men of science, medical practitioners, infidels have admitted the reality of a story, that story is incontestable ! Such a principle carries a man very far. He is disarmed against lies and the gross delusions circulated from hand to hand and raised to the third or fourth power. He renounces the privilege of examining things for himself, he abdicates. Now abdication, legitimate and even obligatory upon us in presence of the testimony of God, is culpable when in presence of the testimony of man.

And what follows ? M. de Mirville represents nothing as doubtful, he has no longer the right.

The Boktes of Thibet rip open their belly lengthwise ; then, having passed their hand over the wound, everything returns to its ordinary state, without leaving the least trace of this diabolical operation ! There is in a certain *lamaserai* or Tartar convent, a tree, the leaves of which bear the impress of divers Thibetan characters ; this may be relied on as a fact, for Father Hue has seen it. Father Bouchet, another missionary, has seen (what he calls seen) a Chinaman whom he was about to baptize, transported through the air ! Certain magnetizers deposit in a bottle of water a virtue of such a nature that “ this *traveling influence* at a distance of even two hundred leagues and after an interval of months, fulfills all the recommendations of its employer. While he sleeps, forgets or ignores, *it* must forget nothing, must weigh everything, and always decide *according to the circumstances* !” Other magnetizers lift their somnambulists from the ground and cause them to fly around the lights of the apartment ! (Pp. 255, 259, 274, 279, etc.)

The above is all perfectly attested. If testimony has the value attributed to it by the Marquis de Mirville, it is our duty to follow his example and reject nothing.

But here, the position becomes embarrassing. The annals of the world present to us numerous facts not less strongly attested, the falseness of which is no longer questioned. I desire to mention some examples, at the same time requesting my opponents to tell me what reasons they can have for denying that which is affirmed by so many respectable witnesses. Upon the grounds usually assumed by them, there can be but one answer : these accounts, demonstrated to be false, are incontrovertibly true from the first line to the last !

And first, what is there better attested than the primitive traditions collected by the Fathers ? However unworthy of the confidence usually reposed in it, testimony in regard to religious matters may be, it is impossible that the memory of places marked by the grand events of Christianity should not be accurately transmitted. Those who lived at the time of our Saviour could not have forgotten the precise place of his death, the spot from which he ascended into Heaven ; neither could those to whom they related it have lost its remembrance. But the confusion introduced into testimony by mixing it up with belief, is so great as frequently to dazzle the excited imagination of Christians, and prevent them from seeing the most palpable and simple realities. Without any bad intentions whatever, all the primitive traditions have been disfigured and transposed. Every event in the Gospels has had its *grotto*, in spite of itself, for in these grottoes was found a mysterious charm which caused them to be preferred.

It is a grotto, which, notwithstanding the express words of the New Testament, has been substituted for the manger where Jesus was born, "because there was no room for them in the inn." It only lacked the plains of Ibrahim Pacha in Syria, for the absurdity of the tradition to be shown up in all its nakedness. The Arabs of the country then established themselves in the convent, carried off the ornaments of the sanctu-

ary, behind which was found an antique tomb. Now, whoever is at all acquainted with the religious scruples of the Jews, must know that they would not have converted their sepulchral caverns into stabling for an inn.

At Nazareth another grotto ! It is there that the virgin Mary received the visit of the angel. Unfortunately, nothing proves that the Jews inhabited holes under ground, and still more unfortunately, the cellar remaining at Nazareth does not fit the size of the house itself, which, as every body knows, was removed to Loretto.

It has been decided that the transfiguration took place on Mount Tabor. I was of the same opinion when I visited that mountain ; but what was my surprise on beholding its entire summit covered with antique ruins, thereby furnishing conclusive evidence that at the time of Christ a small fortified town must have stood there. Moreover, are we certain that the Evangelists refer to Tabor ? Their account seems to indicate a mountain much further north.

Have we been more fortunate in locating the place of the ascension of Christ ? It has been thought proper to designate the Mount of Olives within sight of Jerusalem, in connection with this event. One thing only has been forgotten—to read over the explicit declaration of Luke : “ And he led them out as far as Bethany ; and he lifted up his hands and blessed them, and it came to pass as he blessed them, he was parted from them and carried up into heaven.”—Luke xxiv. 50.

Testimony is already somewhat compromised. What will it be if we take a survey of the primitive Fathers and the ecclesiastical history written by Eusebius ! There, figure fragments derived from ocular witnesses, direct depositaries, whose powers of appreciation should merit our whole confidence. And yet, who, at the present day, will believe in the correspondence between Jesus and the king of Edessa ? Who will believe in the martyrdom of James precipitated from the pinnacle of the temple, and attendant circumstances which render the account materially and morally inadmissible ? Who believes in the in-

spiration of sibyls, in the fire issuing from the foundations of Jerusalem? Who does not know that the famous miracle of Constantine's cross has been related in two or three different ways, absolutely irreconcilable with each other? Who does not know that Augustine very gravely relates and positively affirms the metamorphoses of men into asses or camels?

There is no prodigy better attested than the flight and downfall of Simon the magician. Irenæus, Eusebius, Augustine and other Fathers, all agree in the details. And yet, whoever has bestowed but a small amount of reflection on this legend, whoever has asked himself whence comes this strange book of the *Clementines*, and the important rôle its author attributes to Simon the magician in relation to Peter, does not doubt he had in his mind's eye the simple development of a fable engrafted on the passage in the book of Acts, in which Simon the magician is reproved by the Apostle.

The miracles of Apollonius of Tyana are so well attested that many Christians tremble not a little when they find them opposed to those of Jesus Christ. I will indicate a method of quieting their fears. Let them open *the Life of Apollonius of Tyana*, written by Philostratus, and judge for themselves if it be possible to attach any serious importance to predictions so strangely introduced! I am assured that Apollonius exclaimed, "Strike the tyrant!" at the very moment Domitian was killed at Rome; I am assured that he delivered Antioch from the gnats that infested it. Unfortunately, the same witnesses show him to me at the castle of the wise men, among the dragons and the white does; they conduct him to the cataracts of the Nile, "the noise of which is so great, that those who approach too near it lose their hearing;" and these samples of their powers of criticism gives me the measure of credit that is to be accorded them.

"But" it is said, "these witnesses are not to be compared to those who bear testimony in favor of ancient and modern sorcery! I grant it, and I willingly go one step beyond. Let us advance into history; let us see if solemn and ill-founded attesta-

tions are the exclusive privilege of the first centuries of the Christian era.

I shall pass over in silence some historical lies, which have lacked nothing in point of brilliancy, duration, and verification ; which at one time universally prevailed, but which are at the present day, universally rejected: the false Decretals for example. Certainly it would seem that a document of so much importance, the basis of so many bulls, could not have been the pure and simple product of imposture ; and in accepting it for so many ages the world has admitted that it carried with it sufficient proofs of its origin. Nevertheless, the world was mistaken, and the reader will, I trust, dispense with a demonstration which is now generally decided to be superfluous.

I shall likewise neglect the abundant source of argument furnished me by the statements of travellers. We there find conscientious witnesses who relate only what they have seen, and who have seen what does not exist. The pilgrims of the Middle Ages returning from the Holy Sepulchre, tell us of wonders they contemplated such as have never since been seen. This may be said in passing, and without referring to other testimony less respectable. Were we to consult Aulus-Gellius, Pliny or even travellers of a much later date, we should read of men with only one eye in the middle of the forehead, and who see better at night than during the day ; of whole families, whose voice bewitches and produces death ; of nations covered with feathers and nourished by the perfume of flowers. We should there discover the wonderful stone, possessing the property of restoring sight to the blind, the secret of which was obtained by observing the swallows make use of it to cure their little ones when their eyes had been put out. A certain book of travels published in the 17th century tells us of the inhabitants of the island of Formosa, who are furnished with a long tail, similar to that of an ox. In opening the *transactions* of the Royal Society of London in 1724, we there find a grave dissertation in Latin on the vegetable lamb of Tartary, described *de visu* by several persons, taken in earnest by naturalists, and com-

mented upon by Scaliger, who affirms that it yields blood when ever an incision is made in it.

Let us pass to facts accompanied by less questionable attestations.

De Lanere gathers the following from various sources of testimony and official reports : " When the executioner threw La Sabaudine (one of the pretended sorcerers of Labour in the 17th century) into the fire, the Almighty, in order to show that she was really a sorceress, and manifest her loathsomeness, permitted a swarm of toads to issue from the top of her head ; whereupon the people so overwhelmed her with blows from sticks and stones that she died more from the bruises received than from the effects of the fire. But with all their efforts, there was one black toad they could not kill, that triumphed over the flames, sticks and stones, to make his escape like some immortal demon, never afterwards to be found.

I shall be told perhaps, that things have actually happened thus, that in genuine sorcery it is not absurd, and that I should not decide the question by the question. This is very just, and in order not to fall again into the same error, I will sacrifice some facts, where my right to consider the falsity as evident may be contested. Ambrose Paré affirms to the marvellous phenomenon of nails issuing from the mouths of persons possessed by evil spirits. Who knows that he is not right !—Borel, in his *Centuries*, relates examples of *persons of his acquaintance*, the glances of whose eyes were highly corrosive, eating into glass and mirrors to such an extent as to make it necessary to renew the plates from time to time, the surface being entirely spoiled and the glass full of holes. He *knew* a lady, who, for that reason, could not long use the same spectacles. Can any one say that this is not a fair case of sorcery !—Delrio asserts that certain men have been seen in Spain, called Zahuris, because of their lynx eye ; he declares that *he saw one* in Madrid in the year 1575 ; these men perceived springs and other objects in the interior of the earth.—Albert the Grand speaks of two

brothers who opened the most firmly closed doors, one by presenting the left, the other by presenting the right side. "And why not?" it is said.

Why not, indeed ! Does not Agobard, Bishop of Lyons, attest the power possessed by certain men of rousing the tempest and transporting themselves through the air by means of the *aura levatitia* ? Were not a man and a woman one day brought to him, *who had been seen* to fall from the sky ? Is not Sandoval very accurately posted up on the history of that sorceress, who, in the year 1547, obtained from one of the inquisitors of Navarre permission to make her escape if she could, and who, having commenced by descending like a lizard, the walls of the tower which served as her prison, finished by flying away in presence of numerous spectators, who only lost sight of her when she passed the horizon ? This is a very simple thing ; it is the A, B, C of sorcery ; we are not to be astonished at such a trifle !

Well, then, let us show by other examples that facts the best certified, are found to be entirely false.

The famous *tooth of gold* has been attested as nothing ever was before or will be again. Men saw it, men have touched it ; men of science wrote great folios in explanation of the phenomenon. What reply have we to so many direct, impartial, enlightened witnesses, to so many skeptical and learned men, who personally inspected the mouth of the Silesian child ? The tooth of gold would have figured in the books that are at this very time published by the school of the marvellous, the school of the Middle Ages, if, unfortunately, the part played by the hand of fraud, in covering a natural tooth with gold leaf, had not been detected. Frauds are not always detected ; the teeth fall out, the children die, but the folios remain, the testimony subsists in all its majesty.

We have here a devotee, a person inspired by Heaven, her history is authentic as possible. We are in the middle of the eighteenth century. Mary Bucaille was regarded as a saint by the inhabitants of Valogne and its vicinity. She worked mir-

acles ; she cured a multitude of sick given over by their friends and physicians. Still more : she had obtained from God the greatest of favors ; in imitation of François d'Assise and Catharine de Sienne, she bore on her body the stigmata of the cross. By one especial favor not accorded to any one else, these stigmata were removed every Friday in commemoration of the Passion. These are certain facts, whose authenticity is easily established by the attestations of myriads of witnesses. Yet, everybody is not convinced, and some of the most suspicious take it into their heads to investigate the matter more closely ; they demand that the new saint shall be subjected to solitary confinement, and narrowly watched. The trick is finally discovered, and the people, passing from one extreme to the other, can scarcely be prevented from burning as a sorceress, this woman bearing the marks of so many miracles.

In point of miracles, those of Saint Hubert's stole merit a place by themselves. Their number, their brilliancy, the testimony which surrounds them, seem to leave no legitimate sphere for doubt. Since the year 825, pieces of the stole have been repeatedly cut off without diminishing its primitive size. The holy fragments are inserted in the forehead of persons bitten by mad dogs, and their cure is consequently effected. Now, this is all well enough. But, unfortunately, there are critics, who, for want of something better to do, have torn down all this scaffolding to the very foundation, and given the lie to the witnesses who support it ! Other witnesses show that the journey of Hubert to Rome is a fable ; there is no mention of it either in the Anonyme his Cotemporary, in Godescalc, in Stephen, or in Anselm. The visit to the tomb of the Apostle Peter, the stole brought by an angel, have also fallen by the same blow. Doctors of medicine have looked into the matter, likewise doctors of theology ; it has been declared suspicious, this strange regimen prescribed to the *taillés** of Saint Hubert—a regimen

* Persons cured of hydrophobia by being touched with fragments cut from the stole of Saint Hubert.—*Trans.*

comprising swine, capons a year old, fish with scales, etc. Nevertheless, the University of Louvain held on to the miracles, the stole, and the journey to the tomb. It also, in its turn, pleaded the value of testimony. "What! has the world during nine hundred successive years given itself up to delusion! Does the fact that so many thousand persons have been preserved from madness, prove nothing! Should not the evidence of the stole alone, which, so frequently cut, always remains intact, be sufficient to confound the incredulous!" Alas, no. The incredulous have persisted, and I have even reason for believing that they have carried the day. Among the remedies for hydrophobia at the present time, we do not often hear fragments of the holy stole suggested. It must be confessed that this is not a favorable sign of the importance attached to twenty generations of witnesses.

Neither is there any lack of witnesses to the purgatory of Saint Patrick. It is well known that the inhabitants of Ireland, having preserved doubts of the reality of the purgatory, the saint obtained God's permission to convince them by a miracle. Thereupon was opened the mysterious cavern where infidels miserably perished, but from which believers came out with their faith brilliantly confirmed. All legend aside, the fact of the testimony subsists. The descents into the Hole of Saint Patrick are innumerable; they are authentic, for no one descended into it without permission of the bishop; they are confirmed by statements related with full details, beginning with that of the Chevalier Oween in the twelfth century, and continuing down to cotemporaneous accounts. To-day still, the sacred well has its visitors who remain in it a night and a day; they contemplate its mysteries, and submit to all the pains of purgatory. To-day, still, certificates analogous to that which Edward III. in 1358 delivered to a Hungarian noble, are presented to those who have undergone the trying ordeal. In short, if there be anything certain in this world, it is the wonders of the Irish cavern, and I can easily comprehend that, in view of such a mass of testimony, preachers, in their sermons, should so often have appealed

to the unquestioned notoriety of this fact.* Nevertheless, both testimony and witnesses have been utterly rejected by the Church of Rome, which has not permitted the insertion of the fact in its breviary !

Would you have examples from science itself? Take the well known anecdote of the luminous and burning stone brought from the Indies and presented to Henry II. Men of science gave it their serious consideration; large volumes were filled with discussions on the subject, and the grave De Thou did not hesitate to give it a place in his history. Whence came his error? An entirely too poetical description of lighted charcoal had been published by Fernel, first physician to the king; Jean Pipin, physician to the Constable de Montmorenci, reported it to his compeer, Myzand, a physician in Paris, who communicated to De Thou the contents of this letter received from Boulogne. De Thou inserted the fact in his work, which was then in press. The authority of this work was such that no one dreamed of doubting any portion of its contents. The compilers of natural wonders, men like Fabricius, Chioceus, Camérarius, were not slow in enlarging their collections by the story of this singular discovery. This was not all; men of science demonstrated that the thing was quite natural: "Why," say they, "should there be any surprise at this wonder? Is it the first time that such things have been seen? Do not Pliny, Solin, and Saint Isidorus describe a stone of fire which they call *pirites*?"

The comedy was complete. Dissertations were written on the stone *pirites* which burns and explodes, upon the stone *phlogites* which comes from Persia and appears internally on fire, upon the stone *phlegontide*, etc. De Thou however discovered his mistake. He obtained from the French libraries permission to suppress the passage so inconsiderately introduced.

* That the visitors to the Hole of Saint Patrick may have mistaken the murmuring of the wind whistling through the narrow passages for the wails of souls imploring prayers, is of little consequence to us; this is not the question. It is very clear, that at the foundation of all incorrect, though sincere evidence, there is either hallucination or illusion. But it is precisely because the sources of error are so numerous, that proof by means of witnesses is inadmissible in matters involving the supernatural.

But foreign libraries were not so condescending : they could not resolve to sacrifice this curious document, and it still figures in all the editions of De Thou's works published by them.

Suppose now, that the error had not been recognized, or that the German editions had been the only ones to reach us, what objection could we have offered to the affirmations of a man like De Thou, supported by the testimony of three physicians ? Yet this is the manner in which testimony often originates. Once admitted as a fact, it is used and multiplied to infinity. This is so true, that even in 1676, after the retraction made by De Thou, many persons still reasoned about it. Scientific works at this very day, contain observations on phosphorus, in which we read, "This stone has left all the virtuoso of this country (Berlin) in doubt whether it be the same, or, at least, similar to that which is spoken of in the sixth book of the history of the President De Thou, as being presented to king Henry II. at Boulogne, by a stranger from the Indies."

Every one knows that myriads of other marvellous things, equally ridiculous, have been seen and attested in all ages. Solin, not satisfied with describing the phenix, adds that "this bird was taken in Egypt in the year 800, and exhibited in an assembly by order of prince Claudius. This fact is related in the acts of the Censorship of Claudius which are still extant." By looking a little further into the matter, we shall actually find that Solin, who copied from Pliny, forgot to transcribe the doubts expressed by the latter. But it is frequently thus that testimony is embellished as it grows old. Every body reproduces it after his own fashion and the testimonial remains. What is written is written !

It is most curious and instructive to observe how language, with the very best intentions, is frequently perverted from its original meaning. The public was quite excited in 1725, by communications sent to the *Mercure de France*, having reference to a Portuguese with the eye of a lynx. A reverend father thought proper to interfere in the debate, and also to quote the name of the celebrated Huygins, in support of his assertions,

"There has been seen at Antwerp," he wrote, a "prisoner whose sight was so sharp and piercing as to enable him to discover articles beneath any sort of covering, no matter what its thickness, material or color, so that it be not tinted with red. *M. Huygens is my guarantee for a fact so singular* ; he wrote an account of it to the reverend father Mersenne, a monk of our order and his intimate friend." Father Lebrun, our authority, had the curiosity to trace this story to its source (which unfortunately is not in all cases possible to do), and this is what he read in the letter of Huygens : "In recompense for the *royage du Paradis* which you communicate to me, I must tell you of something strange enough, although old, and, which serious men of age and station *declare* that they themselves have seen ; there is said to have been a prisoner at Antwerp whose eyes possessed the faculty of penetrating garments." Thus, the matter being inquired into, Huygens had not seen. If these serious men of age and station, could, in their turn, have been consulted, it is probable that we should have been again referred to some one else.

The great miracle of the standing still of the sun, which is said to have taken place during the battle of Charles V. with the Duke of Saxony, at the passage of the Elbe, has been trumpeted over all Europe. The Duke of Alba was careful not to contradict these fine stories ; but what was his answer to the direct interrogatories of the king of France ? "I confess to your majesty, I was so occupied with what was passing on earth that I could not observe what was taking place in heaven."

There are many varieties of official yet inaccurate testimony. Here is an example which owes its special character to the action of an over-excited imagination. I quote it from Lamothe-le-Vayer : "Baptiste Legrain says in his sixth book of the *Decade* of Louis the Just, that he himself observed at Paris, at eight o'clock the evening of the 26th of October, 1615, men of fire in the sky, fighting with spears Yet I was in the same city on that very evening, and I solemnly declare that I most assiduously contemplated the phenomenon to which he alludes, until

eleven o'clock at night, that I saw nothing of what he relates, but merely quite an ordinary celestial appearance in the form of flags which seemed to shoot forth flames from time to time." Was he wrong in adding, "nevertheless, the prodigy of the *Decade* will in a hundred years from this time be quoted as an indubitable fact?" Much testimony, not less certain, not less conscientious, not less enlightened than that of Legrain has no other origin.

Imposture, properly so called, explains a great number of the would-be supernatural prodigies. A striking instance of this appears in the story of a girl, who in 1699, gained her living by becoming alternately dumb and miraculously cured. Cured the first time at Beauvais, where processions marched through the streets in her honor, and where she received the name of the *devotee of Beauvais*, she went from there into the neighborhood of Rouen, to practise the same tricks with equal success, and we see her led in triumph to *Notre Dame de Liesse*. But her most brilliant cure took place at the tomb of James II. Her fame was noised abroad in every direction, even to the very moment when the cheat was discovered and she stealthily decamped.

What Englishman did not believe the story of the woman who was reported to have given birth to several rabbits? The gazettes of 1726 relate the fact with a certificate in due form from the presiding physician, which was approved by the king's anatomist, who published the account in detail! All would have remained indisputable—the certificate, the account, the approval—if the king of England had not seen fit to look into the matter. The over credulous anatomist was obliged to sign a public recantation. He acknowledged that he had been the dupe "of a most abominable fraud.

The history of the *consecrated beads* is familiar to many persons. The nuns belonging to the convent of which Jeanne de la Croix was the superior, had solicited her to obtain from Jesus Christ the consecration of their chaplets. They were therefore deposited in a box and carried by the angels to heaven. The box

being brought back and opened, nothing was found therein; but a very agreeable perfume diffused itself throughout the apartment, and then all the chaplets were discovered in the box. Charms were attached to each bead, and even communicated to other beads which the consecrated beads had touched. These beads drove away the Devil, extinguished fires, were safeguards against epidemics and thunder, dispelled scruples of conscience, etc. This was all proved (let it be emphatically remarked), by ninety investigations and by more than fourteen hundred witnesses. Yet the clergy of France, Bossuet at their head, thought it their duty to contest it, and so well did they conduct the contest that the value of the investigations and testimony was reduced to zero.

At the very time of the great debate between French Catholicism and Spanish Catholicism, the physicians strongly cried up another miracle in support of the discovery of the day: the elixir to restore sight to the blind. They brought in proof the cure of the Emperor Jean Paléologue, who had recovered his sight at Ferrara, during the session of the Council. Who did not regard the fact as beyond a doubt? Why should it not be supposed to rest on positive testimony? But a man has been found, possessing patience enough to devote himself to a complete historical study of the matter, and he has ascertained that the emperor never had any disease in his eyes. On the contrary, he neglected the affairs of the Council, because he spent all his time in hunting, which is hardly the occupation of blind men.

A general rule: Do not pause with certificates, however plausible they may be; look at things more closely: in proportion as we approach them, the marvellous vanishes.

I have already given examples of testimony very little worthy of faith on the simplest of all questions, those of natural history; it would be easy for me to multiply them. We should see defile before us, with their attestations in the margin, descriptions long since consigned to the domain of fiction. How many learned authors have spoken of the king-duck of Scot-

land, produced without eggs, proceeding, sometimes from shells found on the sea-shore, sometimes from the fruits of the willow, sometimes from worms formed in the rotten wood of vessels ! A long list might be made of similar grave dissertations, resting on proof and testimony : *de anseribus Scoticis*. I indicate this example and pass on. To take still another class of facts: we are all aware that testimony is not wanting to prove the suspension of statues and tombs in the air by the power of magnets. The tomb of Mahomet, the famous statue that was *seen* in a temple of Egypt, and spoken of by the Fathers of the Church, that of Mercury, that of Cupid : all of them so many ridiculous stories, which the gravest men have vied with each other in confirming.

If they would still content themselves with confirming ! but they are desirous to explain. Now these explanations often make us think of the misapprehension in the public mind concerning our debate of the Turning Tables. Let us choose one fact as an example, one of the best authenticated. Aristotle, Pliny, Plutarch, Ælian and others, mention the famous little fish, the remora, which arrests the course of the largest vessels. How do they account for such a phenomenon ? Some are content to speak of an occult quality which counteracts the action of the ship. This is a convenient system, one that exacts no investigation, and which is adopted in regard to the Turning Tables by all those who would get rid of the difficulty by means of the sacramental words: Very extraordinary ! Others are not satisfied with the occult quality, but undertake to join to it a supernatural influence. They represent in relation to the remora the school of our "Spiritualists." Others seem to have a presentiment of M. Babinet's discovery on the incomparable energy of incipient motions ; some of them tell us of the struggle between *first qualities*. "Moisture is a property of the ship ; the fish excels in dryness. The dry principle is more active than the moist principle. Is it not clear, then, that the quality in the fish must overcome the quality in the vessel, and consequently arrest its motion ?" "Is it not clear," said a man

to us the other day, "that you can raise without effort a weight you could not raise with effort?"

But my business at present is not with the skeptics; it is with the credulous, those who maintain as incontestable that which appears to be sufficiently attested. I pray them to remember that history is full of facts well attested, and yet very questionable. What quantities of anecdotes does it vouch for as certain which will not bear the test of a close examination! We have seen what became of the testimony of Huygens when it was looked into; is it not probable that the same fate would attend that of Descartes, if the same opportunities were presented for an inquiry into the real circumstances of the story in which he figures in connection with a learned man of Dijon? The latter had occasion for a book which was only to be found at Stockholm. He addressed himself to Descartes through the medium of the French Ambassador, M. Chanut; he described from a distance, the Queen's Library, the shelf on which the book was placed, its style of binding, with the gilding thereon. He made a mistake in nothing, although he had never visited Stockholm.

Accounts of a similar nature abound. The Princess de Conti, a niece of Mazarin, foresaw the fall of her palace; the Countess of Hamilton saw, in a terrible vision, the sudden death of the Duchess d'Orleans. Marvellous! I would merely ask, where are the vouchers for such stories? Have things actually happened thus? Has nothing been added, arranged, or subtracted afterwards? Were there no circumstances to facilitate the marvellous visions or previsions. We know absolutely nothing about it. We always forget, moreover, one important consideration: simple accident may bring about coincidences. Now, it is these only that are remembered; the failures are overlooked. An instance of this is seen in that most surprising of all magical revelations, related by Saint Simon in his Memoirs. The Duke d'Orleans was in the daily practice of consulting sorcerers, and had had predictions by hundreds and by thousands. Among those which he told to Saint Simon, we meet

with one that seemed to be in a manner confirmed by the event, namely, the death of Louis XIV. and the regency. That prediction alone was reported by Saint Simon. This is all simple enough ; it always has been and always will be thus. If another prediction had been realized instead of the one referred to, it would have figured in the Memoirs, and the death-bed scene would have been left out.

I invite those who find me difficult in point of testimony to carefully ponder on the instruction that may be derived from the regularly organized miracles which fill our annals : cures of the king's evil, tests by red-hot iron and by floating. These things have not taken place once only, but they have arrived at the condition of a national institution. They have had not one witness merely, they have had millions, they have had successive generations of witnesses ; and yet, who, at the present day, will consent to admit the reality of these facts, so generally and for so long a time attested ?

Our kings have cured thousands upon thousands of people afflicted with the king's evil. Guibert de Nogent speaks as an ocular witness of cures effected before his day by Louis the Fat. Those effected by Louis IX. are mentioned in proper terms in the bull of canonization. Charles VIII. touched and cured many cases of king's evil, both at Rome and Genoa, during his expedition into Italy. The facts have been carefully verified, and the authors who mention them, remark that illusion was impossible, since even little children were among the individuals cured.

" Well, be it so ! " it is said. " Our kings all had the gift of miracles. What harm is there in that ? " I shall not ask you why this gift vanishes in presence of increasing light, why Louis XVIII. Charles X. and Louis Philippe cured no one. I will not even ask you how it has happened that the gift of curing king's evil was transmitted to England the moment the English kings laid claim to the crown of France, or how you explain the fact that the Protestant kings possessed it as well as the Catholics. Elizabeth also touched the sick, and certifi-

cates of cures effected by her, abound in an equal degree with those effected by our sovereigns.

Certificates ! We have indeed a most formidable array of them in support of the tests with red hot iron and boiling water. From the sixth century to the thirteenth, these tests are constantly employed ; they have left their impress on the language itself, and we still say. "I will put my hand in the fire." At first we find them referred to by way of deciding the dogmatic quarrels between the Catholics and Arians, and official statements without number attest that whenever those trials were made, the Catholics plunged with impunity into caldrons of boiling water, which scalded their adversaries to death. The laws of France, at a later day, admitted this mode of criminal procedure, and Charlemagne, in his Capitularies, exacted of his subjects implicit faith therein, *absque dubitatione*. Whoever was scalded in boiling water was put to death without mercy.

We infer then, that there were many persons whom the water did not scald. The fact is proved, and as it is proved, in addition that the clergy who applied the ordeal, were incapable of lending themselves for the space of six hundred years to a prolonged and systematic fraud, it thus becomes demonstrated that we are in possession of some thousands of indubitable miracles. Unfortunately it sometimes happens that the innocence of those who are scalded, and the guilt of those who pass through the ordeal unscathed, are discovered. What explanation is furnished us for such mistakes in the miracles, and what becomes of so much accumulated testimony ?

The king Lothario accused his wife Thietberge of the horrible crime of incest. She at first denied the fact, and proved her innocence by the test of boiling water. It is a pity that having thus established her purity, she should afterwards have confessed her guilt.

The trial with red hot iron seemed still more conclusive. What fraud could be imagined in cases where men were required to take up and hold in their hands for any length of

time, a ploughshare heated to a state of incandescence, to walk barefoot on red hot iron, or to put their hands into a gauntlet of red hot iron, which extended as far as the elbow? And these miraculous decisions were blindly accepted. An empress, the wife of Otho III., was burned alive because her accuser had sustained unharmed, the ordeal of hot iron.

Whence comes it then, that the public voice should finally make itself heard in protestation against these most evident manifestations of the divine interposition? Whence comes it that the world has with one accord acknowledged that the result of these tests is frequently in an inverse ratio to the truth? Whence comes it that the clergy who formerly passed their time in blessing red hot iron, and the councils who tolerated its employment, should now be so earnest in its condemnation? Why put a stop to miracles? Why, because illusion and fraud invariably insinuate themselves into such matters; because the testimony which supports them never has had and never will have any value. Questions are still decided after this fashion among the savages of Oceanica and among the negroes of Eastern Africa, the most deadly poisons becoming harmless in order to render homage to innocence. I should not be surprised if the champions of testimony were to propose to imitate these wretched people, and restore the good times when Louis proved his right against Charles the Bold by furnishing thirty men, ten for the trial of cold water, ten for the trial of boiling water, ten for the trial with red hot iron.

I have just mentioned cold water. This was, in reality, only one form of the miraculous experiment, of which the often repeated success figures in a great number of documents. For a long time after the Middle Ages, cold water was still employed in judicial proceedings. I have under my eyes at this moment, an official report dated June 11th, 1696, wherein it is attested that all efforts to *plunge beneath the water* certain individuals accused of sorcery, had been *in vain*. Hence, their title to the name of sorcerer was no longer to be doubted. Indeed, less than that was required to make a sorcerer! Even, at the pres-

ent day, if a man bound hand and foot should be thrown into the Seine, and should obstinately persist in floating on the surface of the water, the event would be generally regarded as a miracle. It is true that at the present day, no person in such circumstances could remain on the surface. Certain prodigies are indissolubly linked with certain periods of time.

Be that as it may, innumerable documents attest that cases of floating daily presented themselves when miracles were in fashion. Bandits and thieves fearlessly accepted the ordeal, fully believing that they would sink, but lo, and behold ! they remained astonished and dismayed on the surface ! The Manicheans or self-styled Manicheans of Soissons, were burned merely because they floated. In the times of Bernard, the Catholic Church often employed, and always successfully, this operation as an argument by which to convince its enemies. From heretics, it was extended to sorcerers. The church asserted and undertook to prove "that sorcerers were necessarily lighter than other men because the devil whose substance is necessarily spiritual and volatile, penetrating all parts of their bodies, communicates to them his own buoyancy." In virtue of this fine reasoning, it continued to *bathe* (this was the term), and to burn.

"But, after all," it is said, "the fact of floating on the surface of water does exist ; how do you explain it ? I do not attempt to explain it, for the very good reason that I do not believe in it—neither do you. The floating is attested in the same way as the trials by boiling water, and red hot iron are attested ; as analogous trials which still take place in Africa, are attested. I see in them all, only one illustrious example of the little credit to which testimony in general, is entitled. The greater the number of official reports, authentic declarations and unquestionable facts, the greater is my triumph ; for it is certain that these unimpeachable certificates establish only one tremendous lie, a lie which has endured for ages, and never will your stories of spirits or sorcerers be better attested than these.

These are false ; that point was settled the day on which the

discontinuation of miracles was ordered ; real miracles are not so importunate that we would deliberately rid ourselves of them. I know not, or rather I know too well, how this holy justice of the Middle Ages originated ; I know the value to be attached to the official documents of those times. I know also by what illusions certain inquiries were surrounded when the current of credulity set in their favor ; I know to what extent it is easy to believe things in accordance with reigning superstitions. Permit me, therefore, to abide by the judgment you have yourselves pronounced, and let me tell you, "no one, bound hand and foot, has ever floated on the surface of the water, for no one can do it now. You have never performed this miracle, for you no longer venture to attempt it. By your own confession, you have sorcerers without number ; why not induce some of them to throw themselves into the water, promising to pull them up by a rope if perchance they should sink to the bottom ?

Ideas change ; for if sorcerers no longer float, neither have they floated at any former period of time. The properties of water for drowning then, were the same as now, and never was any one thrown into it, who failed to sink beneath its surface. There was, indeed, at Toulouse, an iron cage which was lowered by means of a lever, and I do not know that it met with any resistance up to the time when all these things were done away with. Thieves, sorcerers, heretics, all these became as light as corks ; in our days, they have probably resumed their ancient weight.

But a truce to pleasantry ! The subject is too serious. When I think of the fearful amount of violence, calumny, injustice and cruelty which these odious practices have sheltered and sanctified, when I think of so many innocent victims sacrificed on the altar of human depravity, draped in the garb of religion, I feel neither the disposition nor the right to laugh. The question concerns a long series of abominations ; it has reference, moreover, to a mortal malady inoculated upon successive generations, a malady which attacks at once the conscience, the

reason and the faith. For whom and what shall history reserve her severity, if she has only complacency for such crimes and for such epochs?

I admit, that of the instruction we derive from them, the condemnation of testimony is not the most important. Yet they also furnish us this, and I have endeavored to profit by it.

Yes, we have already many historical lies. Shall we labor to increase their number? Nothing would be more easy. To-morrow, were we to set ourselves about it, a thousand, nay, ten thousand sincere and earnest witnesses might be brought forward in favor of any prodigy whatever, from the virgin who turns her eyes upon Rimini, from the marvellous events of daily occurrence in Sweden, to those which take place with not less regularity among the Hindoos and Tartars. To-morrow, the miracle of Saint Januarius, the sacred fire of Jerusalem, the phantoms and celestial concerts of the American Spiritualists, the magical operations of the Baron Dupotet, will all be supported by attestations from those who have *seen* them.

A hint to the champions of testimony! I have shown what it is in fact; let us now see what it is in principle.

It will have been remarked that the uncertainty of testimony begins at the precise point where the supernatural likewise begins. As soon as man, in his investigations, leaves the *terra firma* of ordinary subjects to launch forth on the broad ocean of the marvellous, he ceases to see things as they really are, he ceases to relate exactly what he has seen; his discernment, his self-possession, his common sense appear to abandon him.

There is, then, a line of separation between the facts which pertain, and those which do not pertain to our competency. Our reason has a real, but not an indefinite sphere. Demand of it to call up the remembrance of great events, and provided it can come at them by means of direct knowledge, it will, in all times and places, furnish historical narratives worthy of faith; but if religious traditions are mixed up with these an-

nals, the reason immediately drops the reins, the most extravagant imagination seizes them. We are astonished at the accuracy with which an Aristotle, even in his day, described and classified material objects, while the most sensible naturalists abdicate their powers of criticism when they extend their researches into the region of monsters and prodigies. The ancient philosophers readily succeed in establishing the rules of logic, and even in analyzing the operations of the human mind with a certain degree of fidelity ; but on the confines of metaphysics, philosophers of all ages seem to be affected by vertigo. Indeed, in everything that relates to divine revelations, the nature of the gods, of miracles, the operations of good and evil spirits, human extravagance gives itself full scope.

We are so constituted that our incompetency exposes itself the moment we overstep the boundary of natural facts. Within it, our belief may rest on the testimony of men ; beyond it, we can believe only on the testimony of God.

This is not the place to show that this testimony is not wanting, and that its proofs are within our reach, although its contents infinitely surpass our understanding. For the present, we will confine ourselves to the study before us, underlining the fundamental distinction we have just established. In matters of testimony, certainty entirely ceases the moment we put foot on the territory of the supernatural. In fact, let the reader recall to mind the greater part of the examples I have just quoted ; he will see for himself, that the witnesses lose all right to our confidence, only when they relate (and often with the best intentions) accounts of miracles, sorceries, monstrosities, visions, trials, destined to manifest the judgments of God, &c.

The language of Montaigne, in reference to this subject, is replete with good sense. He was urged to believe in sorcery, facts were cited to him ; he was shown certificates ; men who thought it right for him to be skeptical on other points, blamed his skepticism on this. He was summoned to yield his faith to the testimony of the sorcerers themselves, at their own expense. This is the answer of the great doubter, who had good

reason for doubt on such matters : “ Yet even in this, it is said that men are not always to insist upon the proper confessions of these people ; for men have sometimes been known to accuse themselves of the murder of persons who have afterwards been found living and well. In these other extravagant accusations *I would be apt to say, it is sufficient that a man, what recommendation soever he may have, be believed in human things ; but, of what is beyond his conception and of a supernatural effect, he ought then only to be believed when it is authorized by a supernatural approbation. The privilege it has pleased God to give to some of our testimonies ought not to be lightly communicated* and made cheap. I have my ears battered with a thousand such flim-flams as these. ‘ Three, saw him such a day in the East ; three, the next day, saw him in the West, at such an hour, in such a place, and in such a habit.’ In earnest, I would not take my own word for it. How much more natural and likely do I find it that two men should lie, than that one man, in twelve hours’ time, should fly from East to West ? How much more natural that our understanding should be perverted by the volubility of our disordered minds, than it is that one of us should be carried by a strange spirit upon a broomstick, flesh and bones as we are, up the shaft of a chimney. Let us not seek delusions that are external and unknown—we, who are perpetually agitated with delusions that are domestic and our own. Methinks, a man is pardonable in disbelieving a miracle, as far at least as he can divert and expunge the verification of it by no wonderful ways, and I am of St. Augustine’s opinion, that it is better to lean towards doubt than assurance in things hard to prove and dangerous to believe.”*

The incompetency of man in matters relating to the supernatural could not be more distinctly proclaimed. But Montaigne has proclaimed rather than proved it, although he briefly

* The English edition of Montaigne’s Essays, published in 1776.—*Trans.*

indicates one or two reasons for this incompetency. Let us attempt to do what he has left undone. Let us see how it is that so much worthless testimony has sprung up, and upon what grounds it is explained.

We must, first of all, endeavor to gain some idea of the empire exercised over the soul by a current of wide-spread credulity. If it be difficult to keep one's legs in struggling against Alpine torrents, for a still stronger reason is it difficult to preserve entire self-control when beaten about by the violent waves of reigning superstitions.

Represent to yourself a period (and this period lasted more than ten centuries), in which the imagination was daily haunted by stories of visions, angelic apparitions and nocturnal revels of the demons ; in which, images, whose impurity far exceeds anything that the most infamous romances dare depict, were constantly placed before the eyes of men, women, and even young children ; in which, unhealthy exaltation of the intellect existed in an endemic and epidemic state ; in which the people were in the habit of living surrounded by sorcerers, phantoms, spells and ghosts ; in which the mind had been taught to refer to supernatural causes, the most trifling incidents of ordinary life, and no one was protected against these errors by the knowledge of the Holy Scriptures. Represent to yourself a period in which the popular history was composed of such stories as fill the collection of the Bollandists,* and then tell me if you think it possible to place any value on the testimony which offers itself in support of the supernatural. As for me, I am only surprised that the confusion was not more complete, and that momentary hallucinations did not give place to real insanity. The books of Bède, of Pierre le Venerable, of Hincmar, leave no room for doubt on this point. We feel that all is explained, from the inundation of legendary miracles, the success of trials by fire or water, to the denunciation of sorcerers and the confessions of sorcerers themselves.

* The books of the Bollandists were a compilation of legends and lives of the Catholic Saints, the collection of which was begun by Bollandus.—*Trans.*

Under the action of such influences, superstition has gradually and silently gained ground, becoming a deep seated conviction in the minds of men. The least appearance transforms itself into reality : it has been heard, it has been seen, it has been done. Rumor magnifies as it spreads : it is the fable of the man who laid an egg.

We may add that the will, in such cases, completes the work of moral contagion. We often believe through ignorance ; but we also sometimes believe because we are determined to believe. Certain facts appear edifying, we do not willingly forgive those who venture to put them in peril, and it then becomes difficult even for the heads of the Church to throw light upon a false miracle or a false relic previously famed for the cures it has performed. All was not ignorance and innocence, either in the divine or diabolical wonders of the Middle Ages.

The facility, moreover, with which we succeed in forging for ourselves, convictions almost sincere, is a very curious phenomenon. We begin by inventing or exaggerating ; we finish by firmly believing. It is by no means clear to me, that those most infamous liars, the nuns of Loudun, did not, sometimes, during their hours of nervous excitement, almost persuade themselves that they were really possessed. This would be an extreme case, and I do not affirm that it is so ; but it does not seem to me impossible for this strange illusion to be thus produced at intervals.

Be that as it may, it remains certain that fraud, properly so considered, has played a vast rôle in the formation of the wonders which have been transmitted to us, with their *cortége* of certificates. The well-known history of the Holy Nombriil is instructive in this respect ; it proves that in the opinion of many people (honorable people moreover), a lie that edifies should be maintained at all hazards.

It was at the beginning of the 18th century. The bishop of Chalons, in obedience to his conscience, had received from the Church of Notre Dâme, a little stone which, under the title of Holy Nombriil, had been for centuries presented to the adora-

tion of the faithful. Immediately a solemn petition from the canons, curés and parishioners of the church thus despoiled, is laid before *Monseigneur*. They speak of the antiquity of the relic, the impossibility that an error could have endured so long, the indulgences that had been gained by visiting the Holy Nombri, the miracles it had effected, "the daily relief it afforded them in their diseases," the benefit derived from it by the Duchess of Noailles, the bishop's own mother; they insinuate, in short, that she ought to be respected, "*although the relic which was the subject of the remonstrance were as doubtful as the petitions believed it to be true.*"

How many times the world has reasoned thus in regard to miracles, sorcery, judicial ordeals, God alone knows. The details being out of our reach, the part of fraud cannot be estimated, but thanks to certain discoveries, we are all the better prepared to suspect its extent. The miraculous events related by Saint André in his book, merit particular notice. To take one instance among others therein recorded, he mentions having seen a woman notoriously possessed by a devil, who was gradually transformed into a saint, and whose incontestable miracles visibly multiplied, until her fraud and other infamies were finally discovered. Stories of this kind abound; from *possession* to sanctity, there is but one step, and the testimony in support of it, is ordinarily such as to close the mouth of the doubters.

Testimony! Who, at the present day, will tell us to what special origin it may, in its various branches, be traced; whether to interested fraud, pious fraud, fear, excitement, or to hallucination? Who will even tell us which is the supposed, which is the real testimony?—for some of it is supposed. Dom Calmet published as a fact, a certain discovery of the Duke de Richelieu relating to vampires. Now, the Maréchal contradicted the Benedictine; yet, that did not prevent the assertion from obtaining a publicity in the dissertations of Dom Calmet, which its denial never will have.

Dom Calmet confesses, in his work, that an infinite number of fabulous facts and imaginary apparitions are in circulation. "I

myself have also related some," he adds, "in which I have very little faith." How calculated that is to reassure us! The author puts his reservations in the Preface, his random assertions in the body of the work. Now, books are read more than their prefaces, and we may take it for granted that all the facts, without exception, which figure in the dissertations of the learned Father, will always be quoted with this remark: "The fact is attested by Dom Calmet."

The number of historical lies, accredited after that fashion, is untold. The famous saying, "Racine will go out of fashion, like coffee," is attributed to Madame de Sévigné, who did not say it. Why? Because Voltaire was pleased to invent, and La Harpe to arrange it. The same La Harpe has arranged other things, and the prediction he puts into the mouth of Cazotte will eternally serve as a text to the champions of a certain species of the supernatural. We here see how history is written, and what use is made of old testimony.

I know of some of more modern date, not less successful, yet which is strangely perverted. M. Leon de Laborde speaks of the magicians of Egypt: the contents of the pages he devotes to them are already quoted, transcribed, and commented on in hundreds of books. It would be interesting to examine his work, and see if extracts have not been made from it which were never put in by the author. This examination would throw new light on the career of testimony, showing how it has been continually changed and magnified from century to century.

What has M. de Laborde related? That, when at Cairo, his curiosity had been excited to see some magicians. More fortunate than other travellers (than I myself, in 1848), he discovered one, who is worthy to be spoken of here. Achmed poured some ink into the hand of a child; he filled the chamber with perfumes of musk and incense; he traced figures, and repeated mysterious formulas; then, after having acted on the child in various ways, he succeeded in making him see divers figures: a Turkish soldier sweeping the Sultan's tent, the dif-

ferent personages thought of by M. de Laborde and Lord Prudhoë, his companion.

I will not say that M. de Laborde was, at that time, very young, and that, in spite of all his intellect, he gave a hasty welcome to facts, which, if he had been older, would have been subjected to severe criticism. I will not say that his experiments, successfully repeated by him on the banks of the Nile, have never, to my knowledge, been reproduced on the banks of the Seine, where there is no scarcity of young children, ink, or incense, or even the magic formula of which Achmed sold the secret. No, I admit that M. de Laborde was not deceived in 1827, and that he stands ready to renew the experiment in 1854. What conclusion do you pretend to draw from it? That he has met with the magicians of ancient Egypt! That he has attested and proved the reality of sorcery! I admire, in fact, the patience with which he allows this testimony to be imputed to him, testimony which bears not the slightest evidence of truth or design.

Indeed, this is only one of the most ordinary facts of Animal Magnetism. Apart from the formula, which serves no other end than to make an imposing introduction, the *ensemble* of Achmed's operations would have seemed to exercise upon the child, an influence analogous to that submitted to by magnetized subjects. That many similar effects are obtained without passes, properly so called, is no longer to be contested; that they are obtained without first producing sleep, and that a very concentrated will may put the magnetized person into that special nervous condition where the contact of intelligences is effected, seems every day to be demonstrated by facts. To this we shall presently return. The child submitted to such action, first sees the image imposed by the authority of the magnetizer; he next sees and describes images presented to the minds of persons with whom the magnetizer puts him relation. This is not more extraordinary than the impressions communicated by M. Dupotet, or the common experiment in which the same glass of water takes alternately, the taste of different liquors thought

of by the magnetizer, or the faculty by which a somnambulist sees thoughts and the representation of objects in my mind, when I demand of him to indicate them.

"But," it is said, "M. de Laborde has spoken of sorcery, not of magnetism ! It is here I would ask you to pause while I establish with precision the metamorphosis, by virtue of which thousands of stories not less innocent than this, have become corrupt histories of magic, eternal tests for charlatans and weak minds, irrefutable arguments in support of the most absurd doctrines. It was natural enough that M. de Laborde should have wished to give his history a dramatic and mysterious attraction ; there are few travellers who could have resisted the temptation. Yet the true opinion of the author may everywhere be seen. His Achmed is an "Algerine, a sorcerer by profession." M. de Laborde, in a spirit of loyalty, is careful to declare that he leaves out of the question, "the absolute reality of the apparitions and even a certain degree of accuracy in the responses. And that granted, as he cannot admit that Achmed has deceived him, or that he has deceived himself in regard to facts which are repeated twenty times under his own eyes, through an act of his will, what does he do ? Does he assert that it is sorcery ? Far from that, and without asserting any positive explanation, he very evidently inclines to attribute the phenomenon to magnetism. Listen to his own words. "Among a long list of secrets and extraordinary effects produced by words written on small bits of paper and the most absurd recipes, I remarked several which indicated a knowledge of physics that I should not have thought to find in Egypt, and others, which, *doubtless, resulted from the exercise of great magnetic power.*" "I can, in addition," said Achmed, "put any one to sleep on the instant, make him fall down, roll on the ground, throw him into a fit of passion, and, in the midst of his paroxysms, compel him to answer any questions and reveal to me all his secrets. When I choose I can also make the person seat himself on an isolated stool, and turning round with certain motions, I put him to sleep immediately ; but he

remains with his eyes open, speaking and gesticulating as when awake."

M. de Laborde likewise adds that the questions made use of by Achmed, recall to his mind, the *motions of rotation and attraction employed by the magnetizers*. It seems to me that this is clear, and that the witness of an operation in magnetism has been transformed into the witness of an act of sorcery. I would willingly refer this point to M. de Laborde himself; I do not think he has a very high opinion of his ingredients and his formula, which M. de Mirville conscientiously refuses to reproduce (p. 262), through fear of furnishing to his readers the means of conjuring up the devil !*

Testimony then, meets with strange treatment. Not only is it made to say what it does not say, but it is still more gravely distorted by being separated from its natural explanation. The marvellous often amounts to but little; it would disappear entirely if all the circumstances of the self-styled supernatural were known to us. Let me give an example.

The Baroness d'Oberkirch mentions in her memoirs, an astonishing vision of Paul I. Now, we have here one of those suspicious anecdotes that have been transmitted through several agents: the prince, then travelling in France, under the name of the Count du Nord, had related it himself. What plea should we have had for doubt, and on what ground could we have opposed such testimony, if by the merest accident, Paul I. had not again met Madam Oberkirch, and confessed to her that, led away by the example of people around him, and wishing also

* The general explanation furnished by Animal Magnetism, is sufficient, and with this I shall for the present remain content. If I were further advanced in my work, if I had already spoken of biological experiments, I might perhaps find in this special branch of magnetism, a still closer analogy. The biologized person is delivered up a prey to external suggestions: he sees, touches, hears, what he is ordered to see, touch and hear. Are not these precisely the facts in the case of the Egyptian child? Again, this singular condition is in a great measure produced by concentrating the attention of the subject upon a point which he must regard without interruption during several minutes. Was not the Egyptian child compelled to fix his eyes upon the ink in the hollow of his hand until he saw the image appear there which had been mentally suggested to him by the magnetizer, or by the minds of the persons with whom the magnetizer had put him in relation.

to have his mysterious tale, he had invented, with the utmost gravity, the whole account of the apparition of his grandfather, Peter the Great.

It would be very easy to augment the number of well attested apparitions. Take, for instance, the dialogues related by Saint Simon, as having taken place in the chamber of the Marquis d'Effiat during his last illness, every evening at seven o'clock ; how much would it be necessary to add to this story in order to rank it in the above named category ? A few moments previous to the appointed hour, the Marquis sent away his domestics, stationed (very brutally sometimes) his faithful friend Du Palais at the door, and immediately was to be heard the conversation of the invalid with a personage whose introduction remains inexplicable. But there are so many inexplicable things, the explanation of which is perfectly simple !

The careful student of history, knows in what manner traditions are formed. That which yesterday was only a tale of the imagination, presented as such, becomes to-morrow, an unquestioned, unquestionable fact. We see this demonstrated under our own eyes in the legend which seems to be growing out of the phenomenon of Turning Tables. I have already quoted some anecdotes mentioned by M. le Marquis de Mirville, the table that turns after the experimenters have left it, the dog that turns because the turning table falls on him. In vain shall we protest, in vain shall I affirm that my dog, placed on a table in full motion, has afterward evinced not the slightest wish to *pirouette* on his own account ; the prodigies are printed, and they will remain. Future writers will gladly refer to them, sustained as they are by the testimony of M. de Mirville.

How many marvellous things have reached us in a similar way ! We are utterly confounded when we behold the vast quantity of fables which have made themselves accepted as serious truths. There have been dissertations to explain the prolongation of man's life to four hundred years ; there have been dissertations to explain the extraordinary property pos-

sessed by some men of attracting precious stones and of rendering themselves invisible. It would seem that the world has endeavored to justify the words of Cicero : " I cannot account for the fact that an absurdity is never uttered, however great it may be, without finding some philosopher standing ready to attest its truth." Have there not arisen grave discussions on the value of the *Prophecies touching the election of the popes*, which were attributed to Malachi ? Has it not been deemed necessary to point out the precise date of the imposture, by proving that the predictions anterior to Gregory XIV., and the year 1590, were as correct as the predictions posterior to that date were false ? Note that during one entire century, the book of the Prophecies was held in great honor ; that certain coincidences, such as are always to be found, seemed to maintain its pretensions, and that other coincidences might, perhaps, be discovered there by any one disposed to take the trouble of comparing the elections of the popes with the more or less flattering designations of the pseudo Malachi : " The insatiable beast, the glorious penitence, the animal of the country, the apostolic pilgrim, the cross of the cross, the centre of the moon, etc." These sobriquets, which partake also of the nature of puns, are easily made generally applicable and thus conduct the reader to the epoch when, under the pontificate of a Roman Peter, Jesus Christ will come to judge the world.

I feel humiliated as I recall these things to mind ; but of what use are our past follies if they do not sometimes put us on our guard against follies in the future ? Fraud, popular stories, exaggerations, ideas assuming a bodily form, tradition employs them all. There is no creed that has not its marvellous manifestations ; no revolution, that has not its precursory prodigies ; always, on great occasions, we hear the echo of the solemn voice spoken of by Plutarch, the cry announcing to the world, the ruin of Paganism : " Great Pan is dead." I would advise those who do not yet understand how traditions are formed, to make a visit to the Chateau d'If ; they will there be shown the prison in which the Count of Monte Christo was con-

fined. The romance of Alexandre Dumas is in a fair way to become a historical reality. Before the close of another century, it will have passed into a legend.

I said, just now, that the *prophecies of Saint Malachi* contain two or three happy coincidences. No more are required. The most famous examples of prediction owe their origin in general to this law of the human mind which forgets the failures, remembering only the successes. "The method of the *Matthieu Lansbergs*, the *Nostradamus*, the *Almanachs de Liège*, has had its day," it is said ; but it is very certain that in their good times, things happened very much as follows : the almanachs contained two hundred absurdities ; out of all this number (indeed, it is the truth), there was found *one* admirable coincidence ; that only was remembered, that only was spoken of. You know ! The almanach predicted it ! I have it still at home ! It was written !

Those who have studied the history of the divining wand are fully aware that the explanation of its miracles has no other basis. It often miserably failed, its failures attracted no attention ; but was it so fortunate as to make a discovery, whether by chance, sagacity, a knowledge of certain facts, or magnetic lucidness, every body was impressed by this new wonder, it was reproduced in books, it alone, occupied the imagination of the people and passed down to posterity.

I have myself observed the progress of a superstition that yet subsists in the villages of the canton of Vaud. The inhabitants believe in the efficacy of a muttered *prayer in arresting the flow of blood*. In vain have I pointed out the numerous cases in which the blood continued to flow after the utterance of the prayer ; I could not induce them to pay the slightest heed to my words, and when the blood stopped, though it were an hour after the mechanical recitation of the sacramental words, they would exclaim in unison : "Now you see that there is virtue in the prayer !"

Who has not observed persons affected by presentiments ? If an account were kept of them, the list of contradictions fur-

nished by the event, would doubtless be immense. But these are all overlooked in presence of two or three triumphant coincidences.

Some people fear to find themselves in a party of thirteen at table. And we may be sure that they will always have at their service, numerous striking anecdotes of death caused by the fatal number, while they forget the many instances in which it has led to no catastrophe. Now, it must indeed be admitted that if the number thirteen does not produce death, neither does it prevent it, and that the chances of death among thirteen people during a year are far greater than is, in general, imagined.

I ought not to have said, however, that the number thirteen does not cause death, for it has repeatedly killed more than one table-companion whose imagination had been thus worked upon. History tells us of a former president of the parliament of Rouen, who could not resolve to sit down at table because he found himself the thirteenth guest; another person was therefore introduced in order to make our superstitious friend the fourteenth. This arrangement made, he consented to join the party, but the repast had scarcely terminated when he was seized with a fit of apoplexy, and died immediately.

We have just seen why it is that the clearest testimony often merits but indifferent confidence. The radical incompetency of man in regard to the supernatural, the influence exercised by reigning ideas, the delusions that inventors of fabulous stories succeed in creating in their own minds, a determination of the will to maintain certain beliefs, fraud properly so-called, statements badly understood, very simple adventures which owe their marvellousness to the ignorance of particular circumstances, casual coincidences elevated to the rank of permanent laws, systematic forgetfulness of all the facts that are in contradiction of superstitious ideas, the rapid formation of traditions and legends; these are some of the causes which lead to

the inaccuracy of attestations collected by historians. I might also add hallucination, collective or individual, which plays an extensive rôle in the natural explanation of many assertions and confessions. I shall, hereafter, return to it, for I have as yet, only touched on this important branch of the subject. It is sufficient, at present, to have indicated in part, the chances of error that are interposed between the facts as they occurred, and the testimony such as we possess.

I have said enough, however, to draw down withering objections upon my humble head :

“ You depreciate testimony,” is one cry, “ and yet it is upon testimony that the sentence of capital punishment is pronounced ! Is it then so little worthy of faith, this testimony which sends men to the scaffold ?”

I might dispense with an answer. A fact is a fact ; errors of testimony are as much facts as other facts are, and they are facts supported by a vast amount of testimony. But I shall not stop with this determination to reject. It is my intention to show that in comparing judicial testimony with testimony bearing reference to supernatural events, things are confounded which are very dissimilar. All the conditions are different, the moral state of the witnesses, the moral state of the judges, and the nature of the testimony ; to say nothing of the mode of transmission, or the difference that exists between affirmations made at remote periods of time, in distant places, and the processes of direct interrogation, comparison, and inquiry.

What is the moral state of the witnesses in criminal proceedings ? They generally feel the immense responsibility that rests upon them ; they feel it, and the court constantly reminds them of it. The life of a man may depend upon one of their words. Resting under the weight of a solemn oath, their eyes open to the consequences of their declarations, standing in presence of the accused and his family, interrogated by juries and by judges, cross-examined by the lawyers, everything acts as a restraint to confine them within the limits of what they know, and indeed, they are rarely tempted to go beyond. But

the witnesses to marvellous events are in no such condition. That which they write is ordinarily in full accord with the faith of their times, or at least, with the passions of their party. Their exaggerations, they fancy, will never do any harm. On the contrary, they will serve the holy cause of truth. A man who writes under these circumstances, without immediate contradiction, without control, voluntarily abandons himself to his imagination; he does not hesitate to embellish his narrative by presenting as certain whatever appears to him probable.

The same difference exists in regard to the judges. They, whose duty it is to decide the fate of an accused person, compel themselves for the time being, to put aside error, illusion, and especially prejudice. It is most true that the prejudiced judge is an iniquitous judge, and this furnishes a very strong reason for abolishing the punishment of death in political matters. Now the judges of testimony in relation to the supernatural, are almost always as much prejudiced as the witnesses. Here are clergy, here are magistrates, here are chroniclers to whom the news of a miracle or an act of sorcery is carried. Will they exercise a severe criticism, they who participate in the general superstition in matters connected with the marvellous? They who burned so many sorcerers, or who approved their punishment, were they very likely to weigh the value of certificates of sorcery?

In short, the nature of the testimony in the two cases is far from being identical. In the first case, the witnesses are interrogated concerning facts of which they are competent to judge: Did such a man appear in such a street at such an hour? Do you recognise him? Did you see blood? Did you hear cries? In the second case, on the contrary, the questions entirely exceed human competency: Did he cast a spell? Have you been to the *sabbat*? How is the devil made? In what consists a compact with him? Once launched forth on these mysterious waters, the imagination no longer holds the reins; even the grossest and simplest details give place to exaggerations, hallucinations, and fraud: the accusers

take counsel of their fears and their hatreds, the accused gives his reveries for realities. The result is, that thousands of sorcerers have mounted the funeral pile in virtue of decisive attestations and complete confessions. Since I have read the Marquis de Mirville, I no longer dare ask if there be any one who believes that these thousands upon thousands of testimonials (the greater part of them sincere), correspond to the truth. I am content to assert, that with the exception of the champions of the Middle Ages, no one, at the present day, hesitates to write in the margin of these accumulated testimonials, the words falsehood or illusion.

There are some, who would compel us to admit the value of all historical testimony, and with this object in view, they quote judicial testimony ! It must be confessed that the argument is unfortunate. In supernatural matters, judicial testimony is shown to be no more reliable than historical testimony. To have burned innocent men, women and children, by hundreds of thousands, is to have given no great proof of discernment. As for me, were I permitted to employ but a single argument against your theory of testimony, it is yours I should choose. "Testimony is sufficient for history, since it is sufficient for the scaffold !" Yes, the very manner in which it has performed its duties towards the scaffold, indicates the reception it should meet with in history.

"Ah ! Are you there ?" exclaim my opponents. "You are verging towards historical skepticism ! Holding your opinion on testimony, you have no longer the right to believe in the battle of Pharsalia, or the discovery of America by Columbus." Truly, that would be a pity, and I should be very glad to be shown that my doubts lead to that result. It is one of the tricks of extravagant doctrines to seize hold of some of the best established truths, and then to say : "You must accept everything or reject everything." I am acquainted with this method, and I mistrust it. I have already found a way of believing in God without believing in the miracle of *la sallette*, and I hope it will be possible for me to believe in the battle of Pharsalia without

believing in devils with cloven feet and in the *sabbat*. Between the Father Hardouin who admitted the existence neither of Homer, Virgil, nor Horace, and our modern school of rehabilitation at any cost, which admits things hitherto rejected, and magnifies things hitherto cried down, between absurd doubt and absurd credulity, I do not despair of finding a tenable position.

I must here recall to the mind of my reader, a fundamental distinction. Certain subjects are within the sphere of our competency, certain subjects are not. Some things we may receive on the testimony of man, other things we should receive only on the testimony of God. This distinction is so well founded, that we instinctively make it without taking into consideration the reasons by which we are actuated. I meet in the same historian, under guarantee of the same testimony, certain facts that I accept, others that I reject ; I no more hesitate to reject the second than to accept the first, and I am right. Not one of the readers of Livy will doubt the abolition of royalty ; not one will yield credence to the wolf of Romulus, or the shields fallen from heaven. In perusing the works of Grègoire de Tours, we do not dream of disputing the punishment of Brunnehaut, while we discard without ceremony the miraculous does which guide the armies.

This selection is made independently of any other consideration ; and there is nothing arbitrary in it, reposing as it does upon a deep consciousness of the limits of our competency. It is upon absolutely similar grounds that we bestow or refuse our confidence in the various circumstances of life. Why is the right of challenge exercised in courts of justice ? Because friendship or hatred, prejudice, in one word, destroys our competency. Why do we listen to stories of apparitions otherwise than we would listen to accounts of battles in which the narrator took part ? Because the supernatural disturbs the use of our faculties, and exceeds our competency. Why be suspicious of that portion of history which relates to the first kingdom of Assyria, while we have perfect confidence in that which relates to the age of the Cæsars ? Because the documents

are deficient in the one case and abound in the other, so that we are competent and incompetent by turns.

These are practical distinctions which no one will refuse to make. Without contradicting the reason or the moral sense, without in any degree falling into historical skepticism, we each establish the limit where our own individual skepticism commences, and at that point begins our incompetency as judges and witnesses. Prejudice, the inadequacy of the documents, the mysterious nature of the subjects, either one of these suffices to inspire us with legitimate suspicion. What will be our faith when the three causes for doubt are united ! Now, this is always the case whenever we find ourselves in presence of a testimony which concerns miracles or deeds of sorcery.

"Well, then !" it is said, "we shall also reject your testimony on the subject of Turning Tables ! By what right do you pretend to be alone preserved from the conditions of human infirmity ? Since extraordinary facts are in general, so badly observed and so badly reported, neither will we receive yours ! There are no peculiar privileges for the experiments at Valleyres !

Experiments—you have pronounced the true word, that which explains the invalidity of the testimony in the one case, and its value in the other. An incident is not an experiment.

There are many incidents, the nature of which, their mode of establishment, their palpable evidence, the persistence of their consequences, place them beyond serious debate ; history is the series, in general very reliable, of these incidents. But there are also some which exist only in virtue of the affirmation of one or several persons who have heard, have seen ; they are isolated events, in no way confirmed by consequences ; they are special, limited facts, which have or have not taken place. Now, if any of these facts are tinged by the marvellous, the principles of suspicion just mentioned may legitimately be applied to them.

With our experiments, it is not so. The question assumes quite another bearing in regard to them, characterized as they

are by this essential difference, that certain conditions being fulfilled, the experiments may, everywhere and always, be reproduced. Thus, when we affirm, that on condition of persevering to will strongly, the elevation without contact may be obtained, we, by no means ask to be believed in virtue of the particular value of our testimony, but in virtue of the general value which pertains to the experiments. No one has the right to say in regard to an experiment: "I will believe, when I have seen it;" it is every one's right and duty to say this in regard to supernatural incidents.

When a series of experiments is announced to us, we are to consider only two things: the circumstances under which they are effected, and the legitimacy of the conclusions derived from them. We must be at liberty, moreover, to renew the experiments for ourselves; this can do no harm, and in the meantime the experiments are held as certain, until proved the contrary. This is their right, a right without which, studies and scientific discussions would be impossible.

Yet, I cannot too often repeat that there is nothing magical in the word *experiment*. Some experiments are conclusive, some are not. It is important, therefore, to inquire whether those of which we hear, do not come within this latter category. Are the conditions serious, and do they offer real guarantees against error? Are the results decisive or insignificant? Such investigations as these cannot be too critically conducted, and we desire that they should be made in relation to the experiments at Valleyres. But an experiment, I would once more repeat, does not rest on testimony, it rests on the importance given to it by its permanence, its regularity, the relation established between a result obtained and the fulfillment of the conditions.

It is entirely otherwise with the accounts of possessions, miracles, and sorceries. They cannot possibly be verified; take away the testimony, there is nothing left.

I am aware that the attempt might be made to remove a portion of the diabolical supernatural from the category of inci-

dents into that of experiments—and why should such an attempt not succeed, since a regular relation exists between evocations and certain formulas? Now, here we have precisely the best test of the value of the testimony in question: while a carefully executed experiment always succeeds, an incantation, equally as well executed, succeeds only in times of shameful superstition and gross ignorance. Take your recipes, your magical words, your grass, and try to raise the faintest shadow of a devil, try to send it into the body of your neighbor, to kill his flocks, to transport him bodily to the *sabbat*; you will utterly fail in these days, or at least unless you dwell in some retired corner, secluded from the rest of the world, where you have preserved intact the blissful credulities of the Middle Ages.

The distinction between experiments and incidents is not much less important, than that between incidents which pertain to our competency and those which exceed it. It is of universal and daily application.

Does any one speak to me of Animal Magnetism? I there discover various phenomena which I have no need to see in order to be assured of their truth, for they have the character of experiments, and are connected in a regular manner with the accomplishment of certain conditions. I also discover other phenomena of an exceptional title which enter into the class of incidents.

Does any one speak to me of the tables and their spirits? I discover there again several phenomena that have the character of experiments. I know, then, that wherever the chain has been formed, the tables have turned and obeyed orders mentally issued. I know that this is true, even without having seen it; it only remains to know if the guarantees of the experiment are sufficient, and if the conclusions derived from it are legitimate. But I discover other facts of an exceptional character, and which enter into the class of incidents. I am told of pianos that have been made to fly! I am ignorant of such a fact, and I certainly shall not believe your testimony, for you may have been the subject of an individual or collective hallucination, ex-

amples of which are very numerous. This is not an experiment, for you have no process by which men or articles of furniture can be made to fly, and you say to no one : " Come, let us perform the necessary conditions, and then you will be transported through the air ; you will fly out by the window, and you will return by the window." It is true, your spirits and their revelations still remain. We will place them, if you insist upon it, in the number of experiments, but experiments that have failed. You announce to us, indeed, supernatural revelations, and yet, each *medium* gives them the impress of his own particular ideas ! You announce to us the conversation of men of genius, and their words are stamped with the seal of vulgarity !

I come now to the last objection presented by the partisans of testimony. According to them, all our distinctions between human competency and incompetency, between experiments and incidents, will be of no avail in preserving Christianity from the blows which our theory gives it. If our theory does away with historical and scientific certainty, it cannot do away with religious certainty, for the Gospel is, by no means, exempt from the supernatural, and neither is it an experiment. The Gospel, they add, rests on precisely the sort of testimony we reject ; these miracles which we treat so badly, are its support.

I always experience a feeling of painful surprise when I perceive the miserable idea too generally prevailing in the world in regard to the proofs of Christianity.

What ! would they make it rest on miracles, which themselves rest on the value of testimony ? Have they carefully considered this aspect of the question ? Have they well pondered on the poor syllogism charged with supporting the entire edifice of our hopes and our faith ? Thanks be to God, the foundation of our religion stands upon a broader and a firmer basis. God, who knoweth the inevitable lies of tradition, has not condemned us to believe in Jesus Christ because tradition attests the reality of miracles which, in their turn, attest the reality of the Saviour's mission. I am aware that the general apology for miracles throughout the world reasons after this fashion ; but

it is of human origin, very human. God leaves their acceptance or rejection to our consciences, our understandings and our hearts.

The miracles, a serious and essential basis of revelation, and important evidence to the minds of ocular witnesses, can no longer have any value for us except in proportion as we believe in the divinity of the books wherein they are contained. To demonstrate the truth of the books by the miracles found in them, would be a strange begging of the question. The question, then, is of the divinity of the books, and this can be affirmed to us by God alone, for in matters relating to the supernatural, the testimony of God is alone valuable.

Now, here we possess the testimony of God. If any of my readers are disposed to follow me while I trace the short series of simple ideas by which the man whose moral resistance is vanquished (and this cannot be, except through the assistance of the Holy Spirit offered to us), succeeds in grasping the Divine evidence, they will be enabled to judge for themselves, whether I, in any degree, compromise the real foundations of revelation.

And, first, to consider the New Testament only as a document subject to controversy, I remark that the most unbridled criticism (the criticism of Germany, which is enough to say), has succeeded neither in impeaching the authenticity of a portion of the books that compose it, nor in casting doubt on the historical reality of its principal fact. Here, then, we have a starting point, which is in nowise disturbed by the application of the most rigorous principles in matters of testimony.

Our second point remains equally undisturbed in presence of this extreme German criticism, which, although it is extreme, has not abdicated all reason and all modesty to fall back upon the childish, mythical explanation of a Strauss, or into the gross atheism of a Feuerbach. The essential features of the life and teachings of the Saviour, are neither seriously questioned nor seriously questionable. Jesus went about from place to place, accompanied by his disciples, at strife with the Pharisees, curing the sick, pardoning the sins of those who believed in him, de-

claring that sincere faith manifests itself by sanctification and good works ; his instructions frequently clothe themselves in the form of parables ; he affirms his divinity ; in short, he appeals to the Scriptures concerning it as to the very word of God ; in all circumstances he affirms that Divine Revelation comes to us by means of infallible books, infallibly collected.

It is, then, through the mouth of Jesus Christ himself, that we receive the testimony upon which all our religious faith reposes. This testimony is so far indestructible as to be still found at the bottom of the alembic, where an unsparing criticism has dared to place the Gospels. Jesus Christ has, at the same time, attested his divinity and the divinity of the Scriptures. In presence of this double declaration, what course shall we pursue ? We must either undertake to prove Christ to be wrong, or we must say : " Since Jesus Christ declares himself to be God, he is God. Since he is God, he can neither deceive nor be deceived. Since he cannot deceive, his declarations concerning the Scriptures are true ; not only does God inspire the books destined to reveal his will, but he himself assures their collection and preservation."

Shall we prefer to place ourselves in opposition to Christ ? Shall we maintain that he is deceived both in regard to his divinity and in regard to the Scriptures ? This is, indeed, the true point of the debate. The rest cannot be questioned by any honest and sensible minds ; if we would question the existence of Jesus Christ, the principal features of his life and teachings, the doctrine he has propounded in reference to his person, or the manner in which God has revealed himself in the Scriptures that are infallibly written and infallibly collected together, we must also be prepared to question the battle of Pharsalia. Everybody has not sufficient courage for that.

Now, the grounds being clearly defined, the following are a few of the considerations that present themselves to the mind of the sincere man. The reader will judge for himself if they do not seem to him rather more convincing than the old argument of testimony, in which tradition is charged with giving us

the miracles, and the miracles are made responsible for the Gospel.

I cannot, for a moment, be in doubt in regard to the opinion of Christ on the subject of his personality, and the divinity of the Scriptures. In order to have the right to accuse him of error on the second point, I must accuse him of error on the first; and what an error! It is more than an error, it is a blasphemy, the most awful blasphemy. Either Jesus Christ is God, as he affirms, and must be believed when he likewise affirms that God has manifested himself by means of written and infallible revelation, a simple and admirable method which he gives us no encouragement to suppose will be departed from in the future, or Jesus Christ is the greatest of blasphemers, the most culpable, the most foolish! . . . My pen refuses to finish the statement of the inevitable alternative. I prefer to appeal to the reason and conscience of whomsoever will exercise them. Here we are presented with the grand, the irresistible argument which God has incorporated in the very Gospel itself. If there are things that surpass our comprehension, there are others which we are capable of appreciating, and which correspond to the truths of every man's consciousness. And, indeed, what is the spontaneous declaration of our intellect and our heart? "Never did man speak like unto this man." Was there ever such a life, such a death, such a doctrine invented? Whence comes, if not from Heaven, this sudden appearance of a light, without warning, without parallel in the past or the future, this sunshine, without dawn and without twilight, this elevated thought, which no human book inspires or explains, these lofty sentiments, to the level of which no man has since attained? Whence comes the profound darkness that reigned both before and after the Gospel? Yes, after the Gospel, nor do I run any risk of being contradicted by those of my readers, who, having read the Gospel, have afterwards tried to read the Fathers.

Ah! Jesus Christ has not contented himself with asserting his divinity, he has proved it. It everywhere shines forth in his

person, his language, his most trivial actions. His whole life is a miracle more glorious than all the others. It annihilates criticism, and defies refutation. Those who have drawn near to the person of the Saviour no longer stand in need of any proof that he is God, and that what he affirms cannot be false. They have an argument which nothing can overthrow, the place of which nothing can supply : personal experience. Say to the man who basks in the warm rays of the sun, that there is neither sun, nor light, nor heat ! Say to the man who has contemplated the Saviour's divinity, that the Saviour was wrong in saying, "He that hath seen me hath seen the Father ;" that he deserves no confidence when he asserts that God has revealed himself in the Scriptures, and that he himself, watches over this inviolable trust !

It is very evident, then, that our foundation is broad and firm. We are not reduced to the extremity of resting our belief in Christianity on the perilous demonstration of the miracles of the Saviour and his Apostles. These miracles, a necessary manifestation of the divinity of Jesus Christ, are most real in our eyes, since they are recorded in the divinely inspired books ; but the miracles do not guarantee the authenticity of the books ; the books guarantee the authenticity of the miracles.

Who, then, compromises the miracles of Jesus Christ ? You, you alone ; you, with your false theory of testimony ; you, with your supernatural apocrypha, the falsehood of which incessantly betrays itself, although the attestations in its favor are as numerous as those of the Gospel. Believe me, nothing casts so much suspicion on the miracles of the Bible as the appearance of thousands and millions of other miracles, a hundred times more extraordinary, which are produced in support of doctrines the most antagonistic to them and to the Bible. The tendency of your supernatural is to cause an instinctive reaction in the human mind ; it asks if the entire structure of the supernatural may not be an imposture, if it does not repose upon the delusions and inevitable lies of testimony applied to subjects beyond the proper limits of our competency.

Thus, we have no pretext whatever for obstinately maintaining the value of testimony in matters relating to the marvellous. In denying it, we compromise neither historical certainty in general, the certainty of experiments, nor the certainty of evangelical facts, but we do compromise, nay, utterly destroy the edifice of your legends and your sorceries; take away the testimony that props it up, and it falls, a melancholy ruin, to the ground. Your legends and your sorceries will alone be overthrown, if the world shall at last have the good sense to reject the pretended axiom, "Every prodigy, attested by enlightened and disinterested persons, is a real prodigy."

God, in his infinite wisdom and goodness, has established his holy truth by other proofs than miracles and human testimony. He delivers over to our examination the marvellous things not embraced in the Scriptures. Let us, then, use our liberty in respect to them, let us make use of our faculties, let us open our eyes, and we shall soon see for ourselves, that the part of the marvellous is most questionable and insignificant when we remove the part of fraud, of error, of exaggeration, of currents of credulity, of stories at second hand, of complacency, of individual and epidemic hallucinations, of physical phenomena, in short, which pass for miraculous, because they are as yet imperfectly understood.

CHAPTER IV.

PARTICULAR GROUNDS FOR SUSPICION.

HAVING now established the general principle that should guide us in the appreciation of testimony, my next step will be to show by facts, that the marvellous fabrications in which we are summoned to believe are unworthy of credit. If they are found to be stamped by certain essentially suspicious characteristics, if the marvellous rarely manifests itself except in persons who are governed by their imaginations, and whose nervous system is easily excited, if it be produced only among nations and in ages where the control of criticism does not exist, if its explanation can be shown to rest on the interest of a particular doctrine or on any religious foundation whatever, if it vanishes before an impartial and judicious investigation, it will be granted, I think, that we have some cause for mistrust.

Now, none of these symptoms of falsity are wanting in the very best attested supernatural apocrypha.

In the first place, it is impossible to peruse the accounts of possessions that fill and survive the Middle Ages, without being impressed by one invariable fact : women are much more frequently the subjects of possessions than men, and women immured in cloisters, than women leading an ordinary life. From convent to convent the diabolical epidemic takes its way, or if it forsakes the convents to be diffused over cities, it is women, young girls, and young children perhaps, whom it attacks. The Ursulines alone were first possessed at Loudun ; then, the

affair extending, some cases occurred out of the convent, but always among women. The same remark applies to the 14th, 15th, 16th, and 17th centuries. In the 18th century, the famous convulsions of the cemetery Saint Médard, were still imputed to women, although not nuns (there were no more Jansenist nuns, and for a very good reason). Read the history of the *secours*, it is women only, who seek relief from blows of axes, fire dogs, and sword thrusts. Whence comes it that no man seeks the same favor through the intercession of the Deacon Pâris.

Whence comes it? The question is a grave one. There were, during all these centuries as many monks as nuns, yet the nuns have almost a monopoly of possessions! The cities contained as many men as women, yet the women have almost a monopoly of possessions! Does not such a fact speak volumes as to the true nature of the phenomenon? If certain miracles could only be performed in damp places, this would be strong evidence to my mind that the so-called miracles were merely the physical effects of humidity. So also, with the possessions which affect only women, and especially nuns; they, by no means, seem to me of supernatural origin. I recall to mind, the particular action of the nervous system, of the imagination, the peculiar moral atmosphere of the places in which the malady shows itself, and from a consideration of these circumstances, I deduce the nature of the disease. It may, perchance, be demanded of me, that I accept a theory in virtue of which demons have a marked predilection for women, and for nuns in particular! This theory is the last resource of the champions of the Middle Ages and of the faithful believers in sorcery. I advise them to adhere to it; they have sustained other theories less worthy.

Let them be equally careful to establish the point that young women are the most liable to possessions. This new fact, not less remarkable than the first, confirms the natural explanation we have indicated; it is a little less simple when we regard it from a supernatural point of view. But our adversaries are

not men to pause at such trifles ; they will get over that difficulty, we may be sure.

The discussion, moreover, concerns only the explanation, the facts are beyond all controversy. Those who may be disposed to doubt my assertion, will do well to refer to the two interesting volumes of Doctor Calmeil (*de la Folie*), or the not less interesting volume of Doctor Brière de Boismont (*des Hallucinations*), or the History of Pierre Lebrun (*Histoire critique des pratiques superstitieuses*), or the letters of Saint André on Magic, or Walter Scott, or the first treatise on Demonology they may chance to meet, and they will find my words brilliantly confirmed. There are sorcerers among men (especially among shepherds !) but the particular form of diabolical action which is styled possession, is generally manifested in convents. This is so true, that it receives in old books the name of the *possession of the nuns* (*possession des nonnains*.)

To this first cause of suspicion, we would add a second, which appears to me by no means unimportant. Supernatural facts abound in certain ages and in certain countries ; in others, they do not care to show themselves.

It is with them as with cotemporary sorceries, which multiply under the eyes of certain classes of witnesses, and which never present themselves to the attention of others. The same countries are visited by Catholic and Protestant missionaries. How is it to be accounted for, that the Protestants have never perceived the faintest trace of the daily prodigies that are " in everybody's mouth " in China, for example, and fill the *Annales de la propagation de la foi* ? I accuse no one of insincerity. I merely say that the marvellous things related by M. de Mirville, and of which the number fully equals the evidence, ought also to have attracted the attention of our Protestant missionaries. The latter, I am obliged to admit, tell us of little else than gross frauds, and most ridiculous acts of sorcery. They recount to us the tribulations experienced by the poor rain-

makers of Southern Africa, and they never state facts that seem to exceed the limits of chance, calculation, or the tricks of jugglery.

There are then two methods of observing things ; witnesses, equally honorable, equally disinterested are, in supernatural matters, very likely utterly to disagree in their testimony. We should be on the alert against certificates originating in certain ages of the world !

Plutarch, in his times, was astonished that the oracles had ceased ! A little research would have shown him the cause. False oracles never cease except for good reasons. I know of some periods and some countries where a certain species of the supernatural is not at all anxious to seek the light.

It was gravely stated in the sixteenth century, that the French dogs rejected the meat which was thrown to them by the heretical Germans ; whether the miracle resulted from their orthodoxy or their patriotism, it was none the less brilliant. At the present time, I am sorry to say, the canine race has degenerated, and it takes its food from any hands, irrespective of friends or foes.

The canton of Vaud, so rebellious to the spirits in these days, and where we have vainly interrogated the sorcery of speaking tables, was formerly celebrated for its witchcraft, and principally for its *loups-garous*. It was during the fifteenth century the theatre of horrible scenes. A general panic prevailed throughout the country ; a great number of children had been devoured ; the neighborhood of Lausanne bore the reputation of being the principal place of rendezvous for the instruments of Satan. Judges and inquisitors were not slow to profit by the opportunity. Hundreds of miserable beings perished in the flames, after having endured the torture of the wooden horse.* Nor were the confessions of persons affected with lycanthropy wanting to complete the melancholy spectacle ; these boasted of having lived on human flesh, of having gorged

* An instrument of torture.

themselves on thousands of new-born infants. It seems evident, therefore, that cannibalism was then in vogue in this part of Europe and elsewhere.—We must acknowledge that, although centuries succeed, they do not resemble each other !

Neither do adjoining countries more nearly resemble each other. In some countries we continually hear of the presence of vampires. Russia, Poland, Hungary, Moravia, are infested by them. Other countries, Ireland and Denmark, for instance, were subjected to them a long time; but the annoyance has now ceased. Be that as it may, it appears that vampirism is rabid only in the North; it demands Northern imaginations.—And now, if you wish for anecdotes, you will find them in abundance; if you wish for witnesses and testimony, you will have them in such quantities that doubt shall appear to you impossible. Is it possible for one to be deceived a hundred times, a thousand times, ten thousand times, regarding a fact as simple as this : a dead man rises from the tomb, visits his relations on earth, embraces them, and sucks their blood, until he has prostrated their strength or killed them; vampires may be exterminated by digging a ditch, cutting off the head of the dead man, and piercing his heart, the ruby color of which clearly announces his criminal habits ! Does this prodigy not suffice ? You have only to interrogate the *active vampires* who, still in existence, not only amuse themselves by sucking the blood of their friends, but confess it in a loud and intelligible voice.

We have no reply to make; none, further than to remark that these charming stories do not venture beyond certain frontiers, and that they are gradually disappearing from the countries which still persist in believing them. Even there, vampires are decidedly on the decline; their number decreases from age to age, from year to year; and it would, at the present time, be quite easy to designate the privileged districts where the prodigy is accomplished, as in days of yore.

All supernatural phenomena increase or diminish by reason of reigning ideas. I cannot understand how a fact so evident and decisive as this, could have escaped any serious observer.

Certain things occur only in the Middle Ages ; others are only to be met with among people endowed with pensive imaginations. The Swedes and Norwegians live in the midst of countless wonders, of which we, rational inhabitants of France and Switzerland, can form no idea. Haunted houses abound in certain regions, and in others not a single one is to be seen. I have been peculiarly unfortunate ; neither at Paris, nor at Geneva, nor in the canton of Vaud, have I been able to discover one house frequented by ghosts. And even where such are to be found, I venture to assert that everybody does not see phantoms ; that is reserved for a few sensitive individuals who are predisposed to visions in general, either by public rumor or the aspect of places.

The same remark applies to the miracles. You can tell in advance, what author will relate the greatest number. You can tell in what diocese of the present day, apparitions of virgins and letters fallen from Heaven may be expected.

And, strangest of all ! The places in which wonders would seem to be most needed are the very ones in which they never appear. Why not mingle the incredulity of Paris with the heresy of Geneva ? I would propose that instead of giving us a few spirits ashamed of their *rôle*, a wretched magic as a substitute for magnetism, you show us at Paris these undoubted prodigies, which are in "everybody's mouth," at Canton, or in Cochin China. Cause your men suspended in the air to hover over the streets and public squares of our capitol. Deliver Geneva up to the empire of the demons ; let us see haunted houses in all its streets, people possessed by devils in every house. Is it not shameful that Protestant Rome* should have been sheltered from attacks which ought to have multiplied there to infinity ! In truth it is most strange ; and, whatever may be the period of its duration, the world will eventually conclude that prodigies so ready to shun the light, have their only origin in the imagination.

* Geneva.—*Trans.*

Another remark might lead to the same conclusion. There is often at the foundation of great supernatural epidemics, a doctrine interested in making itself known, and this doctrine varies according to times and places. All the possessed women of Loudun will denounce Urbain Grandier ; all the Cévénol prophets will attack the mass and the priests ; all the convulsionaries (*convulsionnaires*) of Saint Médard will comment on the doctrines condemned by the *bull* ; to say nothing of the American Spiritualists, and their zeal to substitute Unitarianism for Christianity. Complaisance for the marvellous is unlimited the instant creeds and prejudices are brought in question. It is thus that in the first ages of the Christian Era, Neoplatonism multiplied its miracles, and sought with that degree of relative sincerity which comports with a partisan spirit, to build up its dogmatic conceptions on the brilliant demonstration furnished by its prodigies.

Miracles are, in general, under our control ; they await our bidding, and come when we want them. I have already mentioned the example of the marvellous cures of king's evil performed in England, but which are never heard of in that country until its rulers lay claim to the crown of France. From that moment the cures effected are so numerous that Bradwardin, the confessor of Edward III. exclaims, in a tone of defiance: "Come to England, you who deny miracles ; bring to our Prince whatever Christian is afflicted with *la maladie du roi* ; he will cure him in the name of Jesus Christ, making the sign of the cross, however inveterate may be the disease." The founders of religious orders, the inventors of still contested dogmas, which stand in need of further support, all are equally well armed with prodgies and visions.

During the period in which the worship of the Virgin Mary received a new and remarkable impetus, miracles were not wanting in its favor. Anselm tells the story of a certain dissolute prebendary, who, drowned in the midst of his licentious pursuits, and transported to hell by the agents of the devil, was reclaimed by the Virgin Mary at the end of three or four days,

because he had been in the habit of performing certain services in her honor.

The illustrious Bernard, Abbé de Clairvaux, having adopted views in opposition to the immaculate conception, an apparition was sent to him to convince him of his error. A menial brother afterwards saw the holy abbé clothed in garments as white as snow, with the exception of one large spot which sullied the lustre of this whiteness. The good monk sorrowfully asked, "Why, my father, do I behold you polluted by a black spot?" "Because," replied Bernard, "I have spoken ill of the Conception of the Holy Virgin."

The thing did not stop there. The controversy, for there were two sides to it, was carried on by visions. Two important saints, Brigitte and Catharine de Sienne testified with equal authority, the one, that the immaculate conception had been miraculously declared false, the other, that it had been miraculously revealed to her.

I do not enter into the merits of the question. I even pass over in silence the innumerable apparitions, which are to be found at the origin of the different religious orders. I merely venture to assert, that, without comparing the sentiments of the personages represented, there has been no more reality in these visions, so very apropos, than in the vision related by Erasmus, and behind which he shelters himself with the following joke: "They imagine that Saint François is displeased with me, because I censure those who promise Heaven to such persons as are buried in the garments of their order. But the blessed founder appeared to me in the middle of the night, greeting me with smiles and expressions of friendship. He thanked me for my exertions in repressing licentiousness, for which he had always felt the greatest aversion." The conclusion is known. Erasmus amuses himself in describing the costume of the saint, in such a way as to condemn one by one all the elegances of the Franciscans of his time. He even goes so far as to affirm that he saw no stigmata upon him! At all events, François left him saying, "Fight manfully, and you will soon be with me."

This jesting throws light on many more serious apparitions.

Those of the famous Mary d'Agréda have divided the religious world in both France and Spain. La Sorbonne and Bossuet have given, without doubt, excellent reasons against this incredible book, at the contents of which I do not venture even to glance, where the beatific vision is described in all its details, and where the history of the family of Mary, her life, her glory in Heaven, is made up of fictions most unworthy of credit. Yet, if good reasons were on one side, testimony and miracles were on the other. Certificates were plentiful in Spain, and even in France, the partisans of the mystical seeress relate the miracles that accompanied the translation of her works. Was I not right in saying that, when a prodigy is necessary, it rarely fails to be produced ?

Nor are they confined to the saints, heretics also have them, and in equal proportions. Cyprien complains of the "silly visions" of his adversaries. Cardinal Bona not less deplores the revelations and false apparitions of the *illuminati*. The disciples of Simon the magician, of Basilide, the Valentinians, the Sabelians, have all had their miracles. Porphyry had his. The Arians opposed theirs to Athanasius, and the prodigies of the Donatists were brought forward in their controversy with Augustine. Antoinette Bourignon, Mme. Guyon, have not been behind-hand, and Mme. Krudener, in the middle of the 19th century, has miraculously multiplied loaves of bread.

And does any one think that the annals of Mahometanism or of Paganism are less rich in facts of this sort ? The Hindoo fakirs have also many stories of saints. The vestal virgins of ancient Rome untied their girdles, and made use of them to raise boats imbedded in the sands of the Tiber. Accused of crime, they took a sieve, filled it with water, and thus proved their innocence.

It will be remembered, without our returning to it, with what

success analogous tests of boiling water and red hot iron were for a long time applied. I might also add the judicial combat ; all these trials worked wonderfully well in favor of the orthodox bishops, sometimes even in favor of the heretics—in the hands of the Christians, sometimes also in the hands of the Pagans—in behalf the innocent, and sometimes in behalf of the guilty.

They were for a long time believed in ; for a long time imposing testimony demonstrated the reality of the miracle, until faith in the miracle was finally weakened, and all the apparatus of extraordinary facts broke to pieces, in that burlesque scene of which Constantinople was the theatre at the close of the thirteenth century. The clergy being divided on the election of a patriarch and other questions, they agreed to employ the trial by fire ; but they were prudent enough to apply it to the *manuscripts*, rather than to the persons of the disputants. The fire was lighted on Holy Saturday. Each party expected to see his adversary's *manuscript* burn, and it must be admitted that each party had this satisfaction, for the two manuscripts were alike reduced to cinders. The people laughed !

How much testimony in support of miracles and sorceries was destroyed by that fire !

I know, however, of a still more formidable fire for the testimony with which we are especially concerned ; it is that of serious investigation.

Unfortunately, the elements requisite to such an investigation are not always preserved ; when they do really exist, they are of but little avail, except to cotemporaries. Yet nothing is more instructive than to observe the result of the inquiries that have been instituted. The best attested facts generally vanish the moment they are subjected to a close inspection. We may then legitimately suppose that the number of marvellous anecdotes would be singularly reduced, if they all could have been subjected to a rigid examination.

I quote only from memory the discoveries that were made at the

time of the destruction of the Pagan temples ; many miracles then found their by no means glorious explanation. I also omit the quite too easy refutation of apparitions narrated by Bède, Pierre de Cluny, or by any other of that class of writers, without exception. But there are facts, more celebrated, more probable, than these which do not better resist the test of examination.

Take for example, the famous vision of Constantine, the luminous cross that appeared in the sky while he was on his way towards Rome to give battle to Maxentius. At first sight, it seems impossible to doubt, the emperor affirmed to the miracle with an oath ; the historians of that day all relate it in the most circumstantial manner ; too circumstantial perhaps, for it is their want of harmony, which, in our times, throws suspicion on the whole story. According to one, the cross appeared at noon-day ; according to another, it appeared at night. According to one, the famous words, "By this sign thou shalt conquer," were written in Latin ; according to another, they were written in Greek. According to one, the emperor was awake ; -according to another, he saw the cross only in a dream, Discrepancies still more extraordinary are to be found in reference to the country in which this marvellous event occurred. One historian maintains that Constantine was in Gaul when the luminous cross appeared ; another asserts that he had arrived in Italy. And in this way, a story is introduced into history, becoming a permanent fact to be handed down to succeeding generations. The miracle indispensable to the great religious revolution that was about to be accomplished, is nothing more than what might result from a dream, from hallucination, from the time-serving generalship, perhaps, of a pretender to the empire, and especially, a pretender so little scrupulous as Constantine !

Neither could the Crusades fail of having their prodigy. The army had taken up its position before Saint Jean d'Acre, and the ardour of the Crusaders required to be stimulated. The real spear that had pierced the side of Jesus Christ, was discovered. Yet, there were some persons so incredulous as to

doubt ; they even dared to contradict the assertion, under pretence that the real spear had already been found elsewhere, and in particular, at Constantinople. Pierre Barthélemy, a priest, offered to pass through fire, the spear in his hand. The trial was made in presence of the whole army, and of course succeeded. Nevertheless, some rather unaccommodating witnesses pretended that Barthélemy moved very rapidly through the fire, and that he came out from it covered with burns. One thing is certain, he died a few days afterwards in consequence of the experiment. The advocates of the genuineness of the spear, thus found themselves compelled to explain this slightly suspicious death, by maintaining that Barthélemy, miraculously spared by the flames, was killed by the excessive eagerness of the spectators, who threw themselves upon him as he came out of the fire. The reader will believe according to his judgment.

I have already spoken of the *taillés* of Saint Hubert. Certain individuals, prompted by curiosity to assure themselves of the reality of this miracle, discovered two things; it appeared that many persons who had never been bitten caused themselves to be touched by the piece cut from the stole, out of pure precaution ! It also appeared that people died with hydrophobia in spite of the virtues of the stole ! But the partisans of the holy stole contended that the *taillés* had the privilege of dying tranquilly and without convulsions. That, certainly, would be something gained, but I am suspicious of miracles which diminish on examination.

We are all familiar with the fame acquired by the celebrated Aymar and his wand, during the reign of Louis XIV. I shall by and by speak more fully on the subject ; at present, I content myself with stating that Paris was less favorably disposed than Lyons, to the divinations of the new sorcerer. An intelligent supervision of his proceedings brought to light both his frauds and his mistakes. The results arrived at were as follows : that the turner of the wand guided it in conformity with appearances, and according to information previously received ;

that whenever the eyes of one of their number were bandaged, that individual made mistakes ; that another of the band, called upon to discover a malefactor, did not hesitate to point out the residence of the man, possessing the worst reputation in the country.

This awoke suspicions. The world then began to mistrust many things. Certain doings in sorcery had had an unfortunate celebrity, and provoked indiscreet reflections. I remember, in particular, the long series of persecutions directed against the shepherds of Brie (always shepherds !). It had been remarked that the mortality among cattle still continued there, in spite of the suppression of spells thrown over them. Now this public contradiction being given to the first condemnations, the judges thought to hush it up by new condemnations, all accompanied by a grand reinforcement of promises, threats and tortures. Reports of cases at law and decisions of the parliament of Paris have preserved to us the details of these judicial proceedings, of which I here present a brief summary.

A shepherd by the name of Hocque was accused of casting spells on the cows and sheep of Eustache Vigier. His judges were content to send him to the galleys. But the sheep and cows continued to die ! What was to be done ? They caused Beatrice, Hocque's companion in the galleys, to tell this to him ; and he allowed himself to be persuaded to write to other shepherds, asking them to break the spell which he had cast. The shepherd Bras de Fer broke the spell ; it was a terrible charge, called the " Good Heaven God." It had been put on with execrable ceremonies. The spell is finally removed, most unfortunately however as regarded poor Hocque, for the devil strangled him on the very instant ! The devil was doubtless furious at being prevented from destroying the cattle of Brie. But strange as it may seem, the cattle persist in dying, the distemper has not yet finished its work. You think perhaps, that the judges will open their eyes ? No. New complaints bring new persecutions. The second Law Report says : " It was necessary to deliver the province of Brie from the

slavery into which it had fallen through the tyranny of the shepherds and the impunity with which they practised their witchcraft ;" for the value of the cattle that died there, amounted in three years to more than a hundred thousand crowns. The accused are submitted to the question ordinary and extraordinary ; several are condemned to death ; Bras de Fer and two of his companions are sentenced to the galleys. I suppose that the mortality was at last arrested, or all the shepherds of Brie would have met with the same fate. The end of Bras de Fer may serve as a comment and a moral to this story. He was sent to the islands with other sick galley slaves. On the voyage, he thought fit to render the vessel motionless by means of a small magical stone ; but a surgeon on board, having discovered his plot, denounced him to the captain, who ordered the sorcerer to be flogged. The poor wretch could arrest a vessel in its course, but could not prevent the lash from falling. Mortally injured by the blows, he restored to the vessel its liberty and soon after expired.

The suspicious part of the community, I repeat, were still of the opinion that calms on the sea, and distempers among cattle on land, may be explained without recourse to witchcraft, that there is no great confidence to be put in *charges* which continue to act after they have been removed, and that shepherds doomed to the torture, the galleys, or to flogging, were possibly made to shape their confessions according to the wishes of their persecutors.

To speak plainly, there was room for doubt ; and all the more, that an investigation, in its results little favorable to diabolical prodigies, had just been made at Toulouse, where a number of young girls had been attacked by possessions, an epidemic which was making alarming progress. The Parliament, advised of the state of things, submitted the possessed persons to the test of both real and pretended exorcisms. Now it was found that the latter produced the same effect as the former. The recital of the most indifferent words brought

on crises, in every respect similar to those resulting from consecrated prayers.

Under the rule of Richelieu, analogous experiments were made without any result ; but in the reign of Louis XIV. the truth came to light. The inquiry set on foot by the Parliament of Toulouse created a deeper impression, it seems, than an experiment conducted, with the same result, by the Count de Lude at Loudun, in which he made evident the fraud of the Lady Superior and her exorciser, by means of a false reliquary filled with hair and feathers.

The possessions of the seventeenth century met with another similar misfortune. Chamillard, a doctor of Sorbonne, was sent into a convent to examine some religious demoniacs, one of whom attracted general admiration by the following prodigy: whenever the exorciser repeated a command in Latin for the pulse to stop, its movement was forthwith arrested, now in the left arm, now in the right. Chamillard, "a sensible and prudent man," so say the accounts of the times, bethought himself to change the phrase. In place of *cesset pulsus*, he said : *non moveatur arteria*. The devil, not being accustomed to this Latin, could not obey. Both exorciser and exorcised decamped in all possible haste, and never ventured into the presence of the doctor again. Chamillard explained the cessation of the pulse by the employment of a ligature, which the nun tightened or loosened on her arm according to the order received, and which pressing an artery, prevented the circulation of the blood. Be that as it may, we willingly adopt the maxim with which he closed his report, and which, making the part of fraud very great, reduced to nothing that of possession : *multa ficta, pauca vera, à dæmone nulla*.

All fraud aside, the peculiar nervous condition of many of the pretended *possédées*, may serve to explain their various feats of strength. We cannot look upon these affections as real, when we know that threats of severe punishment have instantaneously cured the cases of possession in convents and

hospitals, when we also know that the employment of medical remedies has, in expelling the disease, expelled the demon. The children in the hospital at Hoorn, were not exorcised, for they were Protestants ; yet the diabolical epidemic that invaded this establishment in 1673, yielded to a very simple mode of treatment ; the children were dispersed, and the nervous contagion which infected the place, was thus suppressed.

Some years afterwards, a Doctor Rhodes, countenanced by the Count d'Estaing, also ventured to have recourse to purely medical means for combating the epidemic of possession which then prevailed in the neighborhood of Lyons. He very humorously relates the success of his treatment, and especially in the case of a certain demoniac, who at first refused to drink the mineral waters he prescribed, because her demon informed her that relics had been soaked in it. Deceived by the words of her nurse, she was finally prevailed upon to drink from a pitcher which she supposed to contain ordinary water ; she was cured, and the demon disappeared.

Half a century later, the Bishop of Bayeux courageously maintained a difficult contest against a portion of his clergy, La Sorbonne, and even against a great number of physicians, less enlightened than Doctor Rhodes. The devils had taken possession of several young girls in the parish of Landes. During a whole year, four priests and a grand vicar had been occupied in exorcising the little Claudine ; the following year, two prelates, five grand vicars, and nine curés exhausted themselves in similar efforts with two members of the family Laupartin and divers demoniacs of the neighborhood. The bishop at length deemed it necessary to bring this doleful comedy to a close. The curé of Landes was suspended from his functions ; he was even incarcerated in the abbey de Belle-Etoile. The pretended demoniacs were put in solitary confinement, and nothing more was heard of the matter.

My astonishment at the mass of absurdities which have from

time to time gained credence in the world, vanishes when I witness the course, even in these days pursued by the partisans of the tables and their spirits. Human credulity is capable of anything.

There is still one reflection which seems to me of some importance. Why do not these demons, who perform so many impossible things, perform others far more easy to accomplish? They transport sorcerers to the *sabbat*, yet they are unable to release them from prison! This recalls to my mind the legend of the martyrs whom the fire refuses to consume, who defy the teeth of the lions; but whom the divine protection never avails to preserve from the edge of the sword. When all other means have failed, the Proconsuls resort to decapitation; they order the head to be cut off, and the head always falls!

It was only the other day that two sorcerers (miserable sorcerers of the 19th century!) were condemned at Nantes. They carried about with them a book entitled the *Dragon Rouge*. This book teaches the art of commanding the spirits, the art of making one's self loved, and the not less necessary art of rendering one's judges favorable. Unfortunately for the sorcerers, the *Dragon Rouge* was found to be utterly powerless in this last relation. The judges were determined to prove their independence of the devil by enforcing the law in its greatest severity.

It appears to me that such things as these are tolerably significative. Facts which volatilize the moment they are subjected to serious investigation; prodigies which are produced only among young women, and which particularly affection cloisters; miracles which bear the impress of national tendencies, which, of frequent occurrence among such and such nations, in such and such ages, disappear at a later day, and are entirely ignored elsewhere; persons possessed by devils, whose fraud or sickly delusions have been no less proved than acts of a supernatural nature; sorcerers, gifted with the faculty of flying through the air, yet unable to burst the walls of their

prison, possessing the power to make themselves loved, but unable to soften the hearts of their judges : here we have an accumulation of circumstances in the highest degree suspicious.

Thus we could almost fancy ourselves in a dream, when we open a book like that of the Marquis de Mirville. With an air of tranquil certainty, it sets aside at the outset, and without a word of explanation, whatever details are calculated to awaken doubt. In reading it, we cannot help asking, if perchance, the sorceries of former days had this character of matchless evidence ; if cotemporary sorcery has indeed been so well established. Not a reservation, not a stricture. All is true, among the ancients and among the moderns, among the Pagans and among the Christians, among the Catholics and among the Protestants ; from the demon of Socrates down to the demons of the *shepherd* at Cideville, and even down to the *mediums* of the Americans, we do not meet with an assertion which is not accepted, a particle of testimony that is considered unworthy of credit.

Yet M. de Mirville is an enlightened and honest man ; his book is the result of profound study and extensive research. Nor is he the only one who holds this language ; the same astounding affirmations are to be met with among a large proportion of the writers and journalists belonging to this school. They have, as it were, laid a wager to pervert our reason and our conscience in the bargain.

It is important then, for us to know how to resist their attacks, and since they would seem to propagate this nonsense under the cloak of Christianity, our next step will be to show that it is impossible to believe one word of what they relate to us, without first giving the lie to the most explicit declarations of Scripture.

CHAPTER V.

WHAT SAITH THE SCRIPTURE ?

No one will reproach me, I think, for having ventured to present this argument. Those even who do not admit the divinity of the Holy Books, will be interested in learning to what extent they are misrepresented, whenever Christian revelation is made responsible for the diabolical supernatural of the Middle Ages. And, regarding the subject from this point of view, I must confess my eagerness to render to facts their true aspect, and to show once more, the magnificent harmony, which at bottom, exists between the teachings of science and the teachings of the Gospel. Doubtless, science has many times been contradicted by the Gospel ; but that is deluded science, ignorant and provisional science. With new studies, new discoveries, the momentary opposition gives place to a harmony ever increasing in brilliancy.

Now, our simple good sense protests against those diabolical imaginings, the restoration of which is at the present day attempted. There is, even among infidels, a sentiment of decency, of respect, as it were, for holy things, a sort of religious instinct which is wounded by gross or puerile conceptions, by the disgusting materialism which serves as a base to the supernatural apocrypha of the Middle Ages. For the honor of Christianity, I feel called upon to prove that it condemns all this apocrypha with unequalled force and authority.

But first, let me address a few words to Christians themselves ; I cannot conceal the argument, which in their eyes as in mine

should be absolutely decisive. For me, a Protestant, accustomed to humble and complete submission in presence of all declarations of the Bible, the grand question is this : What saith the Bible ? I am sure that more than one of my Catholic readers will also recognize its vast importance. In spite of apocrypha and traditions, the Bible preserves a power that can never be abolished ; it is difficult to maintain the truth of even the best attested facts when the Holy Scriptures condemn them.

This is, indeed, the position of the champions of testimony. According to them, every fact properly attested, is true ; according to them, also, every declaration of the Bible is true. Now, there is a palpable contradiction between the facts and the declarations, between human testimony and divine testimony. This contradiction is not partial, accidental ; it is invariable. We must make our election.

The option in such a case, seems not to be very difficult. If the most enlightened witnesses, men of the utmost veracity, were to affirm to me that Jupiter is the true God, that God has no existence, or that man is without sin, I should not long hesitate between the inconvenience of taxing these respectable witnesses with error, and that of taxing the Scriptures with error.

The first course would require far less sacrifice of my reason and conscience ; for my reason and conscience possess such proofs, exterior and interior, objective and subjective, of the divinity of the Scriptures, that any admission on their part that the doctrines taught by the Bible are false, would be to deny their own legitimate authority. Whereas, they experience no great shock when they find themselves under the necessity of acknowledging the delusions, enthusiasms, exaggerations, or hallucinations of witnesses in other respects estimable.

That which is opposed to the truth cannot be true ; there is no maxim more certain and more essential than this. It is doubtless perverted when applied to the imperfect knowledge possessed by mankind, to scientific notions, for example. Things are not necessarily impossible because they are not comprehended within the limits of an incomplete system. But the revelation of

God has another character ; it is not incorrect or incomplete in its statements, and whatever does not accord with it, is forever condemned.

If I may be allowed the privilege, I would say it is not a matter of indifference that the contest against these superstitions should be conducted in the name of faith. Reason has certainly a right to attack them; nevertheless, if the rehabilitation of sorceries were to find its only adversaries among infidels or rationalists, the effect of the contest would be essentially different. The world must see the false supernatural demolished by men who accept the truth, in its broadest significance. The world must see the devil of the Middle Ages rejected by men who admit the devil of the Bible. Mere denial is not sufficient ; negative works have no permanency. And herein lies the secret of the strange spectacle now offered to our eyes : the ridiculous fables to which philosophy long ago administered their deserts, are reappearing, one after another ; the men it has killed, are all alive and well. Faith alone, faith resting upon the infallible word of God, has power to deal mortal blows.

What, then, are the teachings of Scripture on the subject of the devil and sorcerers?—I concentrate the debate on this point, for it is especially with the devil and diabolical miracles that a large portion of the world is at the present day occupied ; it is a certain sort of devil who forms the centre of this religion of the Middle Ages which our adversaries are seeking to restore.

Let us circumscribe the debate.—It is not the evidence of the devil and his angels which is in question ; neither is it the reality of certain prodigies effected by the devil with the permission of God ; nor is it, in short, the expectation of a period which Scripture names the “last days,” and in which lying wonders are produced with great brilliancy. This is the contested ground :

First, the nature you attribute to the devil and his angels ; secondly, the character with which you invest their action in this world ; and, finally, the innumerable prodigies which you make them perform between the Apostolical period and the last days. Your devil is not the devil of the Bible ; insignificant and ridiculous on the one hand, independent and actually rivalling God on the other, there is no place for him in Christianity. Your temptations are not those of the Bible ; in place of temptations, you give us possessions, spells ; you practise witchcraft by means of magical formulas ; you materialize religion. Your prodigies are not those of the Bible ; instead of an exceptional power, the manifestation of which has been permitted only on certain solemn occasions, you have substituted a power inherent in Satan, constantly exercised, the extraordinary effects of which have become much more frequent since the death of the Apostles, than they were in the time of the prophets or in the time of Jesus Christ.

Several other observations grow out of these principal objections. It is sufficient for our purpose to have indicated these.

Nothing can be grander or more terrible than the Biblical history of the devil and of magic. Not a feature which does not bear the impress of Divine truth, not a word to satisfy mere curiosity, or feed the imagination. Scripture teaches us whatever is important for us to know ; it does not go beyond that ; its moderation on such subjects is by no means the most insignificant mark of distinction between it and books of human origin.

Scripture allows us to obtain a glimpse of the period in which angels, endowed like us with free-will, are divided between obedience and revolt. Some, from every grade of the angelical ranks, voluntarily exiled themselves from the presence of God ; in fact, the enumeration of the demons coincides exactly with that of the faithful angels ; they divide between them authorities, principalities, powers, thrones, dominions. (*Ephesians*, i. 21, and vi. 21 ; *Colossians*, i. 16.)

The sentence of Satan and his companions was pronounced

immediately after the fall. It is in the everlasting chains of this judgment (chains of darkness, saith the Scripture) that they have since been held for the judgment of the great day. (2 *Peter*, ii. 4 ; *Jude*, 6.)

Yet, although attainted by an irrevocable verdict which awaits only the confirmation of the judgment, properly so called, and its final execution, the devils are not yet imprisoned, and even as fallen man remains upon earth, so does Satan still remain in the presence of the Lord (*Job*, i. and ii.), traversing with his angels the space that surrounds our planet. (*Ephesians*, vi. 12.)

When the last days have come, Satan will then be precipitated from Heaven upon the earth, and knowing that but a little time is left him, he will stir up more inveterate persecutions than ever, he will perform lying wonders and obtain great victories. (2 *Thessalonians*, ii. 3-11 ; *Revelations*, xii., xiii., xiv. 14 ; xix. 19, 20 ; xx.)

The second coming of Christ, and the commencement of His reign upon earth, will be marked by the chaining of Satan, who is to be bound for a thousand years. (*Revelations*, xx. 1, 2.)

Finally, Satan loosed for the last time towards the close of the reign of Christ, will stir up the mass of unbelievers against him and against his people. The supreme triumph of the Lord will be followed by the universal judgment, which is first to fall upon the great enemy. It is then only that Satan will disappear for ever, our earth and our heaven will pass away, a new heaven and a new earth, in which righteousness reigns, will take their place. (*Revelations*, xx. 7-11 ; xxi. 1.)

What glorious annals are these ! And how constantly shall we be surprised as we descend to the indecent and unwholesome foolishness of diabolical legends ! What a contrast for those especially, who have learned from reading the Bible, and also from their own experience, in what consists the action of this formidable prisoner who continues to move about in his chains of darkness ! Slanderer and tempter, behold his true character : not a miserable enchanter casting his spells, nor a distributor of parchments, smelling of sulphur.

Slanderer (and that is his proper name, for the word devil signifies nothing else), he accuses God to man and man to God ; he said to Eve : " Ye shall not surely die : For God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened ; and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil." " He said to the Lord : Put forth thy hand now, and touch his bone and his flesh, and he will curse thee to thy face." (*Genesis*, iii. 4, 5 ; *Job*, i. 9-11 ; ii. 4, 5.)

Tempter, he attacks the first and even the second Adam ; he instigates David to the numbering ; he offers to " persuade " Ahab, and is a lying spirit in the mouth of his false prophets. It is he who stands upon the right hand of Joshua, the high priest. It is he who puts it into the heart of Judas to betray his master. It is he who walketh about " like a roaring lion seeking whom he may devour." Behold the formidable enemy ! Without power to read the human heart, which pertains to God alone, he knows enough of it to develop all its evil tendencies. " For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places." (1 *Chronicles*, xxi. ; 1 *Kings*, xxii. 21 ; *Zechariah*, iii. 1 ; *Luke*, xxiii. 3 ; *John*, xiii. 2 ; 1 *Peter*, v. 8 ; *Ephesians*, vi. 11, 12 ; 2 *Corinthians*, ii. 11.)

Such is the Biblical history of the devil and his angels ; they will exercise their slanderous tongues and practise their temptations until the end ; moreover, their seductive snares will be redoubled in the last days.—The Biblical history differs in no less degree from the fables in circulation. According to our amateurs of the diabolical marvellous, acts of sorcery by hundreds and thousands take place every day, and it has always been thus. But what saith the Bible ? Cast your eye over these complete records of humanity ; read once more these books in which the history of the children of Israel for fifteen hundred years is related to us ; and what do you find ? The demons of the Middle Ages, of the tables and magnetism ! Demons whose prodigies fall around us more numerous than

hail stones in a shower ! No. We meet not the faintest trace of this legendary sorcery ; no divining wands, no *loups-garous*, no witchcraft, no evil eye, no fiendish revels. The magic of the Old Testament is limited to the struggle engaged in before Pharaoh. God then permitted the demons to imitate a few of his miracles, and in order better to show that their power was delegated to them and dependent on him, he willed that their accidental sorcery should be foiled in attempting to perform those miracles which were apparently most easy. The New Testament also records one manifestation of the momentary power transmitted to the devil by the will of God. In our Saviour's times, strange diseases, previously unknown, made their appearance, and we read of demoniacs. There were also persons (one at least), "possessed with a spirit of divination." Paul drives out the devil by which the servant at Philippi was enabled to practise soothsaying. The same Apostle smites with blindness, the magician Bar-jesus, whose sorceries perhaps were only pure and simple imposture, for the text in no degree affirms their reality. (*Acts*, xvi. 16-18 ; xiii. 6-11.)

Here ends the diabolical supernatural of the Scriptures. Its partisans must acknowledge that it is of rare occurrence. If it is to be more abundant at a later period, that period can only be the grand and terrible epoch which is announced to us under the title of the "last days," and during which, signs and lying wonders are to be permitted to multiply. (2 *Thessalonians*, ii. 3-13 ; *Revelations*, xiii. ; xvi. 14.)

Thus the Bible furnishes us with three instances of prodigies effected by Satan, three only, each of which is strikingly related to three periods of great religious crisis.—First, when God is about to deliver Israel from the bondage of Egypt and constitute unto himself a peculiar people, he gives the devil power to imitate a few miracles ; secondly, when God sends his own Son to deliver men from the slavery of sin, and render them his willing servants, he gives the devil power to produce certain diseases by possession, and to bestow upon a few magicians the spirit of divination. Thirdly and finally, when God shall pre-

pare to send his Son a second time, and Jesus, having plucked the believers from the anguish of the final struggle, is about to assume the government of his kingdom, then will the devil, for the last time and in the most impressive manner, receive power to effect lying wonders.

I do not absolutely deny the possibility of other diabolical prodigies. God has perhaps permitted this mode of action in cases which are unknown to us. This would seem almost to be inferred from the following passage in Deuteronomy: "If there arise among you a prophet, or a dreamer of dreams, and giveth thee a sign or a wonder; and the sign or the wonder come to pass, whereof he spake unto thee, saying, Let us go after other gods which thou hast not known, and let us serve them; thou shalt not hearken unto the words of that prophet, or that dreamer of dreams: for the Lord your God proveth you." (*Deuteronomy*, xiii. 1-4.)

But even though there may have been some sorceries not related by the sacred writers, even though there may have been some since the days of the Apostles, it still remains certain that the Bible leaves no place for that immense display of sorcery, that regular manifestation of diabolical miracles which characterizes the doctrines against which I have taken up the pen. This is the extent of my proposition, and such as it is, it suffices.

Our opponents have taken a convenient method whereby to get rid of the significant moderation of Biblical magic. They have introduced sorceries, *nolens volens*, into the Sacred Text.

Scripture speaks of enchanters, soothsayers, and warns the Jewish people against them; "therefore," argue our opponents, "it recognizes the reality of sorceries, divinations and enchantments!" Which is to say that in Scripture we are prohibited from attaching to words their ordinary meaning! When we speak of magic, we do not suppose that the use of this term implies a profession of faith. I shall frequently mention sorcerers in this book, yet I do not believe that they were sorcerers any more than you and I are. Now, the Bible has

done what we also do ; it has applied the term sorcerers to persons whom everybody thus designates, just as it has spoken of the rising and setting of the sun, instead of the rotation of the earth. Such language deceives no one. Do not the sacred writers carry the use of received terms so far as to remind Israel that it must not follow after *other gods*? Do we not read in the 95th Psalm : " For the Lord is a great God, and a great King above all gods !" Behold how the vigilant guardians of Monotheism express themselves, and moreover without peril to any one. They elsewhere remark that these gods are only of wood ; also, that these soothsayers and false prophets prophesy only lies.

The simple explanation I have just presented restores their natural sense to the following passages, in which our adversaries seek to discover an especial confirmation of the reality of sorceries : " Neither shall ye use enchantments, nor observe times. Ye shall not round the corners of your heads, neither shalt thou mar the corners of thy beard. Ye shall not make any cuttings in your flesh for the dead, nor print any marks upon you : I am the Lord !" (*Leviticus*, xix. 26-28.)

After thus warning the Israelites against the temptation of imitating the practises of the soothsayers, the Lord orders his people to avoid all contact with them : " Neither seek after wizards." He even pronounces the punishment of death against wizards and such as turn after them. (*Leviticus*, xix. 31 ; xx, 6, 27.)

Deuteronomy repeats the same prohibitions, assigning reasons for them, and giving it to be understood that the practises of sorcery are a part of the Pagan abominations, from which Israel should keep itself separate. " When thou art come into the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee, thou shalt not learn to do after the abominations of those nations. There shall not be found among you any one that maketh his son or his daughter to pass through the fire, or that useth divination, or an observer of times, or an enchanter, or a witch, or a charmer, or a consulter with familiar spirits, or a wizard, or a necromancer.

For all that do these things are an abomination unto the Lord; and because of these abominations the Lord thy God doth drive them out from before thee." (*Deuteronomy*, xviii. 9-12.)

This is perfectly clear; it was necessary to prevent the imitation of Canaanite customs, in the first rank of which figured every form of magic. In the above passage, the evocation of souls is twice referred to, which makes it all the less possible for us to infer that the sacred writer here proclaims the reality of the prodigies mentioned; moreover, the entire Scriptures, as we shall presently see, protest against any pretension to assume control of the souls of the dead, to recall them to earth and address them questions. God here enumerates the different varieties of Philistine, Tyrian, or Jebusite sorcerers: he nowhere declares that their pretensions have any real foundation.

The history of Israel proves only too well, how necessary was the warning. Idolatry and magic completely overrun it. The second book of Kings represents it to us as prostrated before all the host of heaven and serving Baal. "And they caused their sons and their daughters to pass through the fire, and used divination and enchantments, and sold themselves to do evil in the sight of the Lord, to provoke him to anger."—"Manasseh built altars for all the host of heaven in the two courts of the house of the Lord. And he made his son pass through the fire, and observed times, and used enchantments, and dealt with familiar spirits and wizards." This state of things continued until Josiah exterminated alike: "the workers with familiar spirits, and the wizards, and the images, and the idols, and all the abominations that were spied in the land of Judah and in Jerusalem." (2 *Kings*, xvii. 16, 17; xxi. 5, 6; xxiii. 24.)

The prophets are no less emphatic in their denunciations of sorcerers, not as possessing any real power, but as making a part of the train of idolatry. "And when they shall say unto you, Seek unto them that have familiar spirits, and unto wizards that peep, and that mutter: should not a people seek

unto their God? for the living to the dead?" (*Isaiah*, viii. 19.)

I said, just now, that the prophets nowhere declare themselves in regard to the reality of the magical practices which they denounce; I was mistaken. They repeatedly declare that all such things are only delusion and lies. "For thus saith the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel; Let not your prophets and your diviners that be in the midst of you, deceive you, neither hearken to your dreams which ye cause to be dreamed. For they prophesy falsely unto you in my name."—"For the idols have spoken vanity, and the diviners have seen a lie, and have told false dreams." (*Jeremiah*, xxix. 8, 9; *Zechariah*, x. 2.)

Such are some of the principal paragraphs that treat of sorcery. In quoting them, I make a particular reservation of the case of the witch of Endor, who, we shall find, possessed no more power to raise the dead or perform other deeds of sorcery in the supernatural sense of the word, than the rest. To this we shall hereafter return. Our adversaries have succeeded in enlarging the list of passages relating to magic, by giving to certain terms a mysterious signification, which they are far from possessing. Thus, the Magi and the Chaldeans invariably become so many sorcerers; thus, the charmers of serpents are transformed into magicians. It will be my pleasant task to undeceive those who interpret in this manner the phrases, familiar to us all, found in the 58th Psalm, and 8th chapter of *Jeremiah*; when the sacred authors speak of the "charmers of serpents, charm they never so wisely," and of cockatrices "which will not be charmed," they doubtless allude to those poor people whose industry still thrives in Egypt, and whom I myself have seen perform their operations without discovering the smallest sign of sorcery.

Another term badly understood, or rather, badly translated, has aided in the frequent introduction into Scripture of a diabolical supernatural which actually occurs only at rare intervals. If the sacred authors had spoken of women, "pos-

sessing a spirit of divination," they would have seemed thus to admit that a particular devil (the false god Pytho or Apollo) dwelt in these women. Now, the Hebrew text simply indicates the mistresses of *Obed*, consultants with familiar spirits ; such a designation by no means implies the action of any devil within them ; Scripture speaks of them by their popular name, just as it speaks of diviners, interpreters of dreams, casters of nativities throughout the whole Bible, but one single woman is mentioned as "possessing a spirit of divination ;" this is the servant at Philippi. She has, in reality, a devil, since Paul delivers her from it, and it is quite natural that this devil, who pretends to divine, should possess among the Greek people, the name of the god most celebrated for his oracles.

We see, then, the number of sorcerers in Scripture becoming more and more reduced, in proportion as we give to the matter our careful study. It is most unfortunate that we should meet so few in the books of the prophets, and that so many should have appeared during the Middle Ages, among our magnetizers and among our turners of tables. The contrast is overwhelming, and our adversaries attempt to escape from it by appealing to Joseph, to Balaam and to the Jewish exorcisers ; they would apply to magicians, language used in reference to false prophets, and to demons, language used in reference to false gods. Let us examine these last arguments.

Joseph, the son of Jacob, had a knowledge of sorcery ! I can not believe that the very numerous interpreters who seem to incline to this opinion, have well considered the enormity they sustain. The epistle to the Hebrews (xi. 22), ranks Joseph among the patriarchs of the Old Testament, who, through faith, obtained a good report. "By faith, Joseph, when he died, made mention of the departing of the children of Israel ; and gave commandment concerning his bones." It is not easy to conceive that this pious patriarch could have abandoned himself to practises which God declares abominable, or that the sorceries of Joseph could figure in the books of Moses, side by side with several pages of divine commands which pronounce

the punishment of death against whosoever shall have the least connection with sorcerers.

Again, Genesis (xl. and xli.) relates to us in detail, the processes of divination employed by Joseph ; his practises in prison and before Pharaoh of Egypt are those of Daniel before Nebuchadnezzar ; he has recourse to God. In what manner does he explain the dreams of his companions in captivity ? "Do not the interpretations belong to God?" are his words, and he employs neither a cup nor magical operation of any sort. Nor does he pretend otherwise to the king. "It is not in me : God shall give Pharaoh an answer of peace." Such is his language, such is his conduct on the two occasions in which he is the organ of divination, and yet our opponents would make of him a sorcerer or at least a prophet, confirming, by his example, the mysteries of sorcery, in support of which they quote the following paragraph : "Is not this the cup in which my lord drinketh, and whereby indeed he divineth?"

Let us inquire into the circumstances. Joseph's brothers had just departed a second time with the corn. In order to have a pretext to recall them and especially to keep Benjamin with him, Joseph had caused his cup to be placed in his youngest brother's sack, giving his steward directions to pursue, arrest and bring back the whole party, also to address them this reproach : "Wherefore have ye rewarded evil for good ? Is not this the cup in which my lord drinketh, and whereby indeed he divineth?" (*Genesis*, xliv. 4, 5.)

This is easily explained, even without resorting to a different, though equally legitimate translation : "by which he would prove you." I prefer the ordinary version as being the most simple. Joseph wished to frighten his brothers ; he ordered his steward to associate with his cup one of those mysterious traditions which had doubtless grown out of the popular imagination. His words on this point are a *jeu d'esprit*,* which

* They who may yet preserve any doubt on this very simple and very evident character of Joseph's words, have only to refer to the 15th verse of the 44th chapter. They will there find the commentary furnished by Joseph himself on his charge concerning

corresponds neither with the facts nor with his true thoughts, and which has no other object than to trouble the men to whom it is addressed. In the same spirit, he had previously said to them: "Ye are spies; to see the nakedness of the land ye are come." (xlii. 9.)

Joseph's cup is one of the main props of the system which sees magicians in every part of the Scriptures. The great sorcerer, Balaam, is a still more essential support.

To this I can find but one objection; God himself declares to us in his infallible word, that Balaam was a prophet:

"Balaam was rebuked for his iniquity: the dumb ass, speaking with man's voice, forbade the madness of the prophet." (2 *Peter*, ii. 16.) Balaam is a prophet; that is his character, and it is to be inferred from his whole conduct, from the habitually familiar relations which in a measure existed between God and him when the messengers of Balak came to seek him, as well as from his manifesting no surprise when the Lord speaks to him.

If there be any of my readers who consider this strange, I would recall to their minds the mixture of true faith and Paganism which then existed in Mesopotamia and the adjoining countries. The families of Terah and Laban preserved the tradition of the living God, while they gradually departed from his worship to follow after idols and grotesque images. The existence of an Assyrian prophet in the time of Moses is not more singular than the existence of a priest of the Most High God, Melchisedek, king of Salem, in the time of Abraham.

There is then, no trace of magic in Balaam's case. It was very natural that Balak should have been anxious to procure against the people of God, maledictions pronounced by a prophet of God. He was not ignorant of the prophet's venality, and like all Pagans, he believed in the power of formulas, in the acts of a man known to have relations with Divinity.

the cup: "Wot you not," said he to his frightened brothers, "that such a man as I, can certainly divine?" His brothers are spies! his brothers have stolen his cup! this cup is an instrument of divination! he, Joseph, possesses the infallible power of divination! all these remarks belong to the same order of ideas.

That Balaam should have yielded or tried to yield, that he should have followed Balak from one high place to another ; that he should again have consulted the Lord although he had no doubt regarding his duty ; that he should have received authority to go—and here was his first punishment ; in short, that he should have presented throughout it all, the hideous spectacle of a prophet whose mouth proffers only divine words, while his heart is filled with covetousness, and finally corrupted even to idolatry in the broadest sense of the word (*Numbers*, xxxi. 8–16) ; herein consists the peculiar character of this story and the depth of a fall which Scripture repeatedly condemns in most emphatic terms.

In default of Joseph and Balaam, our adversaries cling to the false prophets and false gods ; the first were soothsayers, the second were devils ; there can be no doubt of that in our minds, when we see how large a place in Jewish society was occupied by exorcists !

We will commence by removing these exorcists. There is no question of them before the time of Christ ; exorcism makes its appearance at the same period with possession. It exists there a special fact, closely connected with the coming of the Son of God, and the exceptional display of the diabolical supernatural attendant upon that event. To this, we shall hereafter return ; for the present, it is sufficient to have shown that exorcists are as rarely spoken of in the Bible as magicians, and to have caused to be remarked, in addition, that the New Testament speaks of exorcists without attesting the efficacy of their operations. It would seem, on the contrary, judging from some things we read in the book of Acts (xix. 13–16), that the evil spirits would not recognize the power of these pretended exorcists. The sons of Sceva, experimenting with different formulas, conceived the idea of employing, like the Apostle Paul, the name of the Lord Jesus ; whereupon the evil spirit said to them : “ Jesus I know, and Paul I know ; *but who are ye ?* ”

The exorcists then do not amount to much. What are we

to think of the false prophets? Are we to transform them into magicians, possessing a mysterious power to foretell the future? The answer is to be found on almost every page of Scripture. Two examples will serve my purpose. Ezekial writes: "For there shall be no more any *vain vision* nor flattering divination within the house of Israel. . . . Thou Son of man, set thy face against the daughters of thy people, *which prophesy out of their own heart.*" (xii. 24; xiii. 17.) Zechariah writes: "And also I will cause the prophets and the unclean spirit to pass out of the land. And it shall come to pass, that when any shall yet prophesy, then his father and mother that begat him shall say unto him, Thou shalt not live; for thou speakest lies in the name of the Lord. . . . And it shall come to pass in that day, that the prophets shall be ashamed every one of his vision, when he hath prophesied; neither shall they wear a rough garment to deceive: But he shall say, "I am no prophet, I am a husbandman." (xiii. 2-6.)

That the false prophets of the Old Testament, and even those of the times of the Apostles (Acts xiii. 6), pretended to be clothed with supernatural power, power to reveal heavenly things, to divine the future, to effect prodigies, is not to be doubted; but that the Bible admitted this power, is quite another question. I have already alluded to a period in the future, when the second coming of Christ is to be announced by wonders, which false prophets and the "false prophet" *par excellence* will receive permission to effect. Meanwhile, the Holy Scriptures testify to no exploits performed by the false prophets, either in the past or present.

Does Scripture give us any better authority for believing in the miracles of false gods? Does it proclaim, as is daily repeated, that the Pagan divinities were so many devils, that their oracles were real diabolical revelations, that their prodigies were equally real?

Let us settle the terms of the problem. We do not ask, if the worship of idols was of the devil in the sense in which all sins and all errors come from him; but, we ask, was the

person of certain devils fixed and localized in certain local temples, was the Apollo of Delphi a devil, was Diana of Ephesus another, did one or several devils occupy the sanctuaries of the Tyrian Baal, of the Egyptian triads? we ask, if, instead of looking there for delusions and gross frauds, we ought not rather look for diabolical enchantments, diabolical prophecies, diabolical miracles? This would give to Paganism a very particular, a very new character, and a sort of reality which has been until now, generally refused to it. A population of devils dwelling in all the seats of idolatry, an effluvium of a supernatural whose abundance is in strong contrast with the poverty of the Biblical supernatural, all this constitutes an important dogma, one which Scripture must certainly have revealed. Let us consult the Scriptures thereon.

The following are the passages that seem to bear most strongly on this point: "And they shall no more offer their sacrifices unto devils, after whom they have gone a whoring." "Jeroboam ordained him priests for the high places, and for the devils, and for the calves which he had made." "But were mingled among the heathen, and learned their works, and they served their idols which were a snare unto them. Yea, they sacrificed their sons and their daughters unto devils." "What say I then? that the idol is anything, or that which is offered in sacrifice is anything! But I say, that the things which the Gentiles sacrifice, they sacrifice to devils, and not to God: and I would not that ye should have fellowship with devils. Ye cannot drink the cup of the Lord, and the cup of devils: ye cannot be partakers of the Lord's table, and of the table of devils." (*Leviticus*, xvii. 7; *2 Chronicles*, xi. 15; *Psalms*, cvi. 35-37; *1 Corinthians*, x. 19-21.)

We have now to determine the signification of these passages. They either simply mean that idolatry is one of the works of the tempter, or they mean that the false gods were so many fallen angels.

The first interpretation seems already confirmed by the very words in the passage just quoted from Paul: "What say I, then,

that the idol is anything?" It is likewise confirmed by the numerous declarations which class unbelievers and sinners with the servants or children of the devil. "Ye are of your father the devil," said Jesus, "and the lusts of your father ye will do." (*John*, viii. 44.) Who has ever taken this language in its literal sense? How can any one avoid seeing there a figure which naturally applies to the custom of the Pagan religion? The first epistle of John (iii. 8, 10) leaves no room for doubt in this respect, being thus expressed: "He that committeth sin is of the devil. . . . In this the children of God are manifest, and the children of the devil."

Nothing can be clearer, and the argument which would transform false gods into devils, under pretext that the worshippers of the first are treated as worshippers of the second, is nothing more nor less than a simple absurdity. Moreover, no one will hesitate thus to qualify it, after having remarked that the entire Scriptures, far from taking seriously the pretended oracles and pretended miracles of Paganism (and what is more serious than the true diabolical supernatural), continually demonstrate the absolute inertia, the total impotence of idols. Let us see if they leave any place whatever, for the mysterious action of devils, clothed in the character of lying divinities.

Deuteronomy (xxxii. 17) thus expresses itself: "They sacrificed unto devils, not to God." Jeremiah develops the same idea in his tenth chapter: "one cutteth a tree out of the forest, the work of the hands of the workman, with the axe. They deck it with silver and with gold; they fasten it with nails and with hammers, that it move not. They are upright as the palm tree, but speak not: they must needs be borne, because they cannot go. Be not afraid of them; for they cannot do evil, neither also is it in them to do good. . . . Every founder is confounded by the graven image: for his molten image is falsehood, and there is no breath in them. They are only vanity and the work of errors." This is not the language of those who discover devils in every Pagan

temple, and believe in the reality of their predictions and sorceries. It would be highly dangerous, in their opinions, to be so prodigal of insults to *wood* ! What will they make of Psalms 115 and 125. or of chapters 40, 44, and 54 of Isaiah : " Their idols are silver and gold, the work of men's hands. They have mouths, but they speak not ; eyes have they, but they see not ; they have ears, but they hear not ; noses have they, but they smell not ; they have hands, but they handle not ; feet have they, but they walk not ; neither speak they through their throat." " The carpenter stretcheth out his rule ; he marketh it out with a line ; he fitteth it with planes, and he marketh it out with the compass, and maketh it after the figure of a man, according to the beauty of a man ; that it may remain in the house. . . . He planteth an ash, and the rain doth nourish it ; then shall it be for a man to burn ; for he will take thereof and warm himself ; yea, he kindleth it, and baketh bread ; yea, he maketh a god, and worshippeth it. . . . And none considereth in his heart, neither is there knowledge nor understanding to say, I have burned part of it in the fire ; yea, also, I have baked bread upon the coals thereof ; I have roasted flesh, and eaten it ; and shall I make the residue thereof an abomination ? Shall I fall down to the stock of a tree ?"

It is useless to attempt to maintain that this satirical language of the Bible is applicable to idols only in so far as they are made from the stocks of trees, and that it may be reconciled with the supernatural action of the devil dwelling within the idol. The prophet Elijah effectually refutes this argument. Listen to the words in which he defies the priests of Baal : " Cry aloud, for he is a god : either he is taking, or he is pursuing, or he is on a journey, or peradventure he sleepeth, and must be awaked !" (1 *Kings*, xviii. 27.)

I think that the question is now solved. We know, at last, how large a sphere the Bible reserves to the Satanic supernatural. In these annals, which comprise the history of the world from the creation to the time of the Apostles, we see wonders

attributed to the devil and his angels, only in a very few exceptional circumstances, where the struggle between good and evil is of the most solemn importance. On the occasion of the temptation of the first man, Satan assumes the form of a serpent; at the period of the departure from Egypt, Pharaoh's magicians reproduce various miracles; at the time of the first coming of Christ, demoniacs appear, and perhaps, also, a few persons, by the assistance of evil spirits, practise divination; at the second coming of Christ, men will be stirred up to revolt by the brilliant signs Satan shall have had permission to accomplish.

This is all! It is certainly curious to compare an account like this with a description of the works of the devil such as the Middle Ages have imagined, and such as is even at the present day, offered to our belief. In antiquity, we see false gods changed into devils, temples famous for their continual production of miracles and Satanic oracles; false prophets metamorphosed into magicians, the true prophets sometimes making use of the rites of magic; magic continually and universally practised. Since the Christian Era, we have a most prodigious inundation of sorcerers who cast spells, kill, dispose of hearts, assist at the revels of the fiends, influence the destiny of humanity, and multiply wonders; prodigies so extraordinary that exorcisms place the suspension in the air, the gift of tongues and the prediction of future events among the regular marks of possession; we are in the midst of a world of spirits, where the supernatural is the ordinary law, the common and permanent fact!

The two stories cannot be equally true. We must make our election.

Here I meet with an objection, which I am not permitted to pass over in silence. "How do you dispose," say our adversaries, "of the wonders announced by Jesus Christ, and which are hereafter to become the visible sign of his Church? In

order to throw suspicion upon sorcery, you begin by denying the miracles ; you forget to inform your readers that since the death of the Saviour, the supernatural is a portion of the true order of things. Now, the two supernaturals, the divine and the diabolical, reciprocally support each other."

I by no means desire to evade so grave a question. We will inquire, then, if the divine supernatural and the diabolical supernatural have survived the Apostolic period ; but let it be first understood that even though the answer be in the affirmative, we shall have no right to conclude therefrom that the rôle of devils since the Christian Era is in absolute contradiction to their rôle in the Old Testament, or during the ministry of our Saviour.

To this reservation, I would add two others. In the first place, I do not affirm the absolute cessation of miracles since the close of the Apostolic period. God has not made me the confidant of his designs ; I affirm only, that the continuation of the miracles cannot be proved from Scripture. In the second place, I deny the necessary correlation which our opponents attempt to establish between the two supernaturals ; if the miracles have continued (contrary to all likelihood), it does not necessarily follow that the prodigies of devils have also continued.

And now, I am prepared to attack the theory which, in a certain way, extends the period of miraculous facts beyond the Apostolic times. There always have been, and there always will be on this point, two systems presented, the system of limitation and the system of extension. The one insists that Revelation completes itself throughout the ages, by means of tradition and infallible interpretations ; the other maintains that all Revelation is contained in the Bible, that after it, and external to it, God reveals nothing. The one holds that miracles have become a permanent institution, an attribute, as it were, of the Church ; the other maintains that beyond the miracles of the Bible, and those which it predicts for the "last days," there is nothing proved, nothing authentic. I shall excite no surprise

by declaring the second system to be the one which I adopt.

I am aware that the words of our Saviour, at the period of his ascension,* will be quoted in opposition to the ground I take: "Go ye into all the world and preach the Gospel to every creature. . . . And these signs shall follow them that believe: In my name, shall they cast out devils; they shall speak with new tongues; they shall take up serpents; and if they drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them; they shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover." (*Mark*, xvi. 17, 18.)

This declaration either guarantees *forever* the gift of miracles to every Christian; or it must be understood in the sense that the Apostles, more favored than the prophets of old, not only possessed power to perform miracles themselves, but they saw this marvellous faculty displayed in the midst of their proselytes, as the brilliant mark and divine seal of their ministry.

Now, are we authorized to adopt the first interpretation? I think not. If miracles are the sign of Christianity in general, and not of the special ministry of the Apostles, there is no longer any restriction to be put upon the terms employed by

* The preaching of Peter on the day of Pentecost may also be quoted against me. "For these are not drunken as ye suppose, seeing it is but the third hour of the day; but this is that which was spoken by the prophet Joel, And it shall come to pass in the last days, saith God, I will pour out of my spirit upon all flesh: and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams: And on my servants, and on my hand-maidens, I will pour out in those days of my Spirit; and they shall prophesy; And I will show wonders in heaven above, and signs in the earth beneath; blood, and fire, and vapor of smoke. The sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before that great and notable day of the Lord come." (*Acts*, ii. 15-20.) But those who will trouble themselves to read over the whole of the second chapter of Joel referred to by Peter, will feel convinced that the prophet has there mentioned all the signs which are to appear in the last days, that is to say (for it is the frequent sense of the expression), during the entire period between the first and second coming of Christ. The effusion of miraculous gifts is there found in connection with the darkening of the sun and the re-establishment of the Jews. Now, as we know that a considerable portion of the prediction does not apply to the Apostolic period, it is equally natural to suppose that the portion of it which is then accomplished, does not apply to the succeeding periods. It is in vain to interrogate the Bible; nowhere shall we discover a promise of the universality and perpetuity of miraculous or prophetic power after the Apostles.

Christ. "Them that believe," will be those who dispose of the supernatural at their pleasure. The verification is easy ; let all those who have believed, come and drink poison, let them cure the sick, let them speak strange tongues. No church whatever has pretended to this universal gift of miracles ; everybody has understood that this is a very common form of language in the Bible, the apparent generalization of a particular proposition.

There is, moreover, no means of doubting, for Scripture is here, as always, the infallible commentary on Scripture. By the side of the promise of Jesus Christ, the New Testament places its realization ; it gives us the picture of the primitive Churches. And what do we see ? Does every Christian possess the gift of cure or the gift of tongues ? Far from it. Miraculous gifts, now more frequent, now more rare, are nowhere universal. On the contrary, they have precisely the character I just now indicated, they confirm by the extraordinary power with which some of the converts to Christianity are clothed, the divinity of the mission confided to the Apostles.

This is so true that the Epistle to the Hebrews (ii. 3, 4) pointedly refers to these marvellous facts as a demonstration of the Apostolic ministry : "How shall we escape if we neglect so great salvation ; which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed unto us by them that heard him : God also bearing them witness, both with signs and wonders, and with divers miracles, and gifts of the Holy Ghost, according to his own will ?"

Yes, God thus bore witness to the Apostles ; their peculiar office being distinguished from all others in the annals of the world by miracles and extraordinary gifts of the Holy Spirit. When we compare the instructions given to the Apostles by their master at the period of their first mission, with those which relate to their final mission, we remark that their peculiar characteristic lies in the fact that the gift of miracles is no longer confined to the person of the Apostles, as it was formerly confined to that of the prophets. "Them that believe"

will speak strange tongues, and cure the sick ; formerly it was otherwise ; it was only to the seventy Apostles that Jesus said : "Heal the sick, cleanse the lepers, raise the dead, cast out devils." (*Matthew*, x. 8 ; *Luke*, x. 9.)

This is not all. The perpetuity of miraculous gifts cannot be inferred from the passage in Mark, if their universality is not ; not simply because the two ideas are intimately connected, but because the second alone seems to be expressed by the text, ("Them that believe"). Now, the New-Testament, which protests against their universality, equally protests against their duration. The attentive reader thus sees miraculous action gradually diminishing and retiring, in proportion as the results of the Apostolic ministry make its confirmation less dependent on supernatural agencies. Everything seems to indicate that it will soon disappear. Turn to the Book of Acts ; you will first notice the general effusion of extraordinary gifts ; the three thousand converted at Jerusalem, the friends of Cornelius, the proselytes of Samaria, receive all the supernatural gifts of the Holy Spirit ; later, those who possess similar privileges may be counted in the Churches, the Church of Corinth, which is particularly favored in this respect (and, indeed, the errors that threaten it seem traceable to this cause rather than to any particular holiness), the Church of Corinth, where the Apostolic ministry is attested by miracles more numerous than elsewhere, particularly distinguishes those of its members who are clothed with the gift of tongues, the gift of prophecy, or the gift of interpretation ; and, still later, the pastoral epistles regulating the permanent condition of the flocks do not even foresee the possibility of these glorious, but transitory manifestations.

The decrease of miraculous gifts is so marked that the period of each epistle may be determined, so to speak, by the language it holds concerning them. The Epistle of John is one of the oldest, it is connected with the first times of the Church, and we find in it, accordingly, the traces of a miracle frequently performed by the elders. "Is any sick among you? let him call for the elders of the Church; and let them pray over him,

anointing him with oil, in the name of the Lord; and the prayer of faith shall save the sick." (*James*, v. 14, 15.) The anointing with oil effected miraculous cures at that epoch in all the Churches to which the Apostle addressed himself; at a later day nothing is said of this miracle. Paul writes to the Philippians of the sickness of Epaphroditus, he gives advice to Timothy concerning his health, he mentions that he has left Trophimus sick at Miletus, yet nowhere does he indicate that recourse has been had to the anointment with oil by way of cure. We all know what finally grew out of this miracle; the act of healing became an act establishing the triumph of death, the anointing with oil is metamorphosed into extreme unction! Nothing better demonstrates that miracles did not continue.

They were not destined to continue; the promise of Jesus Christ concerned the Apostolic ministry, and nothing else. Shall I produce another proof of this. Among the supernatural works which they who believe are to accomplish, he places the cure of demoniacs. Now there have been no demoniacs except at the period of the Saviour and his Apostles. I shall again refer to this branch of the argument. Meanwhile, I beg the reader to remark that if the name of demoniac has been applied to persons affected by convulsions, epilepsy, or hallucination, it is not to say that hallucination, epilepsy, or convulsions, were the possessions related in the Gospels. The Fathers speak of demoniacs and cure them; who doubts it? but their discernment is at fault upon this point, as upon many others. Their subjects of possession do not resemble those cured by Jesus, no more do they resemble those described in the Catholic exorcisms, according to which, veritable possessions are identified by the gift of tongues, by a knowledge of the future, and by suspension in the air. None of these characteristics, that I am aware of, are met with in the demoniacs of Tertullian; his demoniacs are not more real in the eyes of my adversaries than in mine.

I confess myself as skeptical as Jurieu* touching supernat-

* A Protestant minister of the seventeenth century, the cotemporary with Bossuet.—*Trans.*

ural facts related by the Fathers. Miracles, possessions, apparitions, nothing is there lacking, I know; but I also know that the heretics then performed as many miracles as the orthodox, and that the doctrine of the perpetuity of extraordinary gifts was precisely one of the particular characteristics of Montanism; I know that everybody was not so credulous, and that the fourth century saw Vigilance combating apparitions with the same courageous and clear-sighted fidelity which he opposed to the introduction of images into Christian worship. There is, moreover, one reflection which appeals to the attentive reader of the Fathers, and puts him somewhat on his guard against their marvellous stories. Prodigies multiply in proportion as the distance from the Apostolic age increases;—the first century has none, the second century has a few; during the third the inundation commences; the fourth relates, with perfect sincerity, thousands of miraculous acts, while the Middle Ages far exceed the fourth century.

A progression so marked as this, says much both for the real cessation of the supernatural at the end of the Apostolic period, and for the true nature of that supernatural, which increases in proportion as it recedes from the fountain-head, and as traditions interpose between believers and the Divine instructions.

I hope my readers will not accept this on my word alone; I would respectfully ask them to examine for themselves the writings of the primitive Fathers. In the long letter of Clement Romain, where so many other subjects are brought up, we find not the faintest trace of miracles. Neither is there any reference to them in Ignatius, who would seem to be the very man to accept floating opinions. Polycarp is equally silent on this point. It is in Justin we perceive the first indication of supernatural pretensions; and even here it is very slight, compared with Tertullian and the Fathers succeeding him! Throughout the whole of these numerous treatises, these apologies, these minute descriptions of the life and worship of the Christians in the second century, scarcely more than one or two passages bearing on the subject of miracles are to be found.

The moderation of Justin is all the more remarkable from the fact that there is no mention, either of miracles or possessions, in the epistle to Diognetus, in Tatian, in Athenagoras, or in Theophilus. It would seem strange, in truth, that so many works written in demonstration of Christianity, should have, by mutual consent, shunned the grand argument of miracles, if miracles had then occupied the important place which soon after fell to their lot. Even Irenæus wrote his long work without speaking of the miraculous facts ; he no more availed himself of them in his contests with the Gnostics than the other apologists, in their first contests with the Jews.

Such was the *début* of the Fathers. Since then, the question has taken several steps in advance, and the prodigies have multiplied. How necessary is it, then, to remind us of the exceptional character of the times of Christ and his Apostles. Indeed, we are exposed to grave errors of every sort, when we fail to recognize this fundamental truth : the Apostolic period had a monopoly of miracles as well as a monopoly of infallible revelations.

In regard to celestial communications, it is important to distinguish the different periods. In the time of Moses and the patriarchs, God himself conversed with them or directed them by dreams. In the time of the prophets, God granted them visions and sometimes dictated their words : " Thus saith the Lord." The Apostles had, in general, neither conversation, nor dreams, nor visions, nor dictation ; but their canonical writings were the word of the Lord, their ministry was confirmed by their own miracles, and by those that were occasionally performed by simple believers. Since the Apostles, we have on the one hand, the books of the Old and the New Testaments ; on the other, the Holy Spirit, which makes us understand and delight in them when we humbly implore its assistance. We are, then, far from being disinherited ; on the contrary, mankind has never been in as direct communion with God. Only one thing is required of us : let us accept our lot, our magnificent lot, not that of preceding generations. In extending infallible

revelation and miracles beyond the Apostolic times, we expose ourselves to the most dangerous errors; as well might we pretend to prophetic visions, or to talk directly with God like the patriarchs of old !

It remains for me to clear up a point, which, in order to avoid a break in the discussion, I have as yet barely noticed. Among the supernatural manifestations related in the New Testament, demoniacs occupy an important place. Is it certain that this great fact disappeared with the Apostles, and that it was strictly cotemporary with Jesus Christ and his first disciples?

So long as there exists any doubt on this point, so long will also exist the right to assert that the supernatural has survived the Apostolic age, and that nothing distinguishes the period in which we live, from the period during which the Church was founded in the midst of miracles performed by its members, and prodigies effected by the enemy, or from the period in which the return of the head of the Church will be announced by new Satanic prodigies, responded to by new miracles. Between this commencement and this end, between the age of the Apostles and the "last days," as Scripture in a general sense calls them, does there not exist a long interval, our own age, an interval deprived of the extraordinary facts which distinguish both the first and the "last days" properly so called ?

Nothing better proves it than the total disappearance of demoniacs. Now, in order to be certain if they have disappeared, we must first establish what they were ; to define, is almost to demonstrate.

There always have been, and there always will be diseases similar to those with which the demoniacs of the Gospel were afflicted, deaf, dumb, epileptics, convulsionaries. There always have been, and there always will be moral possessions, sins, revolts against God and against his word. But neither were there before the coming of Christ, nor have there been since the death

of the Apostles, *diseased possessions*, complex diseases, in which are displayed at the same time, the two consequences of the fall : physical death and moral death.

The son of God came to deliver us from both ; therefore, I cannot be surprised that this double deliverance should have found its most striking expression in the cure of demoniacs. It was, doubtless, important that the disease and the sin should be presented in their closest relation at the Advent of him who was to triumph over death and hell.

But were the demoniacs really what we have just supposed them to be ?

To listen to certain persons, we might actually believe that the condition of demoniacs invariably partook of the character of epilepsy or lunacy ! They who hold this language, and who obstinately shut their eyes to the fact that it was only an ordinary disease transformed into possession by the prejudices of an ignorant age, have probably never opened the Gospels. Side by side with the child to whom the demon gives epileptic crises, the two men to whom the demons give violent and dangerous madness (*Matthew*, viii. 28 ; xvii. 15), we are shown other demons who render their victims blind or dumb, or who afflict them with divers diseases. (*Matthew*, iv. 24 ; ix. 32 ; xii. 22.)

Demoniacs are not simply epileptics or madmen ; their declarations, moreover, and especially the declarations of the Lord, do not permit us for an instant to rest on this hypothesis. And, on the other side, neither are men tormented only by a moral evil, by extraordinary temptations. As if to compensate themselves for the interpretations of the rationalists, Christians have too often introduced their own, which are not much better. In their eyes, demoniacs are little more than great sinners, possessed by the devil in the sense that their heart pertains to him in a more than extraordinary manner. The world is so disposed to suppress the diseased and physical side of the possession, that its traditions have transformed Mary Magdalen into a representative of the worst class of female sinners, because Jesus delivered her from seven devils. To have had seven devils ! that is the

very height of sin, and Mary Magdalen or Madeleine is henceforth confounded with the sinful woman who washed the feet of the Saviour with her tears, and wiped them with the hair of her head !

Let us vindicate the true character of the possessions related in the New Testament. They are a disease, or rather they are all sorts of diseases, accompanied in general, doubtless, by the interior action of the demon. The demoniacs in no respect resemble the pretended *possédés* of the Middle Ages ; there is no authority for asserting that they were sold to Satan and more depraved than the other inhabitants of the country.

To whom, indeed, are addressed the most severe reproaches of the Saviour ? To the demoniacs ? No ; to the " Scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites," to men perfectly exempt from the disease of those afflicted by possession, but real slaves of the devil. Jesus does not for an instant encourage the baleful opinion which would confound material possession with moral corruption. If he says to a certain demoniac who has been cured, " Go, and sin no more," he addresses the same language to other diseased persons ; he never delivers the body, without making allusion to the deliverance of which the soul has need. Moreover, he invariably places the struggle on its own ground ; it is to escape from sin, not from possession : the tempter, he is the enemy. Simple infirmity is nothing ; the evil lies in being tempted to revolt.

When the devil " enters into Judas," Judas does not become a demoniac ; he ends in becoming a traitor. He sells his master, he is driven to despair, he kills himself ; he experiences no epileptic crises, no speechlessness, none of the symptoms of the strange malady that then afflicted Palestine.

It is quite evident that possession, without being a particular sign of sin, nevertheless implies the idea of a heart still corrupt and unconverted. Various passages, and especially the parable related by Matthew in the 43d and following verses of his 12th chapter, testify that it is thus. In other terms, among the sinners in the time of Jesus Christ, there were some whose

bodies presented a visible manifestation of the action of the devil. Sometimes even, the demons who possessed them are quite particularly designated as "unclean spirits," which seems to indicate that the disease was accompanied by moral obsession. (*Mark*, i. 23, 27 ; iii. 30 ; vii. 25 ; *Luke*, ix. 12 ; *Acts*, v. 16.)

But the distinction none the less subsists ; disease is not sin, the proof of which lies in the fact that cure is not conversion. If there are some demoniacs converted, Mary Magdalen among others, there are likewise some in whom the deliverance from their infirmity is unaccompanied by any sign which denotes a change of heart. Their conduct is similar to that of other persons cured of their diseases, sometimes giving their hearts to the Saviour, and sometimes responding to his love only by ingratitude and frivolity. In all cases, whether of ordinary invalids or demoniacs, cure and conversion were two distinct facts, although they were occasionally concomitant facts.

In thus attempting to characterize demoniacs,* my object has been to establish that none have appeared since the times of the Apostles. They are only to be found in other periods, by misconstruing the extraordinary fact which signalizes the coming of the Saviour and the foundation of his Church. Some, as I have said, see little else in possession than moral action ; they transform demoniacs into great sinners, which is most assuredly one method of finding them everywhere. Others, again, regard possession almost entirely as an ordinary malady, mental alienation or epilepsy ; this is still another means of finding demoniacs both before and after Christ.† As for us, having defined it according to the Gospels, as a diabolical possession which occasions divers infirmities, we are prepared to establish

* Those who would investigate the question more fully than it is in my power to do here, are referred to the following passages: *Matthew*, iv. 24 ; viii. 16, 28 ; ix. 32, 33 ; x. 8 ; xii. 22 ; xv. 22 ; xvii. 18 ; *Mark*, iii. 15 ; ix. 28, 38 ; xvi. 9, 17 ; *Luke*, iv. 41 ; viii. 16, 28, 29 ; x. 17, etc.

† Origen, in his commentary on the seventeenth chapter of *Matthew*, makes the remark, that the pretended possessions of his times were, in the opinion of physicians, only ordinary diseases.

that nothing similar to it has appeared at any other times than those we have specified.

I would invite such persons as may still preserve doubts, to review the Old Testament. Does it any where mention diabolical diseases? No; throughout its whole contents the only instance in which we are even faintly reminded of demoniacs is a circumstance in the history of Saul; he is tormented with an evil spirit sent by the Lord, and here rests the analogy. Saul suffers by a special action of the enemy, and according to the will of God; but he appears to suffer in his mind and not in his body; he is melancholy and troubled, he is not a demoniac.

Behold the only example that can be cited during a period of fifteen hundred years, from a collection of more than thirty books, describing in detail all the incidents in the history of the people of God! An imperfect, far-fetched analogy, nothing more!—Now, these eighteen hundred years that have rolled by since the times of the Apostles, do not even furnish this isolated and insufficient fact, which is quoted to us as having been discovered before Christ. Epileptics, yes; pretended possessions, yes, again; but diseases resulting from possession, deafness, dumbness, convulsions, blindness, caused by the presence of devils, not one instance will you find.

This form of the supernatural, corresponding as it did in a most evident manner with the coming and mission of the Redeemer, could not fail to disappear with the others, and more than the others perhaps. Moreover, everything indicated that it was to be thus. The mention of demoniacs is less and less frequent in the New Testament as we recede from the time of our Saviour, and the word *demon* is finally used by the authors of the epistles and the Revelations only in its Greek signification, *demi-god*. I would especially call the attention of my readers to the fact, that in the numerous passages where the action of the devil is described, not a single phrase is to be found that refers to the special action which signalized the period of our Lord, and which was to be prolonged during the ministry of his Apostles. The New Testament has predicted that we

shall be exposed to the temptations of Satan ; it has not predicted that we shall be exposed to the torments of demoniacs ; it has clothed us in the whole armor of God, wherewith to combat the enemy of our souls, but it has not transmitted to us the smallest exorcism. The devil will sow tares in the field ; he will take away the Divine Word from our hearts, lest, that having believed, we shall be saved ; he will pervert the ways of the Lord which are narrow ; he will take advantage of our anger, of our various passions, to cause us to fall ; he will expose us to a formidable assault in the "evil day ;" he will set snares for our feet ; he will prowl around us like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour ; this is the extent of his rôle (quite sufficient, in my opinion !) until the day when the momentary appearance of his prodigies will call for a return to miracles, and, in giving the signal of the final struggle, will also give the signal for the second coming of Christ. (*Matthew*, xiii. 39 ; *Luke*, viii. 12 ; *Acts*, xiii. 10 ; *Ephesians*, iv. 27 ; vi. 11-13 ; 1 *Timothy*, iii. 6, 7 ; 1 *Peter*, v. 8.)

I have just pointed out the reasons that induce me to contest the continuation of the Divine supernatural and the Satanic supernatural after the age of the Apostles. I have now to maintain a second proposition : even if there had been miracles from God, or prodigies from the devil since the close of the first century of the Christian Era, one thing would still remain certain, that there could be no analogy between these wonders and those which you relate to us ; you have found out the secret of degrading and perverting everything ; your devil has nothing in common with the devil of the Bible ; in place of the fallen angel, the perfidious and formidable adversary, you give us an indescribably ridiculous being, clothed in a traditional costume, occupied with the sorcery of the Middle Ages, condescending to perform tricks with which everybody is familiar, dancing with shovels and tongs, etc. ; now a satyr, now a hobgoblin, it is not Satan, it never will be, and it never has been Satan.

In order to believe in your devil and his works, we must first get rid of our belief in the devil of Scripture, with whom we are, all of us, only too familiar. What sort of a devil is this whom you represent in a state of subjection to the will of man, yielding a slave's obedience to magical formulas, gaining souls by contract, and by the same contract to which he affixes his signature, binding himself to serve, for a certain period, the master whom he accepts? What sort of a devil is it whom you confine in boxes, in the bodies of beasts, and bottle up at pleasure? Here is a demon imprisoned in my ring; I charge him with my commissions, he traverses the entire world at my command! Here are other demons, who serve as nags to the sorcerers, and who, every night of the *sabbat*, station themselves with the utmost docility on the chimney tops, ready to transport their masters through the air!

Popular imaginings! do you say? yes, but popular imaginings not worse attested than all the rest of your stories; popular imaginings which you fully adopt; and you are very right, for, in rejecting them, you would reject all the testimony upon which the faith of the Middle Ages reposes—testimony, in virtue of which thousands of men have been put to the torture and burned. Your witchcraft accepts it all; the principal fact is not better proved than the details. The descriptions of the devil are the same or nearly so, in your authentic accounts, in your civil, ecclesiastical, and judicial certificates, in all the confessions of your sorcerers. He is always the same miserable wretch, deceiver and deceived, disgusting and absurd. He has always a cloven foot, a goat's foot. The famous Superior of the Ursulines of Loudun, whom you take under your especial protection, saw her demon Behemoth under a hideous and terrible form, with huge jaws belching forth fire and flames from the mouth and eyes, provided with great claws, etc. An official uniformity is to be found in the descriptions of all the sorcerers and exorcists:—horns, claws, and tail.

Now, then, tell me if you know of anything more contrary to the declarations of Scripture, better calculated to precipitate souls under the dominion of Satan. Satan "disguises himself as an angel of light;" he conceals his ugliness in order to be more successful with his temptations. Would that I could here quote the highly humorous refutation which a noble-hearted and intelligent man has opposed to your traditional devil. Unfortunately, he has seen fit to express himself in *patois*, although he writes the very purest French. The conclusion, however, to be derived from it is, that the tempter is not very tempting when he presents himself in the form with which you have invested him.*

The form, have I said—what will be his attractions if we pass from that to his names? Nor have you any cause to laugh; names make an integral portion of your official revelations by means of witnesses; they make a large part of your official reports of torture and the stake; everything is false if the

* I have, upon reflection, decided to insert in a note the lines above mentioned. It is possible that my book may fall into the hands of some of my countrymen in the south of France: it is also possible that our *patois*, to which I have adapted an orthography most closely resembling pure French, will be understood by the majority of my readers:

Te lassés pas tenta dou diablé,
Mè disi mousu lou cura;
Che saris un grand misèrablè
Et per toujou saris dana.
—Per lou counèisse coumé faîré?
—Es un animou tout pèlous.
—Cavallsquo! ah, boudiqu, ma maîré!
—Cha lou bé nègré et les yeou rous.
N'en sort dè fio quand vous regardo.
A d'arpioun d'un pan et démi,
La langue en ferre d'alébardo.
—Telsa vous, mé fasè frèmi!
Séi pintourla d'aquello sorto,
Vous juré, mousu lou cura,
Qu' aura beou tapas à ma porto,
Jamai per eou sarai tenta.
Mais si tout pouldo chatoulo
Médit: eh! migno, veno eici!
Alors, la forço m' abandouno,
Et dise leou: Vege m' aqul.

"Flee from the devil far away,"
Said the curate to me one day;
"Or miserable you will be,
Damned to hopeless eternity."
"But will you not describe his mien?"
"A hairy creature strange and grim,
With horny head and sharp black beak."
"Oh, Holy Mother, how you speak!"
"He glances from his eyes of fire,
The fiercest flames in dreadful ire;
His tongue a foot-and-a-half in length,
An iron halberd is in strength."
"Ah, cease, I tremble, say no more,
In vain may he knock at my door,
If fashioned thus he is, I swear
The devil shall not enter there.
But if disguised with accent sweet,
He said, 'Come darling, let us meet,'
My strength would vanish, I reply
Oh! take me, master, here am I."

names are false. Now, who will dare to believe them true? Listen to the names of some of the demons.

The proceedings of the Middle Ages present to us the demon Seraphim, the demon *Chat*, the demon *Peregrino*, Dagon, *Accarron*, Potiphar, *Incitif*, *Ramond*, Béhémouth Asmodeus, *Orphaxad*, *Gonsang*, Beelphegor, Beelzebub, *Delphon*.

The nomenclature indicates the different sources from which it has been derived; now, generic names are adopted, as for instance, Seraphim; now, recourse is had to biblical personages of the worst reputation, to Dagon, Potiphar, Beelzebub; — to an idol, a lewd woman, to one of the real names of fallen Spirits; now, copying from the Apocrypha, we are furnished with Beelphegor and Asmodeus; and now significative or fanciful appellations are invented: — *Chat*, *Peregrino*, *Accarron*, *Incitif*, *Ramond*, *Orphaxad*, *Gonsang*, *Delphon*; without forgetting Behemoth, who apparently owes this honor to the monstrous proportions of the animal that bears his name.

I have also attempted to give a complete list of the demons who took an active part in the great possessions of Loudun. The reader can make his own commentary on it:

Leviathan, Behemoth, *Isaacorum*, Balaam, *Sans-Fin*, *Achaos*, *Eajas*, Cerberus, *Béhérit*, *Grésil des Trônes*, *Amant des Puissances*, *Souillon*, *Cèdon*, *Daria*, *Baruc*, *Allumette*, *Sabalon*, Astaroth, *Charbon d'Impureté*, *Lion d'Enfer*, *Pérou*, *Marou*, and *Ennemi de la Vierge*.

It comprises demons of the order of angels, as *Charbon d'Impureté*; demons of the order of archangels, as *Lion d'Enfer*; demons of the order of the Cherubs, as *Pérou* and *Marou*. I must indeed, confess that at first sight and without examination, I should not have supposed the two last names, rather plebeian as it seems to me, to belong to the highest infernal aristocracy; but we are not permitted to doubt on this point; testimony that was sufficient to burn Grandier ought assuredly be sufficient to establish the classification of fallen angels. Let no one then permit himself to express any hesitation in accepting this catalogue, tried in the fire of a hundred exor-

cisms, embracing mythological, Biblical and macaronic designations ; Cerberus, Balaam, *Souillon*, *Allumette*, and *Grésil des Trônes*. It is all true. as the whole of sorcery is true.

After the Ursulines of Loudun and in imitation of them, possessions multiply in the convents and even elsewhere. We see Beelzebub and Astaroth reappear, and quite ingeniously introduced, following in their train, comes first, *Barabas* ; then *Guilman*, *Carmin* and many others. These démons often related their history :—one had entered into Judas Iscariot, another had been expelled by our Saviour from the body of a demoniac, a third had aided in the destruction of Job's riches.

But, without dwelling longer on a subject of this sort, there is one remark I deem useful to make. The names of the devils are so little real, they are so much the creation of the imagination, reminiscences and fraud, that the nomenclature becomes modified according to times and places. The unclean demons who among the Jews were called Haza and Lilith, in the Middle Ages bore some of the names above enumerated, and gave place, after the discovery of America, to the new demon Cocoto, a designation borrowed from one of the gods of the New World. Northern countries have not always given their devils the names and forms by which they were known in Southern countries ; as all this phantasmagoria passes within man and not external to him ; as, to speak philosophically, it has only a subjective reality, its objectivity it being nothing, it is natural for the conceptions of the mind in regard to it, to vary according to usages and climates. Compare the declarations of sorcerers burned in Sweden with those of the sorcerers burned in France, you will doubtless find a common ground of superstition which has been spread over all Europe ; but you will also find significant dissimilarities. The Swedish sorcerers invoked a devil named Antessar ; they held their assemblies in a place called Blocula ; instead of our meridional goat, Satan appeared to them in the shape of a man, clothed in grey, with a red beard, blue stockings, scarlet shoes, and a peaked hat ornamented with tufts of ribbons ; they made their aerial journeys mounted on sheep and

goats ; at Blocula, the devil played on the harp for them, imparted to them the secret of milking cows from a distance, presented them with a quadruped and a white bird of which they were to make use in taking game. Of course, murders of children, abominable vows and language—disgusting acts are mixed up with these things in Sweden as in France, as everywhere ; yet, it is impossible not to be struck by this devil Antessar, this grey man deprived of horns and claws, his cloven foot replaced by scarlet shoes. The harp, the secret for milking cows, the white birds for hunting, impress on the northern *sabbat* a seal which we cannot misunderstand.

A General Rule: Testimony relative to Satanic scenes, always bears the stamp of ideas prevalent among the witnesses. Swiss sorcerers are burned for affirming that the devil has taught them how to produce mortality among cows ; Swedish sorcerers are burned for affirming that the devil has furnished them with implements for supernatural hunting ; the marine sorcerers of Labour are burned for affirming that the devil transports them to the yards of vessels in order to ruin commerce.

I return to my point of departure, to the ignoble puerility of the character attributed to the devil in the sickly ravings of the Middle Ages. In support of this consecrated type, which, indeed, cannot be abandoned without bringing down with it an immense mass of authentic testimony, an appeal has been made to various passages from Scripture. And why not ? Has not the Apostle Paul spoken of “ spiritual *malices* * in high places ? ” *Malices*, there it is, you see it for yourself ! It is by no means astonishing that demons should disguise themselves as hobgoblins, and give themselves up to frolicsome pranks !

I certainly cannot be expected to reply seriously to arguments of this sort. If there be any persons, who, having read the last chapter of the Epistle to the Ephesians, attribute to the word “ *malices* ” the sense above mentioned, without being able to comprehend that its true rendering is “ *méchancetés*, ” (wickedness), if there be any who have never felt the fearful

* Malice, knavery, sly humor.—*Trans.*

gravity of the war engaged in with this "spiritual wickedness" against which the Holy Spirit orders us to "put on the whole armor of God," our "loins girt about with truth, having on the breast-plate of righteousness, the shield of faith, the helmet of salvation, the sword of the Spirit which is the Word of God," such persons may be very learned in sorcery, but they are absolutely ignorant of what the Bible has revealed to us. To argue with them, would be to lose time.

To whomsoever will make use of his eyes to see, and his intellect to understand, I would say : Consider the devil and his angels as Divine Revelation shows them to us, and then judge for yourself what confidence is due to the declarations, the confessions, the official reports, the capital sentences of former times ; to the attestations and journals of the "Spiritualists" of the present day. If Divine Revelation does not deceive, we may legitimately infer that ancient and modern testimony either deceives or is deceived, for it attributes to demons the following occupations :

Certain old manor houses have a bad reputation, not without cause. They are incessantly haunted by noises, blows, and apparitions. Whenever any one is courageous enough to lodge in these suspected houses, he is assailed by so many nocturnal enemies as to be obliged to yield up to them exclusive possession.

At the parsonage of Cideville, the demons make a perfectly infernal uproar ; they shake the floors, and imitate the rhythm of tunes they hear sung ; they reply to questions by rapping a certain number of blows ; they also take the liberty of striking a mayor on his thigh, of causing a curé's tongs and fire-irons to dance ; they box the ears of the children belonging to the parsonage, yet afterwards play with, and submit to be teased by them. It is true, however, that such fun is dangerous to the furniture and crockery of the establishment !

At Guillonville, the year 1849 is marked by diabolical farces not less curious. Adolphe Benoît was exposed to strange persecutions. "Sometimes, ropes, candles, rags, bread-bask-

ets, pint measures filled with water, and even carrion would be suddenly deposited on her back, or in her pockets ; sometimes, cooking utensils, saucepans, dippers, fastened themselves to the strings of her petticoat or apron. At other times, as she entered the stable, the harness of the horses would leap upon and twist itself around her in such away as to render assistance necessary in getting rid of it. One day, as she was again entering the stable, the collars of the two horses placed themselves on her shoulders," the ladder fell upon her back, a sack enveloped her person from head to foot, a trivet and the sawyer's buck put themselves astride of her back. I say nothing of the bonnet of a young child being taken off, and an enormous dipper substituted in its place ; its cradle assailed by shovels and chafing dishes ; the disappearance of medals and crucifixes. It is not my intention to discuss the facts and the very respectable certificates by which they are supported ; I wish only to state the functions attributed to the devil, and entreat Christians thoughtfully to compare them with the teachings of their Bible.

In the department of the *Seine-Inférieure*, so M. de Mirville tells us, there have been witnessed, within twenty-five years, three capital exorcisms, directed by the bishop, and crowned with the most complete success. A certain church-living remained tenantless because of the spirits who troubled it ; the ecclesiastic who finally had courage to take up his abode there was compelled to defend himself from the hobgoblins by firing a pistol at them.

In the United States the devil makes his *début* by mysterious noises ; from *knockings* and *rappings*, he proceeds to place and displace articles of furniture, he runs off with the head-dresses of the women and brings them back at pleasure. He has even exhibited his power in magical illuminations, in representations with a full band, causing a phosphorescent light to gush forth from the walls of an apartment, or producing enchanting music either on earth or in the regions above. After such things as these, 'tis but a mere trifle for him to group phantoms in a

chamber, to suspend men in the air, or to touch the spectators with superhuman and icy hands.

I pass over in silence the round tables, the hats, the *mediums* and their far too simple processes, by means of which they place to the account of spirits all the conceptions of their own minds. Is this, I ask again, the Satan of the Bible, the great adversary, the great castaway ? That he profits by such a terrible misapprehension, is not to be doubted ; there is no error by which he does not profit. But his work in this instance, especially consists in making us believe that he is wholly occupied with frolics and fooleries, in concealing the tempter behind the manufacturer of small prodigies, who squats down among the furniture, and whom two bits of board nailed together serve to put in motion.*

This leads me to point out another contradiction between the Bible and the diabolical supernatural. The partisans of the latter are not content with giving us a devil of diminished power and capacity, now a satyr, now a goblin, according to the times ; they invent a devil dependent on motions or formulas. They have familiarized us with him, they have taught us to find our amusement in the sports of fallen angels or condemned souls ; this is not enough, they are determined to obliterate every trace of spirituality as they have already obliterated every trace of grandeur. A shameless materialism, such as the Baron d'Holbach himself in the last century would not have dared to imagine, is now installed in our midst, and it is the *religious* party who are its patrons !

The fundamental idea of the Middle Ages and of its modern champions is that the action of Satan is connected with material facts, with a formula, a gesture, the employment of certain herbs, the choice of certain hours of the day or night. Now,

* See the work of the Marquis de Mirville, pages 227, 229, 325 to 327, 330, 335, 346 352, 353, 356, 357, 372, 374, 375, 376, 379, 380, 381, 383, 391, 396, 397, 400, 401, 402, 405, etc.

the invention of mechanical sorceries (to which corresponds the not less mechanical miracle, the magic of good formulas annulling that of bad), is the height of impiety.

That formulas are supposed to operate in virtue of their intrinsic power, no one can doubt. Read any of the official interrogatories directed to any of the sorceresses or *possédées* with whom you may chance to meet, you will there find the famous *compacts*. Madeleine Bavan and the other nuns of Loudun declared that a magician had delivered them over to the devil. "I have given in writing the property of my body to this Dagon," said Madeleine Bavan ; "there exist several documents signed with my blood, by which I acknowledge that my body pertains to him."

And these compacts bound not only the possessed person, they bound the demon. Having once affixed his signature, he is compelled to obey whomsoever shall require the execution of his promises, nor can he, under any pretext whatever, get rid of his engagement. The compacts are inviolable ; there are some which endure after the death of the contracting party ; in such case, if they happen to fall into the hands of a person utterly ignorant of sorcery, the hands of a child, for example, who makes use of conjuration or any other sign the meaning of which he does not understand, he will be promptly obeyed. The obedience will sometimes be too prompt ; witness the poor student of Louvain, who, remaining in the cabinet of his professor (a celebrated sorcerer of course), had the imprudence to read from a large book lying open on the table. His reading, unluckily, compelled the devil to appear, who, perceiving that the student knew nothing of the secret, and had summoned him by accident, became furious at being disturbed for nothing, and seizing the student by the neck, strangled him on the spot.

But this is comparatively nothing. In the compact, there is at least voluntary consent ; the omnipotence of matter is not sufficiently prominent. Here is still too much spirituality for the theories I attack, and which yet dare call them-

selves Christian ; they take a step further. In virtue of a formula, of a motion, of contact with a magical object, the gift of a ribbon or a flower, the sorcerer disposes of bodies and souls, and delivers them over to the empire of Satan ! The miserable Père Surlieu, one of the exorcists of Loudun, submitting in his turn to the infernal contagion, wrote to another Jesuit : “ The devil has made a compact with a magician to prevent me from speaking of God. . . . I am compelled, in order to have some conception of him, to hold the holy sacrament over my head, making use of the key of David to open my memory.”

We here see a Divine materialism corresponding to the Satanic materialism ; that which the compact of the magician has produced, is, in a moment, destroyed by placing the holy sacrament over the head. The same scenes are enacted in the convent of Louviers ; there also the evil comes from a magician who has cast a charm upon the nuns, thus transforming them into instruments of Satan.

And this was always the way. In the case of the nuns of Lille, who were possessed at the commencement of the 17th century, the author of the charm made a full confession. Here is the declaration of a certain sister, Marie de Sains, until then celebrated for her virtues. “ I placed under the clothes of the nuns, under their mattresses, an evil charm confided to me by the devil and intended to cause the extermination of the community. This charm was invented at the *sabbat*, by Louis Gaufridi. . . . It was composed of consecrated wafers and blood, goat’s dust, human bones, skulls of children, hair, nails, etc.” And the new sorceress tells how her philter gave to one nun a disgust for her vocation, to another, unchaste thoughts, to another melancholy or angry feelings. She speaks of charms “ opposed to confession.” Indeed, there is neither a moral nor a physical evil which charms cannot communicate !

L’envoûtement,* a well known operation destined to secure

* For a more particular account of this operation, see the chapter on spurious sorcery, Vol. 2d.—*Trans.*

the death of an enemy, was nothing at all if we compare it with the operations which introduced the demon into the heart, and instantly defiled it. A bouquet is thrown into the convent of the Ursulines, and behold the nuns compelled to experience and express sentiments such as the pen refuses to record ! the charms are placed in different parts of the monastery of Saint Louis at Louviers, and the sisters of Saint Elizabeth are in their turn, invaded by a troop of unclean spirits !

The spell has been cast ; thenceforth Satan (who cannot do otherwise) lays his ruthless grasp on the victims thus abandoned to his power. Men die, cattle perish, souls are governed by the most depraved instincts ; nothing, however, is more simple : a spell has been cast !

And what is better yet ; notwithstanding the declaration of Jesus Christ that Satan does not cast out Satan (*Matthew*, xii. 21-27), the devil is often "divided against himself." It is he who dissolves the spells he has cast ; sorcerers expel devils, their formulas cure, their formulas deliver !

I do not discuss ; I relate. If I had to discuss, I should demand of the modern champions of the supernatural, to substitute acts for words. They are familiar with these famous formulas, the power of which is so great ; there is even no lack of magicians, who, we are assured, have never been so numerous ; what prevents them from performing their operations publicly and on a large scale ? When, by the use of a word, they shall have created or suppressed diseases and possessions in general, they will have taken from us the right to say that certain wonders prudently confine themselves to the times and places in which they have no control to fear.

Meanwhile, we entreat the reader not to lose sight of our present proposition, and not to oppose to Christian dogmas the dogma of sorceries, of possessions by means of magical importation or touch.

It is when the shepherd has *touched* the child that the storm bursts over the celebrated parsonage of Cideville ; even the *curé* is obliged to resort to his cane as a weapon of defense

against the shepherd-magician, who, under pretext of imploring his pardon, likewise *touches* the reverend man himself.

M. de Mirville has with justice remarked, that possession may everywhere be traced to an *importateur*, a magician, or a spell thrown by him. It is the Curé Picard at Louviers ; it is another curé in the diocess of Bayeux. The shepherdess of Cret, Isabeau Vincent inoculated the Camisards with prophetic possession. The convulsions of Saint Médard are produced by contact with the tomb of the Deacon Pâris. That which the perfume of roses had effected at Loudun, that which a breath had effected in the Cevennes, that which earth and marble had effected among the Jansenists, the chalk of Mr. Dupotet, and the magnetized water of Mesmer will effect in their turn. All of them so many talismans serving as vehicles for the demons.

The diabolical epidemic is concentrated in one particular spot, in a cavern, in a desert. It issues thence at the orders of a magician, and once imported by him, it spreads in every direction. Napoleon was compelled to order a certain sentry box in his camp at Boulogne to be destroyed, because all the sentinels stationed in it blew out their brains—a magician had thrown a spell upon it. Marshal Serrurier walled up a certain door in the Hôtel des Invalides because a dozen of the pensioners had hung themselves there within a fortnight—a magician had bewitched it.

The stock of bad spirits has accumulated in certain corners of the earth, in the prophetic places of the Pagans, in the high places of Jewish idolatry. It was thence that the ancient sorcerers supplied themselves, it is thence that the transcendent magnetism of the present day continues to procure demons whom it imprisons in its magic circles. It is thence that the *mediums* derive that mysterious influence to which they serve as agents.

It is, moreover, very easy to spread the contagion. Formerly, epidemic possessions were transmitted from convents of women to convents of women ; to-day, the speaking tables arrive by packet from America. They are imported by way of Germany,

take their route through England and France like the cholera. The halting-places may be counted.

Thus, we always have a point of concentration, always a conducting agent of diabolical miasmata, always a communication from one place to another. The theory is as consistent . . . and as materialistic as possible ; it is the faith of the Middle Ages revived with perfect sincerity.*

This faith has everywhere prevailed. In countries desolated by vampirism, one becomes a vampire by eating of food which vampires have infected.

The diabolical evil is so liable to be communicated by material contagion, that the exorcists themselves are exposed to the possession which they labor to destroy in others. In the Loudun affair the Père Lactance, the Père Surin, and the Père Tranquille are represented as successively afflicted with the epidemic, like those physicians who died at Barcelona, whither they had gone to study and combat the yellow fever.

It would surely be difficult to find any better way of forgetting the rôle of the tempter, and the character of his attacks. We are a thousand leagues from the Bible. Is it possible to remove ourselves still further ? It really seems that it may be done, for M. de Mirville has discovered in his fluid spirits of Cideville, the same property formerly remarked in the demons of the good times. Their presence is manifested by a sort of greyish column ; this vapor is to be seen curling round in every direction, making a slight hissing noise ; then, it visibly condenses, and escapes like a current of air through the windows of the apartment. It is at that precise moment, the witnesses of the prodigy arm themselves with long iron pikes (as I have already mentioned), and inflict upon the mysterious shadows wounds which, in virtue of a diabolical solidarity, are the next day found on the body of the shepherd.

And here is quite enough, I hope. In reading these things,

* Consult the following pages of the book of M. de Mirville : 108, 109, 117, 121, 129, 186, 187, 145, 163, 170, 201, 202, 203, 204, 205, 207, 286, 290, 320, 325, 333, 366, 395, 407, 410, 426, etc.

I am only surprised that the men who wrote them, and who are often as honorable as they are distinguished, could ever have held in their hands a book called the Bible. That ages which neither possessed nor knew the Bible were led away by such superstitions, I can comprehend ; but in respect to the present age, it seems to me utterly incomprehensible !

In the present age, the Bible is quoted in favor of materialism ; that is the only change. I might appeal from this argument to the great body of the sacred writings, to the odor of spirituality which exhales therefrom, to the worship in spirit and in truth, which Christ has established. I prefer, however, to renounce all my advantages, while I confine myself to the examination of three or four passages, laboriously gathered together and perverted from their natural signification, in order to be made to yield a doctrine analogous to the magical action of formulas, spells, possessions by contact, to deliverances by sorcery or exorcisms.

We are told in particular of the handkerchiefs of the Apostle Paul, which were taken to the sick at Ephesus and cured them ; of the hem of our Saviour's garment, which was touched by an infirm woman from behind, and which likewise imparted a healing virtue.

Unfortunately, these examples have no materialistic bearing, except when the advocates of this doctrine have taken pains to insert between the lines. "The handkerchiefs of the Apostle had been stolen from him, and it was not by his order that they were taken to the sick. Jesus Christ was ignorant of the presence, the action, and the faith of the infirm woman who touched his robe." Without this necessary addition, the two passages yield no support whatever to the theory which invokes them, for their natural interpretation is as follows :

Paul, overcome by his labors at Ephesus, and being, doubtless, unable to visit all the sick and lay his hands on them, sent handkerchiefs ; his will to cure them in the name of the Saviour, the faith of the sick, and the material act, coincide in this case, as in all other cases of miraculous cure. Jesus, sur-

rounded by the crowd which presses upon him, and which (mark it well) is constantly coming in accidental contact with his garments, without receiving any magical virtue therefrom, Jesus, who knows and sees all things, perceives a poor, infirm woman approaching him from behind, and carrying a hand as humble as believing to the hem of his robe ; Jesus wills that her health shall be restored, and it is restored. Here, again, the will to cure, the faith of the sick, and the material act, coincide.

“But, after all,” you will say, “here are material acts !” Most assuredly, and I would even beg you to remark that material acts have always or almost always been connected with the miracles of the Bible. Jesus Christ performed cures by laying his hands on the head of the sick, or by allowing them to touch his garments. Sometimes he went so far as to apply his finger to the part affected ; sometimes he only repeated words, which is also a material act. Lazarus did not rise from the tomb until he heard the words, “Lazarus, come forth !” After the example of their master, the Apostles effected miracles by speaking, by touching with their hands those whom they wished to enrich by extraordinary gifts of the Holy Spirit, or deliver from maladies and devils. In default of hands, they applied portions of their wearing apparel. And what is there astonishing in that ? Is there no medium for us between an anti-Christian materialism, and an absolute Spiritualism which Christianity none the less condemns ? Must we reason after the manner of certain mystics, who, anxious to improve the Gospel, dispense with communion and baptism ; for, say they, we can nourish our souls in Christ without having recourse to material symbols, and the interior baptism which purifies the soul, renders unnecessary the material baptism which cleanses only the body !

Thank God, I do not carry my Spiritualism so far. I know that my Saviour touched and allowed himself to be touched. I know that he breathed on his Apostles when he communicated to them the Holy Spirit ; I know that Elisha gave his staff to Gehazi to lay it on the face of the child of the Shunammite

woman, and that he himself covered the child with his body ; I know that God gave a rod to Moses, and that the Red Sea did not roll back, nor the rock yield its water, until after the rod had been stretched forth. . . . But I ask, what relation does all this bear to the magical action and intrinsic virtue of formulas, to the introduction of demons by a purely material act, to the contagion propagated by means of infected objects, by bouquets impregnated with diabolical miasmata ?

Combinations of matter or combinations of words which, by reason of an intrinsic virtue, abandon souls to the empire of evil or deliver them from it ! they find no analogy in Scripture.

One single fact might seem to have this character, but it does not long preserve it in the mind of the reflective reader. A dead body was resuscitated in consequence of having been thrown into a ditch where the bones of Elisha were lying. What conclusion shall we draw from this ? That the bones of saints and prophets have in themselves power to restore the dead, or that God chose to honor one of his most faithful servants by a special miracle ? We shall not hesitate to adopt the second conclusion when we call to mind the fact that prophets and saints have been very numerous, and that resurrections by virtue of their bones have in no other instances occurred.

Thus, materialism, driven to extremity, loses one after another its favorite arguments.

Its partisans would gladly discover something whereon to lean, in Christ's declaration ; " This kind can come forth by nothing but by prayer and fasting." Here seems to be a process ; the expulsion of certain demons is made to depend on certain acts of abstinence and devotion. A process ! Yes, certainly, and one of very general application. Christians are powerful only through prayer and fasting, through supplication and humiliation (for Esaias teaches us that therein lies the essential part of fasting). That the Apostles, not yet fully confirmed in their faith, should, after performing a few miracles, have been obliged to confess that the work before them was

most difficult, that the Saviour on this occasion should have recalled to their minds the necessity of greater humiliation, of more earnest prayer, is most natural, and furnishes no argument in support of religious materialism . . . unless, however, fasting be transformed into simple abstinence, and prayer into a repetition of words ! to that I have nothing to say.

There still remains one last resource. Our opponents may endeavor to strengthen their position by passages from the Old Testament where the spiritual action of music is described. Now, it is Elisha who causes a minstrel to play in his presence before prophesying against Moab ; now, it is Saul, whom the melodies of the young David delivers from an evil spirit sent by the Almighty. I have always been surprised at the astonishment these passages seem to create. Does any one pretend to deny the connection between the physical and the moral ? Does any one contest the moral effects produced by certain harmonies ? Of what use then is church music, or songs of any description which act on our souls, not only by the sense of the words, but by the power of sound ? Have you never remarked the war-spirit infused by martial music ? Not a syllable is pronounced, yet all hearts are electrified, every one is impatient for the combat. If there are warlike tunes, there are also religious tunes, tunes which soothe or elevate the soul. It was not without a motive that Jesus sang the canticle with his disciples, that the Apostles recommended the churches to edify themselves by psalms and spiritual hymns ; it was not without a motive that we are told that the angels sing, that music will penetrate into the regions of another life and be eternally heard in the presence of God.

It is evident that music, of itself alone, possesses no power to drive out the devil or call down upon us the Holy Spirit. But is that to say that it may not, under the blessing of the Most High, powerfully contribute to awaken such dispositions that the evil spirit may withdraw from the heart and the Holy Spirit find access to it ? Certain physical impressions are dangerous to the soul ; certain physical impressions are beneficial to it.

If the tempter profits by the undue excitement which meat and wine create, the gentle and pure serenity resulting from beautiful harmonies is equally favorable to devout meditation.

I have exhausted the list of passages which religious materialism has culled from Scripture, and seeks to interpret in its support. I would invite those who may wish to look into the matter still more closely, to open their Bibles to the following paragraphs : *Acts*, xix. 10 ; *Mark*, v. 25-34 ; *Matthew*, xiv. 36 ; *Matthew*, ix. 18 ; *Luke*, xiii. 13 ; *Matthew*, viii. 15 ; *Matthew*, ix. 29 ; *John*, xi. 43 ; *Mark*, xvi. 18 ; *Acts*, viii. 17 ; *John*, xx. 22 ; *2 Kings*, iv. 29 ; *2 Kings*, iv. 34 ; *Exodus*, iv. 20 ; *Exodus*, xvii. 5, 6 ; *2 Kings*, xiii. 21 ; *Matthew*, xvii. 21 ; *Isaiah*, lviii. 5 ; *1 Samuel*, xvi. 14-23 ; *2 Kings*, iii. 15 ; *1 Samuel*, x. 5. These are all that can be opposed to me on this point.

The idea of magical charms has of necessity its correlative in that of exorcism. One formula casts a spell, another formula destroys it. We do not question, and let this be well understood, the efficacy of prayers in our combats with Satan and all his works ; we question only the virtue attached to such and such arrangements of words.

This, according to Josephus (*Antiquities*, viii. 2), was the claim set up by the Jewish exorcists spoken of in the book of *Acts* (xix. 13). They pretended to cast out devils and cure diseases by means of cabalistic signs and combination of words or figures to which they attributed a mysterious power.

In regard to Jesus Christ, he certainly made use of no exorcisms, nor did his disciples receive any from him. They cast out devils by the "Spirit of God." It has been sought to find in the 27th verse of the 12th chapter of *Matthew*, a proof of the successful employment of cabalistic signs and exorcisms "By whom do your children cast them out ?" It is maintained that this expression : *Your children*, designated the Jewish exorcists alluded to by Josephus. Now, if this be true, its legitimate consequence is as follows : The Saviour thus proclaimed the miraculous power of his adversaries ! The mira-

cles which he performed were in no respect superior to those daily performed by means of formulas ! He put himself on a level with the cabalistic magicians ! In solemnly conferring upon his disciples the power of expelling devils, he granted them nothing—nothing that was not within reach of the unbelieving children of Sceva. Behold to what conclusions we are brought, when we pervert language from its simple and evident sense. In saying, “Your children,” Jesus Christ clearly designated his Apostles, and also those of his disciples who were not his habitual followers (*Mark*, ix. 38). “You accuse me,” he seems to say, “of having recourse to Beelzebub to cast out Beelzebub ; you accuse me who am not a mere man ; but my disciples, your children, who are of you and who are nothing else ; my disciples, whom you cannot transform like me into extraordinary beings at the service of Satan ; my disciples, whom your calumnies, always concentrated on me alone, still spare ; my disciples are scattered over the land everywhere delivering demoniacs. By whom do your children cast them out ? therefore they shall be your judges.”

Scripture, then, no more authorizes the materialism of the exorcists than that of sorcerers or workers of miracles. Magical action of words pronounced, magical action which other equivalent words do not possess, is absolutely foreign to the Bible. It is not the Bible which furnishes any example of the benedictions so often made use of in relation to the knocking spirits : “Put to flight, Lord, all wicked spirits, all phantoms, and all spirits which knock, and protect the entrance of this house.” It is not the Bible that has taught us to expel the devil from the elements, from places, from edifices.

The religious world was on the high road to such a result, from the moment it commenced to attribute to baptism a magical virtue, an *opus operatum* ; from the instant it began to see water driving out the devil and dislodging him, as it were, from the different parts of the body. “Come forth from this head, this hair ; these lungs ; come forth, fly, run off like a liquid, *liquefactus* !”

From that to exorcisms in behalf of furniture or lands, to exorcisms against cock-chafers and rats, the distance is not so great as may be imagined. Since the process of expulsion exists, why not make it of universal application? Therefore, I am not of those who were astonished at seeing the Bishop of Lausanne exorcise the rats that desolated the canton of Vaud. The scourge was real, and the famine resulting therefrom was by no means pleasant; insects actually figured among the plagues of Egypt; the excessive multiplication of rats is not less formidable. The principle of exorcisms once admitted, it is quite natural that the bishops should have made use of them against adversaries that seem to us ridiculous. The principle is the deplorable part; there lies the origin of those rat demons, worthy cousins of the demons located in walls or the timbers of houses; that is the root of those all-powerful formulas, the near relations to the incantations of sorcery.

Once launched on such a declivity, it was not easy to stop. Then come the consecrated medals, vehicles of a holy influence, just as Grandier's bouquet was the vehicle of an evil influence; then comes the application of relics which deliver the maids of Bayeux from their demons. Insupportable pains in their head, legs, or arms, were by application of relics, made to pass instantly from one part of the head to another, from one part of the arm to another, or from one arm to the other. These applications put an end to muscular paralysis, to occlusion of the senses, to suspension of intelligent acts. At Loudun, the Holy Sacrament placed on the head, produced the same effects. After such things as these do you laugh at that Duke of Alba, an ambassador to the court of France in the reign of Louis XIV. who sought to cure his sick son by making him swallow, without knowing what he was taking, some relics reduced to powder?

The magical virtue of sacred objects and sacred words, introduces us to an order of ideas which considers oaths taken upon relics as more obligatory than ordinary oaths taken before God; which leads a man, when he wishes to deceive his enemy and

assume a solemn obligation with the intention of violating it, to procure an empty shrine !

Materialism like this has always prevailed. Pagan antiquity had its palladiums, small statues whose intrinsic power protected the cities ; Apollonius of Tyana manufactured talismans against gnats, scorpions, serpents, inundations and fires. Have not these examples been imitated in modern times by attributing to consecrated bread or holy water, the faculty of putting to flight destructive animals or demons ? Here we have an abbey in which the Holy Fathers distributed consecrated bread with instructions to cut it up in little morsels and scatter it about in places visited by rats. Here is a Pope, Stephen V. who orders holy water to be sprinkled in fields visited by grasshoppers ; “and there remained not a grasshopper in the places where the water fell !” Here are rituals that contain formulas against storms and announce that the holy water is useful to “put to flight demons and to expel diseases. . . . , so that every thing in houses which shall have been moistened with this water, will be rid of all impurity, of all evil, the pestilential spirit having taken its departure,” etc. (*Non illic resideat Spiritus pestilens.*)

Even at this very moment, there is in circulation at Lyons and in its vicinity, a *prayer to the Holy Sepulchre of Jesus Christ*, in which I read as follows ; “Whoever shall carry this prayer about him will not die of sudden death, will not be attacked by pestilence, will not perish by fire. All those who shall wear this prayer about their persons need fear no evil. . . . Whoever shall carry it with him will not be unjustly condemned ; he will not die without confession and will have no cause to fear false accusation. If any one be possessed of a demon, let her put this prayer on her person and she will be delivered on the instant. All those who shall wear it devoutly, may be very sure of seeing *Notre Dame de Bon-Secours* three hours before their death.”

If there be nothing more opposed to Scripture than the belief in amulets, exorcisms and all material proceedings against

Satan, yet nothing is so firmly anchored in the corrupt heart of man. They who have perused the excellent work of Layard (*Discoveries in the ruins of Nineveh and Babylon*) will have remarked, the curious images that figure there from pages 512 to 520. They are Jewish exorcisms, discovered at Babylon, and traced as far back as the first centuries of the Christian Era. Is it not a striking fact that, in searching at the present day among the shapeless ruins of ancient Babel, very little else is to be found than these, that out of so many monuments these little bits of pottery, covered with cabalistic signs, should have alone survived ? What a trade in exorcisms it supposes ! how many breasts protected by the mysterious talisman ! what an amount of superstition ! what an eloquent commentary on the Talmud are M. Layard's excavations ! Those who managed to place the Talmudic traditions by the side of the Bible, were equally capable of composing the formulas for so many years concealed in the hill of Babylon.

"This is a letter of divorce which I give to the devil and to Satan, and to Nerig, and to Zachiah, and to Abitar of the mountain, and to the monsters of the night ; (it is to be seen that the names of the demons of the Middle Ages were not invented in the Jewish colony of Babylon) . . . I frustrate the designs of these devils and the power of the chief of the monsters of the night. I command you all, male monsters and female monsters to take flight. I command you by the sceptre of Him who is alone powerful, to quit these habitations Amen, Amen, Amen, Selah !"

"Celestial remedy to cure diseases and to expel demons, (the Lyons letter does as much) This remedy protects all the children of men from the charms of the enchanters, and will also deliver your habitations from them. . . . This amulet puts an end to *levatta*, whether it be old or new. It affords protection against magicians, in the name of Batiel and of Gatuel, by the patronage of an angel who has eleven names : *ss. bb. hs. rig. ecc. acs. cas. id. rih. hrih. ih. oini. hch. qph. ang. paa. nsec. csc. ici. crv. nha. ii. . . .* By these names, captives will be deliv-

ered from their captivity and from all *nidra*, all *levatta*, all *patiki*, all *isarta*, as well as from all other bad spirits Amen, amen, selah, amen, amen, amen, amen, selah, hallelujah. hallelujah. V.V.V. Take heed. V.V.V.V.”

“Same letter, approved, confirmed and sealed by Divine authority, the efficacy of which will be felt by those who read it, by all those who inhabit Pasikiah ; to preserve from the *nidra*, from sorcery, from enchanter's, and from this *levatta* and from all evil spirits, male and female, and from the evil eye.”

I am weary of copying this ancient and modern nonsense. A man runs the risk of becoming an Atheist if he looks at it too long. Matter stocked with spirits ; spirits, whom a talisman, a medal or a letter puts to flight ; a self-styled religious mechanism that works of itself ! Indeed, if our relations with the invisible world really possessed such a character, we should be tempted to decide in favor of the most open enemies of religion.

I must, however, again triumph over my repugnance and briefly notice other consequences resulting from the materialism whose portrait I here trace.

The first is the frequent insufficiency of exorcisms. The power of formulas being necessarily proportioned to that of the enemy, it sometimes happens that demons obstinately defy a mixture prepared for less powerful spirits. In vain are conjurations multiplied, specific prayers repeated again and again, songs sung that are endowed with an acknowledged virtue, recourse even had to holy water and the crucifix ; the devil does not yield ; he passes from one part of the body to another, but is not entirely dislodged.

This is materialism in its most powerful form. While Scripture says to us,—says to the most humble Christian, “Resist the devil, and he will flee from you,” the material system admonishes us that there are possessions against which the usual for-

mulas make shipwreck, which demand particular ceremonies, exorcisms of a rare quality. In his account of the doings at the parsonage of Cideville, M. de Mirville relates the embarrassment into which the performers therein were thrown by several successive checks: "Fatigued and extremely afflicted by the condition of this poor child, likewise fearful of the consequences that must result from it, first in regard to religion, and, secondly, in regard to M. le Curé de Cideville, the two Ecclesiastics, one evening united with the latter in asking how (the prayers of the Church not appearing sufficient), they might succeed in ridding themselves of the enemy."

The prayers not appearing sufficient. Behold the decisive word. Prayers do not suffice, let us take spits! To pray, to pray without an official formula, to pray from the heart, to lay our distress before God, to implore a promised and supremely efficacious assistance, this was well enough for the times of the first Christians; but things are changed now.

Thus the books are full of insufficient exorcisms. When in 1628, the Benedictines of Madrid were visited by possessions, three years were spent in vainly multiplying conjurations, repeating formulas, and reciting prayers, which it took more than forty hours to finish. At Loudun, a short time afterwards, the work of expulsion occupied not less than seven years! With what catastrophes it was accompanied everybody knows. Nor was it from lack of skillful men, nor from lack of docility on the part of the demons, who are always so very complaisant. But it was far more easy to induce them to argue on the theological quarrels of the day, than to make them take their final departure. Several exorcists nearly perished in the attempt. Who could have anticipated this from the language of the Apostle to his brethren, wherein he announces a certain victory over the enemy, and writes: "Wherefore, take unto you the whole armor of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand?" (*Ephesians*, vi. 13.)

He doubtless forgot to warn us that the armor of God was not always sufficient, and that certain diabolical possessions did

not yield to the prayers of Christians. Did not the 15th century witness the spectacle of the demons established among the nuns at Cambray, laughing in defiance, not only at the exorcisms of the local clergy, but at those of the Pope himself? The names of these poor nuns were sent to Rome, the Pope read them aloud at the celebration of mass, and yet the evil none the less persisted !

The materialism of insufficient prayers comes, then, to confirm the materialism of formulas. The latter has still other corollaries :—the materialism which fixes the abodes of demons in certain countries ; the materialism which localizes the action of each demon in different parts of the patient's body; the materialism which gives to demons a fluid consistence.

With regard to the countries serving as head-quarters for the devils, it is most unfortunate that God has not designated them, in order that we might be preserved from the *geographical* dangers to which we unconsciously expose ourselves. I am somewhat reassured, however, when I remark that, as yet, no country in particular seems to be more under their control than its neighbors, and that the intensity of sorcery is in general modified according to times, not according to places.

M. de Mirville and the school of the Middle Ages to which he belongs, bring forward, of course, various passages of Scripture in support of their thesis. They first quote some paragraphs in which the evil spirits are represented as seeking rest in the dry places, as luring demoniacs to the wilderness, as waiting in the wilderness for Jesus Christ himself to tempt him. (*Matthew*, xii. 43 ; *Luke*, viii. 27, 29; *Matthew*, iv. 1.) What are we to conclude from these? Purely and simply what we are told : that demons voluntarily avoid the presence of man, and seek their rest far from him. Between this mysterious truth and the pretended homes of the demons, I perceive not the least connection. John the Baptist also abode in the wilderness, and the Saviour often went there to seek a moment of solitary communion with his Father. (*Luke*, iii. 2 ; iv. 42.)

There are still two other passages on which they rely. It is

written in the book of Judges, (ix. 37) : "*Une bande vient du bois de chênes des devins.*"* It is written in Revelations, (xviii. 2) : "Babylon the great is fallen, is fallen, and is become the habitation of devils, and the hold of every foul spirit, and a cage of every unclean and hateful bird." "You see," they exclaim, "the Bible speaks of forests filled with enchantments, and cities peopled with devils!"

My response is simple. The first passage is of no account whatever in our debate ; that a forest should have acquired the name of "*bois des devins*" might be explained in a hundred different ways, and especially by the fact that the pretended soothsayers formerly practised their calling there ; even at the present day we have glades for sorcerers, and grottoes for fairies. It is a proof of ancient superstitions, nothing more. That fallen Babylon should have become a haunt for demons I am but little astonished. In what wilderness would they be more inclined to seek their rest than in that which had been the theatre of their triumphs ? Those who cite this passage have doubtless read the whole chapter ; they know what is meant by the Holy Spirit when it speaks of Babylon, the unclean and persecuting city, "in which was found the blood of the prophets and saints, and of all those that were slain upon the earth." They understand that the Apocalypse, in placing also upon its ruins the "unclean birds" of the old law, presents us the expressive symbol of a terrible, exceptional malediction, announced in the same terms by the ancient prophets. (*Jeremiah*, l. 39 ; *Isaiah*, xiii. 20-22.)

I shall certainly not be expected to pause in order to refute the theory which would locate each demon in a particular portion of the body—one demon in the head, another in the legs, or arms. This was the state of things at Loudun. "Asmodeus, Leviathan, Issacarum, were to be distinguished by entirely different voices," writes Dr. Calmeil. "Each spirit contributed,

* The reader will perceive, on referring to his Bible, that the French rendering of this passage is different from the English. I have, therefore, thought it expedient to copy the French without translating it.—TRANS.

more or less, to the extravagance of the acts performed by the demoniacs ; one demon distorted the face, another pushed the tongue out upon the chin ; this one compelled the girl to move her shoulders with a sudden jerk, to roll on the ground ; that one threw her into violent fits of passion." (*De la Folie*, vol. ii. p. 13.)

M. de Mirville himself thinks that it is very possible for every man to have a demon attached to him—if not to each of his members, at least to his person. After mentioning the exorcism of baptism, he adds, (456): "May not, perchance, the spirit which is expelled at the moment of birth, be the companion of birth, the *natale comes* of the Pagans, the demon engendered in us, *δαίμων γενέλτιος*, the *pene nos natus*, which has been rendered *pénate*, familiar spirit, second self, and *twin of our whole being*?"

From the manner in which the question is stated, it may be judged that the response is not doubtful. Thus, we go through, one by one, all the phases of transcendent materialism: the power of formulas, amulets, and medals ; the variable efficacy of these mechanisms ; colonies of demons located in certain places ; the special offices to be performed by different demons in the different members of bodies possessed ; the personal association of every man with his familiar demon. Nothing more was wanting than to endow spirits with a body that touches and sees, with a body that receives wounds and transmits them to the magicians by means of a fluid solidarity ! This last step has also been taken !

The spirits being "intelligences served by fluids," their partisans are careful to recall to our minds that Ravailiac "felt *something* pass over his face and mouth ;" that nearly the same sensation was experienced by Châtel, by James Clément, and by Damiens. We are entreated to remark, that Satan entered into Judas "after the sop !" (John, xiii. 26.) Balak, they add, knew perfectly well what he was about when he counselled Balaam to change his place ! (*Numbers*, xxviii. 13.) This brings us back to the greyish column at Cideville, which visibly

condensed and sought to escape by cracks in the partitions, an operation that it did not accomplish quick enough, since it was repeatedly stuck by the spit before its departure. Did not Doctor Kerner see the same vaporish column in close proximity to the bed of his visionary? Do not the American "Spiritualists" often perceive something extraordinary acting upon and around them?

It being impossible to doubt this, they invite us to deduce the legitimate consequences.

Fluids are an instrument in the hands of the spirits. Bos-suet has written, that "Satan resembles a pestilential vapor which is dispersed through the air by an insensible contagion, imperceptible to our senses." This is, perhaps, only an imagination with him, but among the Fathers, a belief in the corporeity of spirits is almost universal. Augustine, for instance, gives ethereal bodies to the angels, and grosser bodies to the demons. The ancient philosophers held a language similar to this: everybody has heard of the *shadows* of the Pagans, the *chariot of the soul* spoken of by Pythagoras, the *ethereal envelop* of Plato, and the belief still existing among Eastern nations, that we all have a *ferver* or mysterious companion who is, as it were, the prototype and model of our being. Why, then, should we not, at the present day, behold a confirmation of these theories prognosticated in all former ages, but most unjustly decried in ours! (M. de Mirville, 200, 201, 233, 302, 309, 329, 330, 331, 332, 353, 384, 387, 388, 400, 401, 428 to 437, 443 to 456.)

These pages contain two perfectly distinct questions: the corporeity of spirits, about which I have nothing to say, and the materialism that has been connected with it.

Without occupying myself with the nature of spirits, I protest against the principle which would associate their influence with the change of air by Balaam, with the sop of Judas, with the physical sensations of great assassins, with the presence of greyish and vaporish columns. Let us leave the Fathers who platonize after their own fashion; and let us fasten our

thoughts upon the really materialist claim which seeks to establish a relation of dependence between certain processes or the circulation of certain fluids, and the action of the spirits.

"These spirits," says M. de Mirville, "very easily take possession of our organs, those of our nervous system especially, with which they have the most intimate relation, the fluid that circulates in our nerves being, according to Newton, identical with the air we respire, and these spiritual powers being the princes of that *air* in which they reside.* But as they are expelled from these organs, and from this nervous fluid in precisely the same manner as the crucifixion of Christ expelled them from the atmosphere, the species of physiological assimilation produced between them and us is only an accidental assimilation, temporary and always limited by Divine permission. But woe unto him who braves the peril, and exposes himself to such visits !" (436.)

Thus, we have Satanic possession of our organs and of our nervous system, especially by the fluid in which the devil resides ! And by way of compensation, the atmosphere is purified through the Crucifixion of our Saviour, who "was raised to the cross *in order* more effectually to purge the air of the principalities which defiled it !" That this second assertion may have been borrowed from the office for Holy Friday makes no difference to me. I maintain that it is all stamped with an appalling materialism. I maintain that the New Testament has never spoken thus, either of the cross of Jesus or of persons attacked by possessions, that the demoniacs of

* It is, indeed, written in Ephesians ii. 2, that Satan is "the prince of the powers of the air ;" but the same Epistle, in another chapter, speaks of "Spiritual wickedness in high places," for that is the real translation of the verse. What conclusion does it bring us to ? One that is very simple. On the one hand, the air by which we are surrounded, is traversed in all directions by Satan and his angels as well as by the angels of God ; on the other hand, Satan and his angels appear in Heaven before the throne of the Almighty. It is there they are shown to us in the beginning of the Book of Job. The moment is not yet come for them to be precipitated from Heaven to Earth, (*Revelations*, xii. 7 to 12.) Until that time shall arrive, the earth, differing in this respect from the air and heaven, is not inhabited by them.

the Gospel were followed neither by phantoms nor fluid columns, unskillful in making their escape through the key-hole and transmitting to their attendant sorcerer the blows they personally received.

Now, herein consists the crowning feature of the system. Without the *psycho-electrical solidarity* between the phantom and the person whom it represents, there would be something lacking in the creeds of the Middle Ages and in their recent resurrection. M. de Mirville does not pause with the gasiform corporeity of his spirits, or with their association with the fluids by which they are served; he thus expresses himself: "In regard to the solidarity so complete, between the agent and the shepherd, a relation of which we, however, possess numerous analogous instances, it is what might be called transcendent magnetism. . . . But the old theology which understood this subject still better, professed the absolute identity between spirits and their dependents, all, even the angels themselves being in the habit of *clothing the image and person of the latter*, (Corn. & lapide). We shall return to this book and this psycho-electrical solidarity."

M. de Mirville has kept his word; he has returned to his theme. He relates the trials of a certain curé, who, struggling, not long ago, against the seven sorcerers of his parish, fired his pistol at their phantoms; and, although the sorcerers had not left their houses, they all kept their beds the next day with bullet-holes in their legs! He borrows from the Père Lebrun the story of M. de la Richardière, who defended himself with a knife in place of a pistol, and made five or six thrusts at the phantom of his sorcerer (his shepherd, I should say); now, the shepherd was afterwards found with these marks upon him as at Cideville!

In short, he exhibits his theory of the repercussion of wounds received at the same time by the impalpable phantom and the absent persecutor. Of this fact so often encountered by him, either in the manes and lares of antiquity, or in sorceries attested by the church, he furnishes the following explanation

which I abandon to the reader's appreciation. "We believe that repercussion at a distance takes place by the dynamic extension of this *force* (the *hémato-nerveuse* force), which, wounded during this extension, communicates to the distant and conjointly responsible body all the sensations it perceives." (383, 386, 387, 388, 389, 427.)

This would seem sufficient. A materialism so gross, and so contrary on all points to the declarations of Scripture, should leave no doubt on our minds regarding the radical falseness of the diabolical prodigies, ancient or modern, which the "religious" party has taken under its protection.

Yet, these prodigies bear within them, perhaps, a still more striking mark of error. Our opponents are not materialists only, they are dualists.

Dualism is the most persistent of lies. It is to be found at the root of all Pagan philosophies and religions; the grand Gnostic invasion against which the infant Church had to struggle, was its most scientific and subtile manifestation: this distinct *demiurge** of the superior God, these *æons*, these series of subordinate beings have left an impression on the mind of man that has never been effaced. Without speaking of Manicheism, properly so-called, and of similar heresies that have been at various times produced in the name of the two principles, we have a right to assert that the same error showed itself in the Middle Ages, and was then predominant. Doubtless, it was no longer the precise theory which the legend of the Clementines puts into the mouth of Simon the magician; it was the worship of the devil; it was the devil put in opposition to God, governing, dispensing good and evil, controlling the life, health, and affections, disposing of the living and the dead; it was the devil filling an immense *rôle*, absorbing popular attention, the devil, suspending at will the application of natural laws; it was the devil, a rival of God, God himself, it might be said. Yes,

* In Gnosticism, the last emanation of the Infinite being.—*Trans.*

God divides his empire with Satan ! The rebel, the condemned, already bound in chains of darkness (2 *Peter* ii. 4), and whom the Bible shows us to be incapable of accomplishing the slightest enchantment, without the express permission of the only sovereign (*Job*, i. 11, 12), he has become master and sovereign in his turn ; a sort of religion of evil has installed itself in opposition to our divine religion.

Let me not be misunderstood. I well know how terrible a part is allotted to Satan in the system of the universe. It is not I, certainly, who will deny it, and without going so far as Voltaire, in that respect a faithful echo of the Dualist creeds of the Middle Ages, without saying with him : " Satan is the whole of Christianity," I am, by no means, disposed to contest the immense power exercised by the great enemy here below. I protest only against such phrases as these : " Yes, all Christianity is there. The supernatural is a world with two sides, each of which, the terrible side and the consolatory side, is proved and necessitated by the other. Light and darkness, Jehovah and Belial, Jesus Christ and Satan, behold the two camps, the two standards, the two cities, well defined, well opposed." " This is a new struggle between the two forces that divide the world, unequal forces, doubtless, since one is divine and the other is created, but forces temporarily opposed to each other, whose rival progress bears constantly, in an inverse direction, on the destinies of the earth." (M. de Mirville, xvii. 448).

Those who hold this language, misrepresent the power of Satan much more than they exaggerate it. Instead of speaking to us of his power as tempter, which has its base in the voluntary complicity of fallen man, they speak to us of his pretended miraculous power, of the power that would manifest itself by the subversion of natural laws, by the seizure, in spite of God, of the creatures whom God has made, and who have not summoned the demon ; they show us a Satan who accomplishes freely, of his own will and authority, the works which the Almighty has reserved to himself, a Satan who kills and makes

alive, a Satan who inclines the heart by the magical power of his sorceries !

M. Mirville has felt that this religion of the Middle Ages is open to objections. He defends it, therefore, on the ground of "immense power which such doctrines confer on spiritual powers. upon the good as upon the wicked, upon the faithful as upon the unfaithful, upon the innocent, and upon the infant even ;" and further on he adds : "Great God ! all that is a most discouraging truth ; but do you any better understand the fall of man, the damnation of unbaptized infants, the eternity of punishment, etc. etc ? When, then, shall we fully realize that this divine solidarity, for which so much uneasiness is shown, is, positively, no more compromised by the power of mysterious influences over innocence and infancy, than by that of all human and natural influences over the same age and the same innocence ?" (440.)

It is easy to reason thus in heaping together, pell-mell; things in themselves most dissimilar. What has the pretended damnation of unbaptized infants, regarding which Scripture is utterly silent, to do with the fall of man, of which it speaks in the clearest terms ? What has the pretended magical influence of the devil, an action, independent both of the will of God and the voluntary consent of man, to do with the exercise of human or diabolical influences, which is the natural condition of free-will ? I cannot tell ; but I know that the school of the Middle Ages both exaggerates and diminishes Satan ; it contradicts the Bible as much by the enormity of the real power it confirms upon, as by the purity of the malignant deeds it attributes to him. Listen again to M. de Mirville :

"At some future time, we hope to speak more at length on the immense rôle filled in all cosmical and physical nature by this *prince of the air*, this *torch-bearer* who surrounds our globe (*qui circumambulabat terram*), the mysterious agent that the Bible somewhere calls "the principle of all the ways of the Lord (*principium viarum Domini Behemoth*), a principle created after the Word and the Light were begotten, it being said to

them in their turn : *Ante Luciferum genui te*, I will beget you before Lucifer. We shall again turn our attention to the possible reconciliation between these grand forces of our cosmical nature, and those other spiritual forces which the great Apostle calls *the governors and supports of this world of darkness, rectores* (in Greek, *κοσμοκράτορες*) *tenebrarum harum*; but, I repeat, let us not anticipate the future." (442.)

Yes, let us not anticipate ; we have here quite enough for the present ! The moment has not yet come for asking where these incredible passages are to be found, in what portion of the Bible, Behemoth (I know only of the Behemoth, a formidable animal described in the book of Job, who "eats grass like an ox") in what portion of the Bible, Behemoth, transformed into Satan, is named "the principle of all the ways of the Lord ;" in what portion it is said that Lucifer was created after the Word, thus making his beginning first in time, and that he was created after the light, a somewhat later period in the terrestrial creation of six days. My attention here rests on one point only ; the invention or restoration of a gigantic Satan, first of angels, more than an angel, since his birth is nearly coeval with that of the Word, and since he governs at will, creations from the hands of the Almighty. This Satan, in whose behalf the words of the "Great Apostle" are perverted, is found to be the "governor and support" of our world ! It is not surprising, then, that he every day effects thousands of prodigies.

The Satan of tradition, a constant negation of the Satan of the Bible, possesses an absolute power over the elements, is the the sovereign disposer of times and seasons, sends earthquakes, tempests, floods and conflagrations, destroys or multiplies the products of the earth, causes the death of men and animals, subverts empires, rules our destinies and governs (in virtue of magical acts) the sentiments of our hearts, producing therein, by means of a formula, either the strongest hatred or the tenderest love.

Let us commence with this last fact ; there are none better

attested, more indissolubly connected with the doctrines and proofs relating to sorcery. Whoever has consulted the confessions of sorcerers will have been impressed by it. I shall not cite the example of the poor Margaret betrayed to Faust by Mephistopheles; a legend is not sufficient, although it correctly expresses the real and official creed of the Middle Ages. I prefer to repeat the words of a man who was burnt at the commencement of the 17th century. The Curé Gaufridi, of enlarged and cultivated mind, but participating in the faith of his cotemporaries, thus expressed himself before the Parliament of Aix: "I have belonged to the devil almost fourteen years. I was lost by reading a work from the library of the Curé Gaufridi, my uncle. As soon as I had cast my eyes upon this fatal book, the devil presented himself before me with the features of a man. *This devil engaged to render all the women upon whom I should breathe amorous of my person. . . . More than a thousand women have been corrupted by the irresistible attraction of my breath, which produced in them passionate desires.* The Lady de la Pallud, Madeleine's mother was fascinated like the others; but Madeleine was seized with a foolish love for me. . . . I confess that three days afterwards, I gave to her a devil named *Emode*, who was to assist her, to serve her, to preserve her, and moreover, to excite her to my love."

Facts of this sort are everywhere; they form the very basis of the diabolical supernatural. We are all familiar with the history of that poor young man of the house of Mailly, of whom the Palatine speaks in his memoirs: a sachet had been given him by Mlle. de la Force. Charmed by the magical power of the sachet, he entreated his family to consent to his marriage. Their refusal drove him to despair, and he resolved to drown himself; but hardly had he taken off the sachet preparatory to plunging into the water, than the charm ceased, and the most frigid indifference succeeded his passion.

What would be our condition, I ask, if Satan possessed similar power over us? We should no longer have need to resist his temptations as we are now called upon to do, but to avoid

contact with a breath, with a sachet or a bouquet inspiring love or engendering antipathies, for there are charms also of this latter species. Behold, what an odious dependence ! If it exists (and it does exist or there is not a word of truth in the accumulated testimony now-a-days presented to us), two consequences result from it : first, man is delivered up a slave to the despotism of the devil and of matter ; secondly, Scripture, which declares the contrary, must be rejected.

The invention of amulets that determine our sentiments is not peculiar to Catholic tradition ; it may be met with everywhere. Here, as always, it is only the self-styled Christian interpretation of a radical, universal, and indestructible Paganism. "The Arab," says General Daumas, "concedes to certain old women the power of influencing the domestic relations, of controlling the affections ; he admits the existence of spells whereby we may make ourselves loved, cause our rival to be hated, and obtain the divorce of a woman whom we desire." A few pages further on, resuming the consideration of these wise women who, in the Sahara, fill the rôle that was in the Middle Ages occupied by magicians and sorcerers, he adds : "It is of these *tolbas* (learned men), and of these old women, that both men and women seek the philter, a compound of various herbs, prepared with invocations and frightful ceremonies, to mingle it with the food of him or her whose love they desire to win. There are some who, on paper or on the bone of a dead body taken from the cemetery, will write, together with the name of your enemy, magical formulas, then burying the paper or bone, they are sent to join your enemy, 'his stomach filled with worms.' They will teach you the formulas to be pronounced in shutting a knife, whenever you would produce the death of your enemy ; those that are to be cast into the pot where is cooking the food of the household into which you desire to bring trouble." (*Manners and Customs of Algeria*, 168, 265.)

It would not be difficult, as every one understands, to multiply examples, to borrow them from the Chinese or the Hindoos, the Pagans of Antiquity, or the negro-worshippers of Fetiches,

who, at the present day, inhabit Africa. But the essential point for us, is to establish that such is the actual part of the devil in whom we are summoned to believe, and that this part has never once been changed during the hundreds of years it has existed. All sorcerers, without exception, hold a language analogous to that of Aupetit, curé of Payas, who was burnt alive at Limoges, in 1598. "I have the gift of preventing men from doing things I do not wish them to do, of stopping hemorrhage, and of making myself loved by the young women. I have been in the practice of making fruit decay, of causing the death of men, women, and children." The sorcerer Legros, one of the victims of the great possession of Labour in the 17th century, talks in the same strain. Nothing can be more positive than his account of the powders furnished by the devil. "With the powders, a hundred thousand misfortunes may be produced. . . . When they are thrown, it is only necessary to repeat in *Basque** 'This for the grain, this for the apples ; you will come to flower but not to fruit.'"

These powders that were made at the *sabbat*, with a toad, an asp, or a skinned cat, were useful, not only in producing death ; they might serve also as counterpoison to those who had been bewitched by the touch of sorcerers. The evil enchantment which the devil, some years afterwards, remitted from the sister Marie de Sains, of Lille, was of still more hideous composition ; it also had the power of delivering to the demon as well as that of destroying ; the ones perished, the others were subjected to physical tortures, and the moral blight of possession. I dare not indicate, even by the faintest allusion, the detestable inclinations created and developed by the mere vicinity of this spell.

Let us recapitulate. We have, then, first, the material touch, which, in the hands of Satan, is a powerful instrument to destroy, to produce barrenness, to kill, and also to communicate either ardent passions or terrible vices. Next, by virtue of this unequalled power, he disposes of bodies and souls, creates and

* The *Patois* of Gascony.—*Trans.*

cures diseases ; yes, he cures, for his cures are not less authenticated than his diseases, and if the diabolical powers inflict possessions, they also deliver from them ! I might complete the enumeration by adding the diabolical prodigy most universally admitted, found as it is, among the Ancients and Moderns, among Christians and among Jews, among Pagans and among Mussulmans ;—the evil eye, that fatal influence exercised by a single glance, and of which no one has power to rid himself. I might also mention those magicians whose speciality it is to let loose hurricanes, and who are designated by the Roman or Feudal laws under the names *missores tempestatum tempestarii*. I pause, however, and renew my fundamental question : Are we still upon Evangelical ground ? Can the supernatural of the Middle Ages be reconciled with the declarations of Scripture ? No. According to Scripture, one Being alone sends disease and its cure ; One alone governs the Universe, and disposes of our destinies : it is God. “ The Lord killeth and maketh alive : he bringeth down to the grave, and bringeth up. The Lord maketh poor, and maketh rich : He bringeth low and lifteth up.” (1 *Samuel*, ii. 6, 7.) Thus does the Bible express itself. Since mankind has invented two Gods, it is natural that Satan should be made to participate in the power which pertains to the Creator alone. The principle of evil is planted in opposition to the principle of good ; we are no longer of the school of the Apostles, we are disciples of Zoroaster ! “ *Et nunc intelligite !*” exclaims M. de Mirville. “ And now, you should understand that beneath all these reveries an occult world is agitated, its beneficent or malignant action decides without your knowledge, on your dearest wishes, history being, according to one of the most distinguished thinkers of our epoch (Schlegel), only the incessant struggle of nations and individuals against invisible powers.” (313.)

“ *Et nunc intelligite* ” I say, in my turn. Either the Bible is false and your supernatural is true, or the Bible is true and your supernatural is false, notwithstanding the testimony confirming it. Jesus Christ has said : “ Are not two sparrows

sold for a farthing? and one of them shall not fall on the ground without your Father. But the very hairs of your head are all numbered." (*Matthew*, x. 29, 30.) And yet you come, you and your witnesses, to speak to us of a devil into whose hands we are abandoned, of a devil who kills us and who cures us! You come to tell us of the miraculous cures he has already effected in the temples of the idols. You recite to us the speech of Galen, who admitted that the cures in the temple of Esculapius were much more numerous than those of the physicians! You acknowledge that the devil at the present day still cures by the hands of the magnetizers! What, then, is our position? Whom must we believe, Jesus Christ or your long and persevering tradition?

The contradiction is not accidental and partial, it is constant and fundamental; your supernatural and your testimony, as has been seen, have even succeeded in disproving the words whereby the Saviour demonstrated to the Pharisees that Satan could not cast out Satan (*Matthew*, xii. 26). You everywhere show us the devil furnishing the means of casting out the devil. Your magicians often possess recipes to preserve or deliver men from their evil genius.

"But after all," you say, "it is certain that Satan and his angels have a sphere of action in this world, that they play an active part and wield an enormous influence; Satan is named the prince of this world; it is written that he has dominion over death. We must take one side or the other, either to deny him absolutely, like the infidels, or to admit his reality to the extent of the Catholic traditions, and at the risk of attributing to him a power almost divine. But whatever we may do, let us avoid the supposition that he does evil by the order of God, and that God, consequently, is the author of evil."

The objection can embarrass those only who are not familiar with their Bible. It will not be difficult for me to show, on the one hand, that God cedes to no one, the least particle of His absolute sovereignty; on the other, that the evil deeds of Satan, belong to himself exclusively. As regards powers and

acts of powers, Satan does nothing except by permission, by the will of God. As regards moral influence and temptations, Satan pursues his own legitimate work, under the same conditions as necessarily control all beings endowed with free-will. Let us explain.

That God alone is Sovereign, is proclaimed on every page of Scripture. "The Lord is king for ever and ever. Say among the heathen that the Lord reigneth. The Lord reigneth ; let the earth rejoice ; let the multitude of isles be glad thereof. The Lord reigneth ; let the people tremble !" Such is the cry which makes itself successively heard from all the prophets. I am content to quote a few passages from some of the Psalms (x. 16 ; xcvi. 10 ; xcvii. 1 ; xcix. 1) ; the reader may complete them for himself.

I am opposed with passages in which Satan is named the *prince of this world* ! I read, indeed, in the Gospel of John : "Now is the judgment of this world ; now shall the prince of this world be cast out. . . . Hereafter, I will not talk much with you : for the prince of this world cometh ; and hath nothing in me, . . . the prince of this world is judged." (xii. 31, xiv. 30 ; xvi. 11.) But the signification of these verses is very clear. It is a signification in which Satan, unfortunately, only too well merits the title of prince of this world ; if he has no power, he has much influence. In regard to the power, God reigns and has always reigned alone ; in regard to the influence (this is a necessary consequence of free will and the Fall), Satan still reigns almost alone. It will not be until after his defeat and final expulsion, that God's kingdom will extend over all hearts, as it always has extended over all events and all natural laws ; influence will no longer be separated from power, as it now so often is, when this earth shall have given place to a new earth where justice dwells. Then God will be "all in all."

In this way, then, Satan is prince of this world : the world adores him, the world obeys him (now, "no man can serve two masters"), the world is composed of *his children*. Scripture

speaks of the children of the devil, as it speaks of his subjects. "Ye are of your father, the devil," said Jesus to the Jews, "and the lusts of your father ye will do." "In this," added the well-beloved disciple of our Saviour, "in this the children of God are manifest, and the children of the devil : whosoever doeth not righteousness is not of God. (*John*, viii. 44 ; 1 *John*, iii. 10.) Not only has the devil for children and subjects, all those who are addicted to sin, not only is he their prince and father, but he sometimes gives them his own name. The Lord has thus designated Judas : "Have I not chosen you twelve, and one of you is a devil !" (*John*, vi. 70.)

Satan, who is "a liar from the beginning," really seeks to insinuate that his power here below has the character of sovereignty; he would teach us to doubt these words : "The earth is the Lord's, and all that therein is." In the great scene of the temptation of Jesus, he shows him all the kingdoms of the earth, and says : "All this power will I give thee, and the glory of them : for that is delivered unto me, and to whomsoever I will, I give it. If thou, therefore, wilt worship me, all shall be thine." Now, Satan, whose lies are only perverted truths, might indeed pretend that he possesses the kingdoms of the earth, and that he gives them to his worshippers. Although he cannot dispose of a straw except by the will of God, the sympathy by which the mass of unconverted men are attracted towards evil, leads them to obey the orders of the devil, yield to his temptations, and often causes them to seek out and adopt as rulers, those who participate in their impious tendencies. The true chances of success are there. All the wicked will not accomplish their plans, all Christians will not fail in their undertakings ; yet, as a general rule, the first will attain their object sooner than the second ; they will have no obstacles in the way of scruples and unpopularity, to surmount. Thus understood, the declaration of Satan justifies itself, and will justify itself to the end. "The glory of these kingdoms is delivered unto me, and to whomsoever I will, I give it."

I would ask those who lay any stress on the passages where

Satan is named prince of this world, if they have reflected on the passages that attribute to him power over death? It is written: "He also himself, likewise, took part of the same; that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is the devil." (*Hebrews*, ii. 14.) What does that mean? Shall we relinquish our faith in the power of the Almighty alone, to kill and to make alive? Not at all. We confine ourselves to the belief that the tempter causes death by inducing us to sin; we die by him, inasmuch as he has contributed to the fall, of which the punishment was: Thou shalt die. The power of death is the power of sin; therefore, the same conqueror triumphs over Satan, sin and death. It is an idea very unworthy of the Son of God to represent him as struggling with Satan on the ground of power. The Creator overcoming the creature, the fallen, condemned creature! This would be indeed a great work! The power of Satan never ventures to resist the power of the Lord without being instantly broken like glass, and by the hand of faithful angels. (*Revelations*, xii. 7, 8.) But on the ground of influence it is not so. To destroy the moral empire of sin and of the tempter in the heart of men, corrupt and endowed with free will, to liberate them from the slavery of the devil without injury to their essential nature, is an act which calls for the fullest display of divine power and love. The Son of God, conqueror of Satan, is, in this sense, an object of admiration to all the universe; this is the mystery before which the angels themselves bow, without being able to penetrate its depth.

The reader may be assured that I neither deny nor diminish Satan; I restore to him his true part. Tempter, he possesses an immense power of the same nature as that of which a corrupt man makes use, to corrupt his relations, his neighbors, his cotemporaries. No other power has been intrusted to him. Angels are angels, not gods; and I cannot believe that any one will propose to us a theory, in virtue of which it may be maintained that the revolt of the devil has given him a power, which, as a faithful angel, he would never have possessed. Let us

leave to Milton and other poets the fantastical personage of an archangel placed on the confines of divinity, and transformed into an adversary. The Bible holds no such language ; it speaks to us of fallen angels, smitten immediately by an irrevocable sentence. (*Jude*, 6 ; 2 *Peter*, ii. 4.) It shows them to us still free to inhabit heaven, to roam through the air, to prowl about on the earth, and incite men to evil. They know the abyss that awaits them, and they are continually in fear of being sent there. (*Luke*, viii. 31 ; *Matthew*, viii. 29.) In the last days they will be driven from heaven by the faithful angels ; full of wrath, they will for a short time descend upon earth ; they will then receive the faculty of executing lying wonders, as they have executed them in other great religious crises of humanity ; at last, the sentence will receive its accomplishment. Such is the Biblical history of Satan and his angels ; I here refer to it again, because the tendency of the world is constantly to pervert it. It contains not the least trace of an archangel, partially divine, who becomes entirely divine in consequence of his fall, and, through it, enters into participation of the incommunicable sovereignty of the Creator.

The unfallen angels perform no miracles, they execute the orders of God by the power of God. The unfallen angels are endowed neither with omnipresence nor omniscience ; they go from one place to another, they receive commands and obey them. "He shall give his angels charge over thee." "The Son of Man will send forth his angels, and they shall gather out of his kingdom all things that offend." "Thinkest thou that I cannot now pray to my Father, and he shall presently give me more than twelve legions of angels?" "The beggar died, and was carried by the angels into Abraham's bosom." "Are they not all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation?" (*Psalms*, xci. 11 ; *Matthew*, xiii. 41 ; xxvi. 53 ; *Luke*, xvi. 22 ; *Hebrews*, i. 14.)

Let us take courage ; the fall had no power to elevate rebellious angels above the condition of faithful angels. Nothing is better established in the Bible than the entire subordination

of Satan in everything which is not moral and necessarily free action, in everything which is not temptation. He accomplishes no supernatural act, great or small, except by the will of God. He meddles not with life, nor health, nor property of any description, without the will of God.

"Show the things that are to come hereafter" is written in Isaiah (xli. 23), "show the things that are to come hereafter, that we may know that ye are gods: yea, do good, or do evil." Yes, no one, if it be not God, doeth good or evil, sendeth trials or deliverance.

The Book of Job forcibly exhibits this impotence, and this absolute dependence on the part of Satan. "Doth Job fear God for naught? Hast thou not made a hedge about him, and about his house, and about all that he hath, on every side? Thou hast blessed the work of his hands, and his substance is increased in the land. But put forth thy hand now and touch all that he hath." Satan acknowledges that Job's prosperity comes from the Lord, and that his trial can come only from the Lord. Moreover, does he not accomplish a divine mission, when the Lord says to him: "Behold all that he hath is in thy power; only upon himself put not forth thy hand." God orders the trial and fixes the limits it shall not exceed. Whenever, in his wisdom, he judges that a new aggravation of affliction is necessary, in order to purify the already pious soul of Job and confound his adversary, God gives a new order, and defines a new boundary. "Behold he is in thy hand; but save his life." (i. 9-11; ii. 6.)

Job's calamities came, then, entirely from the Lord. Satan only carried out the will of his Sovereign. And it has always been thus. When Saul was troubled by an evil spirit, when he fell into those fits of melancholy, the cause of which was supernatural, the evil spirit was "sent by the Lord." (1 *Samuel*, xvi. 14, 15; xviii. 10; xix. 9.) When the diabolical malady appeared on earth to signalize the great struggle engaged in by Jesus Christ against sin, the demons repeatedly manifested their entire dependence; if they took possession of

demoniacs, it was by God's permission. Thus, the demons whom the Saviour had expelled from the Gadarenes, implored authority to effect a new possession, that of mere animals. It was necessary that their subordination should be manifested under the most humiliating form (*Mark*, v. 12). When the Apostle Paul was suffering from a Satanic affliction, he submitted to it, as from the Lord : " And lest," says he, " I should be exalted above measure, through the abundance of the revelations, there was given to me a thorn in the flesh, the messenger of Satan to buffet me, lest I should be exalted above measure. (2 *Corinthians*, xii. 7.) The Apostle declares that this thorn was " given " him, and given him in love ; the devil was only an instrument. No event ever takes place, even to the lying wonders of the last days, which is not by the express will of God. The false prophet " deceiveth them that dwell on the earth by the means of those miracles which he had power to do in the sight of the beast." (*Revelations*, xiii. 14.) It has been given to him ; Satan and his agents possess no power of their own ; they perform no prodigy, they inflict no suffering that is not commanded by the Lord.

If you attempt to construct any system whatever, in which trials proceed from another than God, you will fall into Dualism ; behind Dualism is concealed despair. Our misfortunes are without consolation, if we regard them as sent by an inimical power, and from which our tutelary divinity is incapable of defending us. Whence comes the shudder that darts through our veins when we read that horrible argument of impiety, the scene with the beggar in *Don Juan* ? From the fact that the author of the trial is not indicated, and, consequently, its beneficent and divine nature cannot be indicated.

" I am a poor man, sir, living all alone in these woods for the last ten years, and I will pray Heaven to bestow upon you all sorts of blessings."

" Ah! pray Heaven to give you some clothes. . . . It cannot be that you are not entirely comfortable."

" Alas ! sir, I am in the very greatest necessity."

"You are joking : a man who prays heaven all day cannot but be very well off in his affairs."

A most shocking logic and well worthy of this Don Juan, "who believes only that two and two make four, and that four and four make eight." Unfortunately the beggar's philosophy does not seem much stronger than his, and if the poor fellow nobly refuses to blaspheme for the sake of gaining a louis, he remains almost crushed by the haughty charity of his interlocuter : "Begone, begone ; I give it to you for the love of humanity."

Humanity is thus elevated above God ; God leaves to his misery the being whose prayers are offered up to Heaven ; man is moved to pity, and renders assistance ! How different would have been the conclusion if the beggar had opened the Gospel, if he had read to Don Juan these verses upon which the Book of Job is a most magnificent commentary. "For whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth." . . . "But he for our profit, that we might be partakers of his holiness. Now, no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous ; nevertheless, afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby." (*Hebrews*, xii. 6-11.) I have spoken of trial : I have not spoken of temptation. The distinction is fundamental, and it is too often overlooked. God cannot be the author of evil. "Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God : for God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth he any man. But every man is tempted, when he is drawn away, of his own lust and enticed." James thus positively declares it (i. 13, 14.) God only wills temptation in as far as he wills the free-will of angels and men, with all its legitimate consequences. For this purpose it is necessary that temptations exist, in order that reciprocal influences may be exercised, and the struggle against evil be real, and not fictitious. For this purpose it was necessary that the first Adam should be tempted ; it was necessary (this is the language of Scripture) that the second should be equally tempted, it is necessary that Satan be unbound after the ter-

restrial reign of Christ, and go out to deceive the nations that are in the four corners of the earth. (*Hebrews*, ii. 17, 18 ; *Revelations*, xx. 7, 8 ; 2 *Thessalonians*, ii. 8-12.)

But it is one thing, to will the consequences of free-will and the real conditions of our struggle in this world ; it is quite another thing, to will a single bad act. The evil pertains undivided to the creatures, even as sovereignty pertains undivided to the Creator.

It is not enough to have affirmed it ; let us prove it.

I have, in the first place, established a profound distinction between temptation and trial. Not that the trial may not also become a source of temptation ;* everything becomes temptation to our wicked hearts ; misery leads us to murmur, prosperity impels us to pride. It is none the less certain, however, that trial, in itself, is not temptation. Temptation, properly speaking, is an incitement to evil. Now, this never comes from God ; it comes from our corrupt affections, and the enemy, who keeps them from slumbering. Not only does God tempt no one, but it is "impossible" for God to tempt, as is spoken in the Scriptures.

And this is what it adds on the subject of temptation. Jesus teaches his disciples to pray thus : "And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil." In the parable of the sower, he points out those "which have no root in themselves, which for a while believe, and, in time of temptation, fall away." In the garden of Gethsemane, during his unfathomable sufferings, he says several times : "Pray that ye enter not into temptation." And the Apostle Paul, some years later, repeated : "Let him that thinketh he standeth, take heed lest he fall. There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man : But God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able ; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear

* This is so true that the same Greek word is often employed in the New Testament to designate both temptations and trials.

it." (*Matthew*, vi. 13 ; *Luke*, viii. 13 ; xxii, 40 ; *1 Corinthians*, x. 13.)

God sends, then, not the temptation, but a way to escape. He does not permit the temptation to exceed certain limits ; he protects those who pray not to be led into temptation.

Nothing so much astonishes me as the thoughtlessness with which men, forgetting these capital truths, strive to discover that temptation is a divine grace ! It recalls to my mind those people who, in their mystical enthusiasm, sing songs to the glory of the happy sin, without which we should have had no Saviour ! Let us, on our part, endeavor to be less refined. Simple in our sentiments and in our language, let us take heed not to call good evil, and evil good. Let us leave the *felix culpa* where it is ; we shall not discover it in the Bible any more than in the happy temptation.

Trials even, are not such blessings in themselves that we may demand them of God and entreat him not to send us deliverance. Scripture invites us to do exactly the contrary. This, however, does not prevent the trial from being adapted to make us better, and to glorify the Lord so long as he shall see fit to apply it ; " Thy will, not mine, be done," forms, therefore, a most fitting conclusion to our prayers. No Christian thinks of praying thus in regard to temptation ; he implores its absolute, immediate, unconditional cessation, for he knows that it is bad, immoral in its nature, and radically contrary to the will of God.

Our Heavenly Father, doubtless, extracts good out of evil, but the evil remains evil. Temptation does not assume a respectable character, because it may contribute to the strengthening of men, who by the assistance of the Lord, succeed in triumphing over it. If it is written that " all things work together for good to them that love God " (*Romans*, viii. 28), it by no means follows that all things are good.

As for trials, they do not include any intrinsic degradation ; their part in the midst of a fallen race is as necessary as it is mysterious. It is the fire of the furnace in which silver is tried,

and which is spoken of in the 66th Psalm (10 ; see also *Isaiah*, xlviii. 10, and 1 *Peter*, i. 7). It is that struggle of Jacob with the Almighty, a strange struggle, in which man is the conqueror, although the finger of God, by wounding his thigh, leaves a most significant mark that man is not the strongest. (*Genesis*, xxxii. 25.)

Will it be objected to all this, that God indeed permits temptation as well as trial ; that, consequently, it must be acknowledged, either that temptation is not an evil, since God wills it, or that trials are not under his dominion, since they possess the character of things which he does not will ?

They who hold this language forget that God has willed the free-will of angels and of men ; and certainly his wisdom and grandeur are nowhere so evidently displayed. It would surely have been easy enough for him to create automaton angels and automaton men, beings who would have done good as bees make honey. But he has preferred to bring into existence, creatures endowed with the faculty of choice ; he has done more, he has rendered them responsible, he has established between them the possibility of contact, and of reciprocal influences ; He has prepared for them the real struggle, he has called them to breathe the free air ; he has preferred the perils of moral life to the docility of mechanism. For his own glory, he has not willed to have a world in which his creatures would be forced to adore. Now, we all feel that if there be anything inferior to revolt, it is unconscious and necessary obedience.

Viewing the subject from this point, we see the difficulties, one after the other, resolved. God has not willed evil ; he has willed free-will, which is a blessing. Away with the Dualist system ! Away also with the system that makes God the author of evil ! One and absolute sovereign, sole master of the laws of creation, controller of events both great and small, there is only one thing that escapes his dominion, escapes it by his will : it is the action of the affections. Who will dare to say that God has willed, otherwise than as consequences of the free-will decreed by him, either the fall of angels, the fall of

man, the crimes which pollute the earth, or the temptations of Satan ! The crucifixion of our Saviour, even though it expiates our transgressions, is it not the most dreadful of all ; and in this sense, are we permitted to say that God willed it, that he willed the perversity of the Pharisees, the incredulity of the people, the cowardice of Pilate, the treachery of Judas ?

I pause ; there are mysteries in presence of which, we should humbly bow, there are veils which our profane hands were not made to raise. I have deemed it my duty to confine myself to saying only what was necessary to prevent the evil from being imputed to God, or the devil from being called upon to share his omnipotence.

Yes, God does not will crimes ; yet the greatest of crimes becomes in his hands the means of our salvation. God does not will temptation, yet he sometimes renders it useful to our souls. God does not will heresies ; yet it is written : " For there must be also heresies among you, that they which are approved may be made manifest among you." (1 *Corinthians*, xi. 19.) It has been said, " Man is troubled and God leadeth him !" It might have been added : " Man sins and God guideth him." But the sins of man and the temptations of Satan are not pardoned for all that.

The temptation even preceded the Fall, since it contributed to determine it ; but before the Fall, and before the temptation, there existed the admirable principle laid down by the Almighty, free, human, and angelic will. I say free-will, not liberty. The reflective mind will know how to distinguish between these two terms, which differ from each other just as a faculty differs from a sentiment. The moment of primitive choice passed, in which free-will and liberty completely co-existed, it is certain that the first alone has survived : beings who have chosen God, lose their liberty by the power even of their love, while those who have chosen revolt, lose their liberty by the predominance of corrupt affections. In other terms, their will is in bondage ; the ones are " servants of righteousness," the others are " servants of sin," thus saith the Scripture. But

they both preserve the faculty, after having lost their independence of will ; the most pious hearts in certain circumstances, choose evil, the most hardened hearts sometimes choose the good. The man who will not walk, does not walk ; yet he can walk, his legs are ready, the faculty exists, and he will be very apt to make one or two steps accidentally.

It remains certain (and I insist only upon this point, for here is not the place thoroughly to investigate the problem of liberty and free-will), it remains certain that a portion of the angels as well as all men have equally used the faculty of choice, and that the evil of which they have become the voluntary servants has been their own work and not the work of God. Man used his free-will when he delivered up his liberty to Satan ; he also uses his free-will when he passes from the service of Satan to that of God, because grace has broken his chains and has rendered him capable of saying yes, without taking from him the faculty of saying no. His free-will, an indelible characteristic of the moral being, never abandons him. He may become a slave, he cannot become a machine.

Knowing, now, that evil cannot be imputed to God, let us beware (convenient as this might be !) of charging it all to the account of Satan. The first guilt is ours ; the basis of the temptation is within us. James admonishes us of this when he says : " But every man is tempted when he is drawn away of his own lust and enticed." What conscience will refuse to confess it ? What man will dare accuse Satan in excuse for himself before God ? As regards the Satan of tradition, it is all well enough ! He makes use of material force, he casts spells, he possesses by virtue of evil enchantments. But the true Satan will never be an extenuation for our sin. His immense, formidable action, the melancholy grandeur of which I would in no wise diminish, his action is addressed to beings endowed with free-will, which the divine grace, always at their service, renders them capable of using to vanquish the enemy.

Dualism, so sad a characteristic of the faith of the Middle Ages, is again manifested on other points. The devil of tradition is not only the acknowledged rival of God, disposing of our lives and our destinies, modifying or suspending natural laws, dispensing trials as well as temptations ; he usurps one after another, all the attributes of Divinity.

It is thus that he knows and predicts the future !

Now God has, in the most formal manner, reserved to himself the future. If the Bible admits the possibility of some Satanic miracles willed by the Almighty, it also declares that the Satanic prophesies are absolutely impossible. "And if thou say in thy heart, How shall we know the word which the Lord hath not spoken ? When a prophet speaketh in the name of the Lord, if the thing follow not nor come to pass, that is the thing which the Lord hath not spoken." (*Deuteronomy* xviii. 21 & 22.) The only true prophets, then, who prophesy the future, are those of the Lord. "Show us what shall happen ; show the things that are to come hereafter, that we may know that ye are gods." "Tell ye and bring them near ; yea, let them take counsel together ; who hath declared this from ancient time ? Who hath told it from that time ? have not I the Lord ? and there is no God else beside me." (*Isaiah* xli. 22, 23 ; xlv. 21.)

It was, of course, not to be expected that magicians and false prophets should ever have renounced the claim thus condemned by Scripture. Not a soothsayer, not an oracle, not a teller of fortunes by cards, not a spirit of the tables, who does not read the future. One difficulty only is in their way ; it is to read justly, and we see that predictions of this sort are everywhere qualified as lies by the sacred authors. "For the idols have spoken vanity, and the diviners have seen a lie," are the emphatic words of Zechariah (x. 2), and Jeremiah describes in thrilling terms his own struggles with one of the men, who in his times foretold things that were to come. "Hananiah, the son of Azur the prophet, which was of Gibeon, spake unto me

in the house of the Lord, in the presence of the priests, and of all the people, saying : " Thus speaketh the Lord of Hosts, the God of Israel, saying, I have broken the yoke of the king of Babylon. Within two full years will I bring again into this place all the vessels of the Lord's house, that Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon took away from this place. . . Even the prophet Jeremiah, said, Amen : the Lord do so. . . Nevertheless, hear thou now this word that I speak in thine ears, and in the ears of all the people. . . The prophet which prophesieth of peace, when the word of the prophet shall come to pass, then shall the prophet be known, that the Lord hath truly sent him. Then Hananiah the prophet took the yoke from off the prophet Jeremiah's neck, and brake it. And Hananiah spake in presence of all the people, saying : Thus saith the Lord ; even so will I break the yoke of Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon from the neck of all nations within the space of two full years. . . Then the word of the Lord came unto Jeremiah saying : Go and tell Hananiah, saying, thou hast broken the yokes of wood ; but thou shalt make for them yokes of iron. . . Then said the prophet Jeremiah unto Hananiah the prophet, Hear now, Hananiah ; the Lord hath not sent thee ; but thou makest this people to trust in a lie. . . So Hananiah the prophet died the same year." (*Jeremiah xxviii.*)

The following chapter tells us of the punishment which fell upon another man who undertook to prophesy, although the Lord had not sent him. The messengers of the Lord have an absolute monopoly of prophecy, because God alone knoweth things pertaining to the future.

The idolatrous kings—Ahab, for instance—always surrounded themselves with self-styled prophets, who did not hesitate to predict what seemed to them probable, and especially what was agreeable to the sovereign. But throughout the Bible we do not find a single example of diabolical prediction confirmed by the event. In vain does Hananiah break the yokes of wood ; in vain does Zedekiah, son of Chenaanah, make him horns of iron, saying, " With these shalt thou push the Syrians until thou have consumed them." These pretended seers see

nothing whatever. In place of the predicted victory, Abab went forth to meet his death, "And one washed his chariot in the pool of Samaria ; and the dogs licked up his blood, according unto the word of the Lord which he spake."—(1 *Kings*, xxii.)

There never has been, there never will be predictions on this earth, other than the inspired words of the prophets. If the servant at Philippi procured much gain to her masters "by soothsaying," it does not follow that her predictions were truer than had been those of the false prophets under the old covenant. Her oracles, as theirs, were without doubt lying oracles.

It is, moreover, only necessary to give ourselves an instant of reflection, in order to understand how far the curiosity which would penetrate the secrets that God conceals from our eyes, is impious. Are we determined to know the future in spite of him ? or do we really suppose that the angels have a knowledge of things that are to come ; that Satan knew his fall before it took place ; that he saw himself a rebel, condemned, cast out of Heaven ? In truth, the theology which converts Satan into a God, leads to most singular consequences !

Scripture declares that a fulfilled prediction is the sign by which we may recognize the prophets of the Almighty. The school of the Middle Ages declares to us, on the contrary, that fulfilled predictions abound in the annals of magic. M. de Mirville does not even relate one of his stories of sorcery, of possessions, of somnambulism, of spirits, without remarking that the future has been most accurately prophesied. This perfect accuracy is his favorite argument. Less prudent than certain tables of my acquaintance that have taken great pains to establish their fallibility, he seems to indulge in the certainty of a steadfast belief, which events can in no wise contradict.

Let us well understand ourselves. The question concerns neither predictions, for which perspicacity is sufficient, neither those brought about by chance coincidences, nor those resulting from science. When the board of longitude announces an eclipse or the return of comets, it does not prophesy ; when a political experimentalist forebodes war, when an agri-

culturist foresees a bad harvest, he evidently does not divine ; these are conclusions drawn from known facts, in virtue of known laws governing the physical and moral world.

Quite different is the claim of sorcery. According to it, demons know the future, and reveal it to the men whose authority they are by their compacts obliged to obey. It is thus that at the present day, if we listen to M. de Mirville, certain clairvoyant somnambulists are the organs of a diabolical prophecy almost infallible ; it is thus that the spirits of the tables and the mediums never fail to see in advance, things which are to happen !

Nothing could be more decidedly in opposition to the doctrine constantly taught in the Scriptures, and which plainly condemns Dualism. M. de Mirville endeavors to divest his thoughts from this misfortune, and enumerates with complacency, proofs demonstrating that the predictions of sorcerers, of magnetized persons, or of mediums, have been repeatedly confirmed by the event. It is very certain that if the prophecies of magicians, the realization of which is authentically attested, were gathered together, they would fill a large volume. But we know how to estimate their testimony, and those thousands of marvellous divinations, related in the annals of the past, are not worth as much as the most insignificant real divination, the accomplishment of which we may ascertain for ourselves, as we may every day ascertain the accomplishment of the grand Biblical prophecy concerning the duration and dispersion of the Jewish people.

Instead of presenting us predictions already fulfilled, why not give us some for the next year or the next month ? Come, now, let your innumerable spirits set themselves at work. They might already have rendered us great service, if, in 1852, they had vouchsafed to announce the bad harvest of 1853 ; we could then have prepared for it accordingly. Let them make amends for this grievous forgetfulness ; let them write and publish in 1854 the history of 1855. Let them tell us in detail, month by month, day by day, the fortunate or

unfortunate events, or even the degrees of the barometer, the thermometer, or hygrometer at Paris. I do not ask them to *make* the weather (though that is doubtless in their power!); I am content, provided they prophesy.

Here is a fine opportunity for defending testimony against our blasphemies, and for proving that the historical prodigies have had more reality than our skepticism will acknowledge. Summon together your most capable spirits, your most infernal magnetizers, and by no means forget your *shepherds* (the hero of Cideville will, doubtless, be vastly useful); write the ephemerides I have suggested; deign to quit the past for the future, leave secrecy for publicity. This will be only a mere amusement for you. The predictions recorded in your works are much more minute in their details, much more astonishing. Those who see, in advance, all the accidents, great or small, of which my family circle is the theatre, can undoubtedly see, in advance, heat, rain, storms, and revolutions.

But, no; they prefer not to meddle in predictions that must have a certain date, and of which the public is to be the judge. They will continue to acquaint us, when it is too late, with the surprising prophecies that were current before such and such events. But, gentlemen! why wait so long? Let your predictions be known *beforehand*. We are foolish enough to insist that your prophecies shall precede, by some good months, the facts with which they are connected. We can thus compare the prediction with its realization, estimate the part of natural foresight, the part of casual coincidences, and see if anything remains for divination.

One thing that renders us suspicious (must we confess it), is, that your magicians do not make a fortune. We do not perceive that they speculate on 'change with any particular success, and yet they should make a sure game of it. The least we might expect of them would be to operate in stocks *on time*. The poor somnambulists place their clairvoyance at my service in exchange for a few crowns, but they neglect to make use of it themselves, when it might gain them a million! Can

this be from conscientious scruples? from a fear of abusing their superiority? I confess, I should be astonished at such a sentiment from the agents of the devil, and especially from the devil himself.

This, bear it in mind, reduces to a mere trifle, your best attested anecdotes, your predictions of the Middle Ages, and your cotemporary predictions, those of necromancers, and those of speaking tables, as well as those which your gravest historians have taken pains to transmit to us. A small pamphlet (if there were such a thing), published at the present time, and including all the events to take place next year between the 1st of January and the 31st of December, or even those of a single month, or a single day, would be of far more value in my eyes, than all your illustrious predictions with their necessary accompaniment of grand catastrophes and grand personages.

Pasquier relates that Catherine de Medicis, desirous of knowing if all her children should be kings, consulted a magician, who showed them to her, one after another, making as many turns round a circle as would be equivalent to the years of their reign. Cotemporary chroniclers tell us that a female necromancer predicted the fortune of Napoleon. The same woman foretold that Bernadotte would be king. I do not deny the truth of these assertions; but, again I say, I wish that they would prophesy the future to us, and that the predictions were not always made known only after the period of their pretended accomplishment.

To sum it all up, God alone knows the future, even as God alone restores the dead to life. The partisans of sorcery will never be able to cite either a resurrection or a diabolical prophecy that is really incontestable.

And herein has God manifested his goodness to us, by interdicting a knowledge of the future! Figure to yourselves what would be our life, if we could succeed in finding out that which to-morrow has in reservation for us, instead of surrendering ourselves as now, into the hands of our Heavenly Father, eating

our daily bread, and bearing in mind the great evangelical words : "Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof!" (*Matthew*, vi. 34.)

The Dualist character of the views I combat would not be completely realized if, after having attributed to Satan the power of governing our destinies, of protecting or troubling our lives, of suspending the application of natural laws, and of reading the future, they did not likewise attribute to him the power of disposing of our souls beyond the tomb.

Here again, the traditional theory of the devil undertakes to disprove the teachings of Scripture. It shows us the spirits of the dead evoked in the name of the demon, compelled to obey his orders and return upon earth. It is by thousands that the spirits of the dead are at the present time summoned to appear in America, and not only in America, but among us, do they come to answer the most impious as well as the most nonsensical questions !

The Bible itself utterly rejects such imaginings. "And I heard a voice from Heaven, saying unto me, Write, Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth : Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labors ; and their works do follow them." (*Revelations*, xiv. 13.) The First Epistle to the Thessalonians (iv. 14) also speaks to us of those "which sleep in Jesus." They are not then delivered up as playthings to the caprice of table turners, sorcerers, and demons. Enjoying that state of repose which separates death from the resurrection, and which, relatively to the body, not to the soul, is properly called sleep, the blessed have no connection either with the devil or any of his agents. They are already in possession of the happiness of which they cannot henceforth be deprived. Did not Jesus say to the thief on the cross : "To-day shalt thou be with me in Paradise?" (*Luke*, xxiii. 43.)

Our opponents will, perhaps, fall back upon the argument apparently furnished them by the condition of the wicked. "They,"

it may be said, "belong to the devil, and it is quite reasonable that he should have power to recall them to earth after their death, and interrogate them through the agency of magicians ! The Bible no more countenances such evocations than the preceding. Not only do we not see a single example of the kind in the Old or New Testament, but we see passages which cannot be reconciled with the exercise of such a power. The wicked rich man of the parable, being in hell, asks that "one from the dead," may go to his brethren "to testify unto them," and prevent them from also coming to this place of torment. He so well knows that he cannot himself go to them, that he entreats father Abraham to send one of the blessed—to send Lazarus. But what is Abraham's reply ? "They have Moses and the prophets ; let them hear them." The wicked rich man entreats in vain, saying : "Nay, father Abraham, but if one went unto them from the dead, they will repent." The fundamental principle is maintained ; God will never, under any form, permit revelations brought by the dead, to be added to the sufficient revelations contained in his Word: (*Luke*, xvi. 22 to 31.)

Judge, now, if it is possible, that there should be an atom of truth in the myriads of evocations and apparitions related in history ! What are we to think of those pretended souls who come one after another to furnish us details concerning life as it passes in the other world ? This one has been removed to Paradise by the power of an incantation, or by the motion of a magic wand. That one has been snatched from hell by a table put in rotation. Jesus Christ was, doubtless, ignorant of this perpetual going and coming established between the dead and the living, when he gave to his disciples the solemn instructions above mentioned, and which, although comprehended in a parable, must necessarily correspond to absolute truth.

The partisans of the apparitions have still a last resource in the witch of Endor. This story is their grand battle-steed. Does it not show us a magician, a real evocation ? A great

man, a saint, a prophet, is he not found to obey diabolical enchantments, and to return upon earth !

I have always admired the confidence with which they cite this example in support of their theory. Its isolated position in the Bible should, methinks, inspire some mistrust. That the dead should be at the discretion of the turn of a wand, and yet that the whole of Scripture should have recorded but one single instance of an apparition, seems to me a very strong reason for examining this instance with particular attention. The text is as follows :

“And when Saul inquired of the Lord, the Lord answered him not, neither by dreams, nor by Urim, nor by prophets. Then said Saul unto his servants, seek me a woman that hath a familiar spirit, that I may go to her, and inquire of her. And his servants said to him, Behold, there is a woman that hath a familiar spirit at Endor. And Saul disguised himself, and put on other raiment, and he went, and two men with him, and they came to the woman by night : and he said, I pray thee, divine unto me by the familiar spirit, and bring me him up, whom I shall name unto thee. And the woman said unto him, Behold, thou knowest what Saul hath done, how he hath cut off those that hath familiar spirits, and the wizards out of the land ; wherefore, then, layest thou a snare for my life, to cause me to die ? And Saul sware to her by the Lord, saying, As the Lord liveth, there shall no punishment happen to thee for this thing. Then said the woman, Whom shall I bring up unto thee ? And he said, Bring me up Samuel. And when the woman saw Samuel, she cried with a loud voice : and the woman spake to Saul, saying, Why hast thou deceived me ? for thou art Saul.” (*1 Samuel*, xxviii. 6, and *following verses*.)

“Why has thou deceived me ? Thou art Saul !” The exclamation is strange. The woman, then, did not expect to see anything appear. She was, doubtless, prepared to go through with her ordinary performances of ventriloquism. But before she had proceeded even as far as the incantation, she saw as

it were, a god rising out of the ground ; there was the old man Samuel, covered with his mantle ! In the terror caused by so unforeseen an event, she had not a moment for hesitation : her guest must be Saul, the king ; such a miracle could not have been performed, if not for him ; perhaps, moreover (and the woman's words seem to demand this hypothesis), perhaps it was known in Israel that Samuel would return upon earth to address a supreme warning to Saul. Be that as it may, it is certain that this woman, with a familiar spirit, did not act like a person accustomed really to "bringing up" the dead ; her success terrified her. When the apparition does come, it is quite a different thing from her miserable shams ; it is the finger of the Lord.

What a grand scene, indeed, and how consistent is it with the wisdom of our God ! A king, the first king of Israel, strays so far from the truth as to consult soothsayers ; he will be punished even through his sin. God permits Samuel to return for a moment upon the earth, in order that he may pronounce these terrible words : "Wherefore, then, dost thou ask of me, seeing the Lord is departed from thee, and is become thine enemy ? And the Lord hath done to him as he spake by me : for the Lord hath rent the kingdom out of thy hand, and given it to thy neighbor, even to David. . . . Moreover, the Lord will also deliver Israel with thee into the hand of the Philistines, and to-morrow shalt thou and thy sons be with me."

Remark that Samuel does not, for a moment, concern himself with the witch and her pretended enchantments. The will of God alone, influenced by the earnest desire of Saul, restored him to earth. It was the will of God, which, at a later period, also caused Moses and Elias to appear upon the Holy Mountain, in conversation with Jesus, on the occasion of his transfiguration. Saul alone, and not the witch, "disquieted" Samuel in his rest.

The partisans of the apparitions have introduced into this

story a multitude of things, which are not there ; a very sure method of finding them there afterwards. They suppose incantations that have not even been commenced ; they suppose a woman accustomed to apparitions of the dead, instead of a woman terrified at the first apparition she had ever witnessed ; they suppose some sort of a communication received by her, some advice given by Samuel, who informs her that her guest is none other than Saul. But this is not yet enough : they assume that it was the shade of Samuel, and not Samuel in person, who appeared that night ! They everywhere speak of the *shade* of Samuel. This is a received expression upon which they have built the theory of phantoms and ghosts.

Now, the text is positive. It makes not the slightest allusion to the shade of the prophet. Shades figure neither in this passage nor in any other passage of the Bible ; the prophet himself is come. It is important to make this observation, because the amateurs of apparitions, in general, take great pains to transform them into simple phantoms. They recoil before the revolting thought that the souls of the dead are really disquieted, and they believe they reconcile everything by declaring that their apparitions are only apparitions of shades . . . like that of Samuel.

According to those who take this ground, Jesus Christ's own words, when he shows himself to his disciples after the resurrection, should tend to confirm the belief in phantoms : "Handle me and see ; for a spirit hath not flesh and bones as ye see me have." The Apostles, in their turn, must have given this, or an analogous doctrine, a new sanction, when, refusing to credit the story of the servant Rhoda, who asserted that Peter had been delivered from prison, they replied : "It is his angel." (*Luke*, xxiv. 37-43 ; *Acts*, xii. 15.)

The explanation is very simple. In the second case, the Apostles speak like poor Galileans, who are still filled with prejudices on many questions, and whose ignorance, the moment they are abandoned to themselves, only all the more

strongly shows their infallibility when writing the books or letters which God destined for the canon.* In the first case, our Saviour is far from adopting a belief in phantoms. Seeing that his disciples, faithful in that respect to the ideas which reigned among the Jewish people, were obstinate in taking him for a spirit, he told them that a spirit has neither flesh nor bones. In what other manner ought he to have treated them? Ought he to have entered into a dissertation upon the non-existence of spirits? No, he had not time for all that; it was necessary to prove to them that their opinion, false or true, was at all events, inapplicable. This was the course adopted by Jesus; this is the course adopted every day by each one of us. If one of your friends, meeting you of an evening in a lonely cemetery, should imagine you to be a ghost, surely you would not stop to demonstrate to him that by *a* plus *b*, the dead do not return to earth; you would say to him: "Take my hand, look at my face, listen to my voice, and see if I am a phantom." This language is natural, legitimate, and affords not the slightest evidence of any compromise with error.

The dead do not return to earth, I have said, and in corroboration of this assertion, I might content myself with an appeal to the good sense and consciences of my readers. But I prefer to present them the proof, *par excellence*: the declarations of Scripture. It can, moreover, have escaped no one's observation that the mission of the apparitions, with which the books are filled, is frequently of a sacrilegious puerility. Do they come to warn souls, to divert them, to lead them back to God; in one word, to fulfill the mission which the wicked rich

* The error of the Apostles does not here consist in speaking of the angel of Peter, any more than in the other case, it consists in supposing the existence of spirits. It is indeed written: "Take heed that ye despise not one of these little ones: for I say unto you, that in heaven their angels do always behold the face of my Father which is in heaven." The little ones (that is to say the disciples and not children), have angels, then, who minister unto them. These same angels are called spirits, "ministering spirits" (*Matthew*, xviii. 10, and *Hebrews* i. 14). The error of the Apostles consists in supposing the existence of phantom angels and phantom spirits, who represent absent or dead persons.

man would have confided to Lazarus? By no means. They come to show themselves, to answer the questions of an impious curiosity!

For want of a serious message to bring, are they perhaps impelled by the affection which unites them to the persons they visit? Whence comes it then, that the beings most tenderly loved seldom reappear, and that persons with whom we were in this world on the most indifferent terms, usually figure in these *rendezvous*? The moral objection here, is certainly very strong, and I can fully understand that Augustine should have found the fact that his mother had never reappeared to him, a sufficient reason for suspecting all apparitions.

Apparitions, besides, are borrowed from Pagan antiquity, and they are by no means all we have borrowed. Consult Iamblichus, he will tell you how to proceed in order to evoke the dead, what herbs, what perfumes, what formulas are made use of in the operation. Long before Iamblichus, Homer shows us the soothsayer, Tiresias, preparing a ditch full of blood, wherewith to call up the manes of the departed. In Eschylus, the soul of Darius is evoked, and comes to declare to the queen Atossa, all the misfortunes that threaten her. Virgil, in his turn, describes these dismal ceremonies, and Horace makes allusion to them in the Satires. The necromancers spoken of by Lucanus have even in those days, all the skill of their successors of the Middle Ages; in order to make a dead man appear, they use magically one of his bones. This is the very spirit of Paganism. To it alone belongs the honor of having invented so many erring and pitiful souls, so many manes out of employment, so many diabolical practices.

I can understand why, in view of this general and increasing invasion of Paganism, Salvian should have mournfully exclaimed: The devil is everywhere, "*ubique dæmon*." All dualism in fact, sums itself up in a veritable religion of the devil, in a doctrine wherein an ignoble fear of the devil plays a prepon-

derating part. It is one of the signs which most profoundly distinguish traditional from Biblical Christianity.

There is a fear of the devil which every Christian experiences; I mean the fear of yielding to his temptations, and of being separated by him from the love of Christ. But there is a disgusting, shameful, degrading, anti-evangelical fear of the devil, which reigned almost alone during the whole of the Middle Ages. This fear of the devil does not drive us into the arms of the Saviour; it makes us seek a good director; it multiplies formulas; it dictates the pious legacies destined to preserve the soul from the torments of hell. The religious idea with which it is connected, reposes entirely on the intrinsic efficacy of material acts. As Satan makes sure of souls by a signature affixed to the fatal parchment, whoever has not signed need give himself no uneasiness, provided he is in other respects according to rule as regards the sacraments. It is impossible more completely to overthrow the good news of salvation by faith, or more openly to contradict the glorious words of our Saviour: "You must be born again."

In what sense did they fear the devil, those men who enriched churches and convents with their magnificent donations, those crusaders, those penitents, all those people, indeed, who were in the habit of combating prodigies of sorcery by prodigies of exorcism. Those wretched unbelievers of the 18th century, whose deathbeds offered no other consolation than the remembrance of a demon armed with pitch-forks and commissioned to punish them, in what sense did they fear the devil? Begin with the Duchess de Berri, daughter of the regent, and end with Voltaire; you will shudder as you discover to what fundamental elements, to what vulgar and ineradicable notions, Christianity was in all minds reduced!

It was not with impunity that so many hundred years had been passed in transforming great men into magicians, and sorcerers into supreme directors of the affairs of this world. After having divided its sovereignty between God and Satan, the majority of mankind could see nothing but the kingdom of

Satan. Satan became a dreaded, but a real divinity. Fearful adoration of wicked gods is more natural to man than is generally supposed, and the *yezidis* have always been abundant among us. To appease Satan, to avoid the wrath of Satan, to flee from the tricks and evil practices of Satan, such was the predominant religious idea. The imaginations of men found their most interesting occupation in enumerating and describing the diabolical hierarchy. Some represented it as being composed of one emperor, Beelzebub ; seven kings, Baal, Pursan, Byleth, Paymon, Belial, Asmodeus, Zapan ; twenty-three dukes ; ten counts ; eleven presidents ; several hundred knights ; six thousand, six hundred and sixty-six legions, each containing six thousand, six hundred and sixty-six devils ; making in all, forty-four millions, four hundred and thirty-five thousand, six hundred and sixty devils. Others reckoned differently, taking the number six as the cabalistic multiplier : thus they ranked among the spirits of darkness, seventy-two princes (6×12) and seven millions, four hundred and five thousand, nine hundred and twenty-six demons ($1,234,321 \times 6$.) M. Louandre, from whom I derive these details, remarks that, right or wrong, this last sum presents the four numbers that constitute the Tetractys of Pythagoras and Plato.

Bewildered in presence of such a multitude of enemies, the intellect finally lost sight of God's loving kindness and the real nature of Satan. The Middle Ages with their Paganism, self-styled Christian, their materialism, self-styled religious, with their salvation by means of ceremonies, no longer knew, it may be said, either the devil or the Saviour. The devil in those days, appeared to everybody, not as a tempter but as an agent of divine justice. A devil whose miraculous power is incessantly exercised in our midst, who carries off the damned to hell, where he eternally torments them ; this is the image that troubled the lives of men and filled their last moments with anguish. The devil, the chastiser, was substituted for the devil, the tempter. They feared punishment rather than sin. The fear of sin itself never assumed that character of filial appre-

hension assigned to it in the gospel ; their feeling was the very opposite of the grief experienced by one of the redeemed who knows that by faith he belongs to Christ, and who pardons nothing in himself, because God has pardoned everything.

In the Pagan reaction against Christianity, the world has gone back to the hell of Pluto, of Charon, and of Cerberus. The hell of Dante, the really popular hell, is a certain place where the power of the devils is exercised in tormenting, as it is also exercised in gaining possession of the earth ; where, armed with pitchforks, they relentlessly hunt the damned.

First, possession, then punishment, these are the two sides of the part attributed to Satan ; temptation, so to speak, has disappeared. It has disappeared with the real sovereignty of God, and the worship in spirit and in truth. Material Dualism, which so long prevailed, and which still prevails in many places, could not have a truer expression than this particularly ignoble sentiment, in my opinion, most appropriately named the fear of the devil.

The Dualism of traditional belief manifests still another sign. In the conflict between divine miracles and diabolical prodigies, we hardly know how to distinguish one from the other. The two supernaturals are continually confounded.

We shall be told, indeed, that extraordinary facts are of God, when they are produced in the name of the Church, and that they are of the devil when produced by the hand of heretics. The crusader who passes through the flames, holding in his hand the true spear, performs a miracle ; the Protestant Cevenol who passes through the flames singing a psalm, achieves a work of Satan.

This is a convenient mode of reasoning, nay, almost too convenient. " We will show," wrote, in 1833, the anonymous author of *la Religion constatée universellement*, " we will show that it may be ascertained from which of the two classes of superhuman spirits, an event of this sort emanates. The one being

composed of spirits of truth and virtue, the other of spirits of imposture and vice, we must, in all supernatural phenomena, consider the moral aspect of the fact. We must examine the character and doctrines of the person whose invocations have obtained this fact, the end for which it was performed, the effects it has produced : in one word, all the circumstances morally significative." (19, 20.) The Marquis de Mirville, who has reproduced the doctrines and often the reasoning of the work from which I have just quoted, adopts the same rule. In speaking of the supernatural acts attributed to the Camisards, he thus expresses himself : " Misson saw *prodigies* and he converted them into *miracles*." In speaking of the supernatural acts attributed to the Jansenists, he likewise refuses to them a miraculous character. When he comes to the history of Joan d'Arc, he experiences no little embarrassment ; on the one hand, the fairy tree is no longer in fashion, and the clergy has in the main, condemned all attempts to cast its entire responsibility on the shoulders of the Bishop of Beauvais ; on the other hand, it is scarcely possible to transform the liberator of France into a sorceress. What is to be done ? M. de Mirville recalls to mind that the devils at Loudun were forced to labor for the conversion of sinners. Why should not Joan d'Arc's devils have been employed, in spite of themselves, in a work not less excellent ? " We will never consent to rank among our enemies such kind and faithful *voices*, and if the *fairy tree* were of any account, not only in the inspirations of Joan d'Arc, but in the transmission of these influences, instead of giving to this fortunate tree the foliage and color of the trees of Dodona, we should rather represent it to ourselves under the august and sacred forms of the old oaks of Mambré. Such, then, would be our conclusion in regard to Joan d'Arc : *God first, and before everything else his compassion for France* ; then the ordinary instruments of her inspirations, either spirits or saints, and lastly these spirits served in their turn, perhaps, by unknown, endemic, elementary and local influences"

This was a capital method of getting over the difficulty.

The endemic influences, elementary and local, may be what they will, diabolical if necessary, as the prelates and pious men who condemn the heroine seem to think. What matters it whether these devils were enlisted in the cause like those of Loudun, or whether it be proved that Joan "found her inspiration under the fairy tree!"

Endemic influences have, besides, many other manifestations, and it is always quite difficult to decide whether they are Satanic or Divine. Nevertheless, M. de Mirville will insist upon attributing to the devil, those exercised by the greater number of magnetizers, by all the table turners and all the mediums. With still stronger reason he will rank in the same class, the ecstasies of the Swedish Protestants. And, as regards the innumerable miracles of ancient and modern Paganism, that is a matter of course. (133, 141, 183, 205, 214 to 218, 239, 240, 245.)

The difficulty begins in cases where the orthodoxy of the performers of prodigies hardly permits them to apply the summary judgment to which heretics have a right. The divining wand, which is unquestionably diabolical in the hands of Aymar and his confederates, will it become divine in the hands of the numerous clergy who have piously made it turn? The most extraordinary (and in my opinion, the most apocryphal) works of Animal Magnetism, will they pass out of the category of Satanic prodigies to that of divine miracles, when the godly company of Avignon shall have accomplished them?

So long as the illuminated magnetizers operate in heretical countries, in Germany, in Sweden especially, they are instruments of the devil, although they fancy that they call down upon the sick, the action of angels, and drive away that of demons. I willingly abandon them to M. de Mirville, for I reject, with all the power of my Christian faith, revelations furnished in a state of ecstasy, or confirmed by the insensate writings of a Swedenborg. But now, we have Catholic associations engrafted on the Stockholm revelation; that of Paris, presided over by the Duchess of Bourbon; that of Lyons, and

finally, that of Avignon. They all perform admirable prodigies. Is it still the power of the great adversary?

M. de Maistre, who possesses all the necessary audacity, has not hesitated to draw up an answer, which is generally made use of by the school of the marvellous at the present day. According to him, there are two kinds of illuminism, the bad and the good, the diabolical and the divine. "To him," writes M. de Mirville, "illuminism was the initiation, or entrance upon this road, simple at first, but soon branching out into two paths, one good, one bad, one strewn with flowers, the other studded with rocks."

By these means, to which it frequently becomes necessary to resort, they succeed in sheltering the Catholic theosophists from the anathemas thundered in the ears of the other illuminated magnetizers. Do they not commence their sittings with prayer? Do they not sing the *Veni Creator*? Do they not invoke the virgin and the saints, and if they afterwards address themselves "to the soul of the world," "to the fluid Creator," ought we not to pardon them these appeals, which are looked upon as fool-hardy when made beyond the pale of the church, and in an unconsecrated form?

The intelligent sincerity of M. de Mirville is, however, subjected to a trying ordeal when he attempts to place the miracles of Avignon in a privileged category. He contents himself with not condemning them, and that is something. "If you ask us," he writes, "what are our conclusions and our personal opinion on this last spiritualist magnetism, we answer you once more, that not being at present prepared to judge of ordinary magnetism, we shall not pretend to judge magnetism that is ultra-spiritualist. . . . If the Church should ever condescend to answer the reiterated appeals for a doctrinal judgment on these matters, nowhere will she be able to find more important materials, principles at heart more truly Catholic, and especially, in case of need, an author better disposed respectfully to accept censure or approbation." (297 to 311.)

There is still, then, neither censure nor approbation. In

regard to ordinary magnetism, M. de Mirville deludes himself if he imagines he has not classed it with sorcery and knocking spirits ; that is to say, in the category of the diabolical. And yet the confusion is so great, the works of Satan and those of God so strongly resemble each other in the eyes of the material Dualist, that we see M. de Mirville himself successfully practising magnetism, in which he is doubtless assisted by fallen angels ! (278, 279.)

It is impossible completely to disentangle the two supernaturals. I have already instanced sanctimonious sorcerers as well as saints who meddled with the diabolical. It would be easy to multiply these examples. M. Calmeil (vol. i. p. 232) speaks of a young girl of Salamanca, who, at the commencement of the 16th century, caused much embarrassment to the King of Spain, the Pope, and the Inquisition. Was she a saint ? Was she possessed ? No one could tell. They spent a long time in investigating the matter, and finally let the proceedings drop. The Church had not light enough to distinguish between the action of God and that of Satan. It thus became certain that she continually saw Jesus and the Virgin, that she spoke to them, that whenever she was about to pass through doors she paused and stepped aside, as if to yield precedence to some one with her, assuring the people as she did so, that Mary was entreating her, as the spouse of God, her son, to enter first ! She was frequently in a trance state ; she performed miracles, and continued to perform them, to the great satisfaction of the Spanish people.

The example of Madeleine of the Cross, is, in this relation, perhaps, still more striking. In her case, the work of God and that of the devil are, by her own confession, blended. From the age of five years, the demon presents himself to her under the form of Jesus crucified ; he commands her to crucify the flesh, and she obeys. When she is seven years old, the demon conveys her to a grotto, where he makes her embrace the life of a hermit. He takes her for his betrothed, for he always preserves the form of the Saviour. He surrounds her

with devils, who are disguised as happy spirits. But, ere long, she makes a formal compact with a fallen cherub, Balban, whom she knows for what he really is ; he places her as abbess over the convent at Cordova, endows her with the power of travelling through the air, and she, in recompense, furnishes him the means of also passing for a saint. It all winds up with an exorcism, and an imprisonment ; but the signs of possession and the signs of holiness so closely resemble each other, that during long years of her compact with Balban, she is never regarded otherwise than as a devotee.' Her miracles were everywhere spoken of ; the people, the kings, the inquisitors, and the Pope's legates themselves, humbly implored her benediction. She blessed the swaddling clothes of Philip II.

If one possessed by a devil could, during half a century, pass for a saint, does it not seem reasonable that others, equally possessed, who, in divers places have done injury to their magician, and attempted to break his neck, should also be considered as saints ? The indignation that the devils of Loudun manifested against the devil, is but little calculated to put an end to the confusion of which we complain.

This confusion is everywhere. Historians admit that sometimes the power of the demons, sometimes the power of God is manifested in the trial of red hot iron. They remark, that the trial of floating cannot be relied on, because the devil meddles in it. If many persons are cured by divine interposition, are not some also cured by superstitious secrets ? Observe the pious ceremonies to which the first turners of the wand had recourse ; compare them with the magical processes which others, at a later day, employ, and tell us if the success does not seem to come, sometimes from Heaven, sometimes from Hell !

The good father Lebrun undertakes to avoid this dilemma, by the theory of implied compacts. He instances ecclesiastics, and other godly men, who, ignoring their covenants with Satan, are successful in making the wand turn. He *naïvely* relates to us accounts of various persons, who, having renounced the devil, and made the sign of the cross, were immediately endowed with

the power of turning the wand, or moving the ring. One of his stories is as follows :

“ Cardinal Cajetan, one day, performed an experiment with a view of breaking, for the benefit of the faithful, diabolical compacts. The cardinal says, that having taken a ring attached to a thread, he protested that his intention in repeating the verse prescribed on such occasions, was not to move the ring, according to the covenant with Satan, but to praise God, according to the design of the Psalmist. And, indeed, he added, having recited the verse, the ring which he held suspended in the glass did not stir.” (*Histoire critique des pratiques superstitieuses*, iii. 447.)

The explanation of this fact is, to our minds, very simple, for we already know enough of mixed phenomena to comprehend their absolute cessation from the moment the confident and energetic will is withdrawn. Be that as it may, the spectacle is a very curious one ; the two supernaturals are so imperfectly distinguished from each other, that multitudes of intelligent and pious men have for ages persisted in a classification forever impossible. There has always been great danger that the diabolical would be mistaken for the divine ; a just punishment of Dualism ! Is it possible that any one can really desire mankind to become familiarized with the idea that the devil effects cures, that the devil delivers from the devil, that the devil preaches up conversion ?

No one has clearly defined the limits of the rival sovereignties and their prodigies, which are in every respect similar. Neither has any one decided if the revelations of the spirits are true or false. Upon this point, as upon all the others, we are left in the most complete doubt. M. de Mirville alone seems to admit the almost invariable truth of the diabolical prophecies, since he constantly appeals to their perfect realization. But, generally speaking, the advocates of the supernatural are not so wise ; they abandon us, bewildered in presence of miraculous action, perhaps celestial, perhaps infernal ; in presence of predictions, perhaps false, perhaps true.

And the necessary consequence is, that side by side with a great fear of the devil, we possess a great indifference to him. This adversary, so puerile and at the same time so powerful, whose contagious touch cannot be avoided, and whose acts are confounded with those of the Creator, certainly does not inspire us with so profound a moral repugnance as the real Satan excites. We do not wish to suffer through him upon earth, or to be tormented by him in eternity ; but his empire is not sufficiently distinct for us to realize how immensely important it is that we should never venture within its boundaries.

We are becoming entirely familiarized with the devil of tradition. I need no better proof of this than the manner in which his name is used in conversation. Not only do we constantly speak of the devil without having any serious thoughts awakened in the depths of our hearts, but the personage of the devil figures in the plays of the theatre ; *Faust*, *Robert le Diable*, *le Freyschutz*, for instance.

What does that signify ? That the real devil has managed to make himself forgotten ; that, not content with having introduced a false Christ upon earth, he has also introduced a false Satan. And the second lie is only a proper complement of the first. To a redemption which is the magical effect of baptism, to a participation in the worship of a certain church and the performance of certain rites, corresponds a diabolical action which is no longer moral temptation, but a material possession produced by a miasmatic epidemic, and by contact ; or, it is rather perdition consented to by contract. The apostles proclaimed the love of God, the glorious liberty of Christ's redeemed, the voluntary and eager obedience of all those who should embrace the gratuitous pardon offered to faith ; tradition has substituted for these teachings, the most odious and the most degrading of sentiments : the fear of receiving punishment at the hands of the devil. The Gospel says : " Resist the devil, and he will flee from you." Tradition says : " Deliver yourselves by mechanical means and by formulas, from an enemy who attacks you with similar weapons."

What an idea of Christianity, and how far are we from its serene light ! What can supply the place of its holy faith, and its sanctifying fear ? Ah ! let our hearts once more render their allegiance to Him who bruised the head of the serpent, and who will soon return to claim a last victory. Let us seek of Him power to resist Satan, the Satan of the Bible, and not the Satan of magic or fluids, who brings down the hail, presides at the *sabbat*, and shows himself to men under the form of a goat, or a black cat with horns.

Men complain of materialism and pantheism ; they denounce those who do not believe in the supernatural ; they lament, and with reason, over the incredulity of an age which laughs at the devil, and classes him among the *bogies* ; they eloquently describe a malady only too real : and what remedy do they propose by way of cure ? A return to the sorceries of the Middle Ages, to apparitions, to ridiculous demons ! They fancy that the old materialism will cure the modern materialism ! They fancy that Dualism will lead the world back to God !

When I ask myself, what has been the origin of all these anti-Christian notions that have so profoundly corrupted the heart, and engendered, nay, almost justified, infidelity, I find, first of all, the natural tendencies of fallen man, of the obstinately Pagan man, who, supporting neither the grandeur, spirituality, nor sovereignty of the God of the Bible, still less maintains the idea of a temptation purely moral, and of a struggle which has no other theatre than the heart. But how has rebellious man been able to satisfy his desire to substitute superstitions stamped with puerility, materialism, and Dualism in place of the truth, without openly breaking with divine revelation ? By the side of this revelation he has placed Jewish and Christian traditions ; by the side of the Holy Books he has placed the Apocrypha, and it is in it we discover the origin of every one of the doctrines we combat, and which are in express terms condemned by the Bible.

It was, moreover, to be expected that, before dipping into Apocrypha, and into traditions, men should have sought in the Bible, itself, some pretext for the new creeds. Two or three gross misinterpretations have furnished these pretexts. I have already referred to the transformation of Magi into magicians, and all men called diviners into real diviners—into sorcerers armed with power to effect prodigies. To these I will add the passages in which Hosea and other prophets speak of *wood*, of *consulting wood*, and in which the partisans of the supernatural endeavor to discover something else than a mere allusion to Pagan idols, or to the wands of the pretended sorcerers. If Scripture could not name wood without attributing to it a real power, and without supposing it the fluid habitation of evil spirits, it is also evident that it could not employ this expression: "Ahab did sell himself to work wickedness in the sight of the Lord," without admitting the reality of compacts with Satan. The expression, "Ahab did sell himself," doubtless implies that he signed a compact!

The famous legend on the union of angels with women, may also be noticed in this connection. To how many fables has it given rise, and what a capital opportunity does it afford for introducing extraordinary beings among us! And yet the text in Genesis (vi. 2), is as simple and as clear as possible. "The sons of God saw the daughters of men that they were fair; and they took them wives of all which they chose." Now, let it be observed, that the preceding chapters are particularly devoted to two enumerations; the fifth chapter enumerates the sons of God, the faithful race whose father was Seth, and of whom it is said: "Then began men to call upon the name of the Lord;" the fourth chapter enumerates the sons of men, the race sprung from Cain. So long as these two races remained distinct, there was hope; but as soon as the sons of God began to take their wives from among the unbelievers, the great punishment became necessary, and the deluge was announced.

This is all that the partisans of the false supernatural, even

by perverting the natural sense of the passages, have been able to find in the Bible ; and, it must be confessed, it is not much. They have felt the necessity of another basis ; it has been furnished by Apocrypha, and traditions.

The devil of the Middle Ages makes his appearance as early as the book of Tobit. He strangles the seven first husbands of Sarah, which is sufficient evidence of his power to dispose of the life of men. The world was then familiar with Asmodeus, the voluptuous demon, a true type of the Satan who presides at the *sabbat*. It was equally familiar with the material processes whereby to preserve one's self from the devil ; the angel Raphael instructed Tobias to put the heart of a fish on burning coals, assuring him that the smoke therefrom would drive out all sorts of devils.

Tradition could not fail to complete what the Apocrypha had so well commenced. First, consulting Jewish tradition, we shall see the Cabala to be composed of magic formulas, which were combinations of letters, or numbers ; we shall see the Rabbis evoke angels, or the souls of the dead, just as sorcery, at a later period, evokes demons. The processes differ but little ; they are formulas, prayers endowed with a special virtue, skulls taken from a cemetery, and placed in the midst of a cloud of incense. The Rabbins assert, that the patriarchs, prophets, and ancient kings showed themselves on the mountain of Garizim. They affirm that the genii of the mountains were creatures whom God had left imperfect on Friday evening, and whom he was not able to finish before the day of the *sabbat* !

In fact, what do we not read in Rabbinnical tradition ! We there see Adam married for the first time to a sorceress named Lilith, who is mother of the devils. This vixen (see *Calmeil*, 1-142) refused to submit to the will of her spouse. The counsel transmitted to her from God, by the angels, did not change her resolution. Finally, one day, after having invoked the name of Jehovah, conformably to the rules of the Cabala, she took flight and disappeared in the air. Lilith, or the

sorceress, was the bugbear of the Jews. If children were decimated by an epidemic, the people said it was Lilith, transformed into an ærial spectre, who put them to death. The elders of the synagogue confirmed the opinion of the people on this point. Women recently delivered, likewise took pains to have inscribed on the interior walls of their habitation, the names of three angels reputed favorable to infancy. They even caused to be written on the outside of the house, the names of Adam and Eve, adding the words : "Begone, Lilith !" The earth was, besides, peopled with sorcerers affiliated to the sect of Lilith ; they were continually prowling about in the silence of night, visiting families by stealth, caressing children, and putting a finishing stroke to the tender demonstration, by stifling them.

The Talmud speaks not only of Lilith, it also describes lamias with bodies of serpents, and lamias, the type of our vampires. It contained, then, all the principal elements of the diabolical supernatural which was, at a later day, more fully developed. That which Jewish tradition had sketched, Christian tradition conducted to perfection.

In the second century, the *Pastor* of Hermas,* metamorphosed our good and bad instincts into so many spirits, seeking to entrap us. The *Clementines* present us a whole series of diabolical revealers confronting a whole series of the prophets ; Eve is at the head of this infernal revelation ! Shortly afterwards, appear possessions and the magical contagion which delivers bodies and souls over to the devil. The legend of Simon the magician, is followed by a multitude of others ; the Fathers of the 3d and 4th centuries vie with each other in opening the door to Satanic prodigies ; they live in an atmosphere of the supernatural, not in that which supposes the continual action of the God who converts, who cures, and who hears prayers, but

* Hermas was a Christian who lived in the 1st century, supposed to be a disciple of Paul, and an inhabitant of Rome. His work, "The Pastor," is one of the oldest monuments of Christianity. It is divided into three parts : Visions, Precepts and Similitudes. — *Trans.*

in that of miracles, properly so called, signs, wonders evidently irreconcilable with the laws of the physical world, wonders which the Christians accomplish against Satan, which Satan accomplishes against the Christians. From this time, it is acknowledged that the demons everywhere display a power of which they already gave proofs during the reign of Paganism, inspiring the oracles, governing the flight of birds, and insinuating themselves into the entrails of their victims. The car is fairly started, it will roll to the bottom of the hill, and no one will dream of stopping it. Did not Gerson himself demand that a severe punishment should be inflicted upon those who, in his days, threw suspicion on the prodigies of Satan !

Here I pause. I have sufficiently indicated the origin of these follies, and I cannot better terminate this long chapter than by inviting the reader to reflect on the fundamental and unreserved opposition I have just pointed out between the Satan of tradition and the Satan of Scripture. I trust he will not rest satisfied with the conclusion that his duty consists only in spurning this hideous mass of superstition not less odious than childish ; he must take a step further and make up his mind that revealed religion is incomparably beautiful.

It is truly admirable thus to follow its course from age to age. On its right and on its left, under the flag of the enemy, and under its own banner, a multitude of gross errors is in movement ; Paganism, apocryphal books, Jewish and Christian tradition, one cannot tell to which belongs the palm of absurdity. Philosophy succeeds no better ; the powers of magic, the soul of the world, all play their part in the most brilliant systems. Socrates has his familiar demon, the Neoplatonicians finish with ecstasies, while the Unitarian philosophers of the 19th century invent the spirits of the Turning Tables. Now, in the midst of these successive follies, the Biblical writers pursue their long career of fifteen hundred years ; they pass through the enlightened ages and the dark ages ; they write in Arabia, in Judea, in Babylonia, in Greece or in Rome ; and yet in these situations so diverse, these men, themselves so diverse,

deviate not a single instant from the royal road, from the straight and heavenly road ; from Genesis to the Apocalypse, from Moses to John, not a false idea, not a superstition steals into the sacred pages. Angels, demons, divine holiness and human perversity, the merciful way of salvation, the heavenly or diabolical supernatural—all are displayed and successively revealed—nothing is modified, nothing contradicts itself.

In presence of such a spectacle, surely the smallest tribute we can pay is a moment's meditation.

CHAPTER VI.

NATURAL EXPLANATION OF THE PRETENDED SUPERNATURAL.

For many of my readers who have followed me thus far, the question is now solved. What we have said of testimony, and especially, what we have said of the Bible, has, without doubt, appeared to their minds as decisive. Compelled to choose between the supernatural of the Scriptures, and the supernatural they are called upon to admit on the testimony of a multitude of witnesses, not knowing any means of reconciling two facts, which, on all points, contradict and exclude each other, they do not hesitate to declare that the proofs of Christianity are, to their eyes, a little stronger than those of sorcery.

But, by stopping here, shall we have attained the end we proposed to ourselves at the commencement of our work? I think not. The Bible is an argument for such persons only as believe in it, and even they have the right to demand a complete demonstration. So long as there shall remain one important consideration to present, my duty is not accomplished. It is not, certainly, in an age like ours, and in a discussion like this, that we are permitted to pause before the inconvenience of having too many reasons. Now, there is one side of the problem upon which we have not yet touched; if we reject the supernatural explanation of the strange phenomena related by history, and even now produced in our very midst, do we possess any natural explanation sufficient to account for them?

This explanation exists, and my next step will be to point it out.

When we place ourselves in presence of the immense number of extraordinary facts that are certified by ancient and cotemporary testimony, we easily discover that a large portion of these facts finds its explanation in fraud, on the one hand, and in credulity, on the other. But it is not on this first part, considerable though it be, that I would now dwell ; the reader will anticipate my thought, and I have no time to spend in explanations, with which everybody is already familiar.

It is only after deducting the fraud, properly so called, and the gross errors, that we encounter the true difficulty. There are still very numerous facts which are sincerely affirmed, and which cannot but have a reality, either objective or subjective ; and in respect to them, in general, is shown the insufficiency of the solutions which it is customary for those to indicate, who reject the supernatural. A single principle can no more account for all these phenomena, than a single remedy can cure all diseases. I am well aware that medical science has often pursued the chimera of a universal remedy ; this would be convenient, and a universal explanation of the prodigious phenomena would be equally so. Unfortunately we are not to concern ourselves with what is convenient : we are to seek the truth.

Let us attempt, for example, to explain all the phenomenal facts by recourse to nervous excitement ! we shall not succeed. Nevertheless, nervous excitement accounts for a great number of them ; it calls forth prodigies in the way of strength, dexterity, insensibility, of physical and intellectual development.

Let us next attempt to explain all these facts by the action of certain fluids ! we shall succeed no better. Yet the fluids are one step further towards the complete solution, for they account for various phenomena otherwise absolutely incomprehensible, in particular those of Animal Magnetism and Turning Tables. They also furnish us the cue to many mysterious accidents related in the histories of sorcery and possessions.

And lastly, let us try to explain all the facts by hallucination in its different degrees: hallucination of one of the senses only, or hallucination of all, individual hallucination, or collective hallucination! We shall prove too much and too little; we shall shoot beyond the mark, which is as bad as to fall short of it. No one can be persuaded into the belief that hallucination has universally and exclusively prevailed during so many ages. Nevertheless, hallucination accounts for many strange things. It has played and still plays a *rôle* far more important than is generally supposed; the greater portion of the prodigies recounted to us, the confessions of sorcerers, the music that is heard, even the lights that are at the present day to be seen, seem to be so many hallucinations.

This it shall be our aim to demonstrate. And here, the plan of this chapter, the object of which is to prove that natural and sufficient explanations are not wanting in regard to the so-called supernatural phenomena, properly unfolds itself. It is as follows: first, to point out the part of fraud and gross credulity; then, to consider successively the parts of nervous excitement, fluid action, and hallucination, showing that the effects produced by them, are precisely those which constitute the marvellous.

In the special chapters reserved to the various manifestations of the supernatural apocrypha, I shall complete my solution by a consideration of the particular application of the principles which I now merely indicate.

In the first place, let us remove from the question everything which has no serious bearing upon it. An ignorant credulity and a more or less intelligent fraud, account for many of the facts. It is even probable that we do not make their number large enough. Unacquainted with the real circumstances of the events, we are liable to discover prodigies that would rapidly disappear, were we fully cognizant of the facts. I remember that during my travels in the East, as I was returning to Cairo

from an excursion into Nubia, nothing was talked of but the miracle of the Dosch, which had just taken place according to custom, in celebration of the birth of Mahomet ; the horse, bearing his devout cavalier, had effected his passage by crushing beneath his feet the Fellahs couched close together on the ground. I was injudicious enough to inquire into the matter, and was determined to know if the assertion were really true, that the faithful in no way felt the consequences of their devotion. I learned that there were dead and dying, that the ceremony had terminated in blood, that those who officiated in it had used all possible haste in carrying off their victims and stifling their howls of pain ; I learned besides that it was always thus.

Yet this result, be it understood, does not prevent the miracle from succeeding every year, nor does it have any effect upon the numerous witnesses, who, transported by enthusiasm, hold themselves ready to make oath to it. Mentioning this example from my own experience, I would appeal to the personal memory of each reader. Who of us has not a stock of fanciful and well attested anecdotes, of which he does not believe the first word ? We have all heard of the beast of the Cevennes that did so much mischief to the patrols of the guard, about the commencement of the Restoration ; we are told that it devoured women, taking care to remove the pins which fastened their clothes ; just the material for a capital legend or a good bit of witchcraft ! We skeptics are satisfied with a laugh, and we do well.

It is not necessary to be a great philosopher to comprehend that, predisposed as human nature is to the marvellous, the seeds of which are nourished and become deeply rooted in the heart of youth by stories of nurses and other nonsense taught the infant in the cradle, man rarely fails to imagine a supernatural cause wherever the natural cause, from lack of sufficient investigations, does not clearly appear. Fraud, moreover, has played an extensive part in the production of wonders. I have cited several proofs of it ; but the most illustrious example of

all, the pretended possession of the Ursulines of Loudun, and the judicial assassination of Grandier yet remains to be noticed; I shall speak of it in another chapter. In the meantime, before entering upon a careful investigation of the subject proposed in this, I would offer two or three curious anecdotes which seem to show, that independently of the religious interest which in all times and in all countries has been the great fabricator of prodigies, other interests have also been at work in this deplorable forgery—that pure accident or simple jest even, have no small share in it.

Erasmus, in one of his letters, relates the adventure of a man, who, wishing to frighten his niece, disgust her with the world, and induce her to retire into a convent, conceived the idea of disguising himself as a ghost and thus entering her chamber. The niece had her suspicions; she resorted, not to exorcisms, but to the protection of a stout cudgel, handled by a vigorous arm; the pretended phantom soon had enough of it, and implored her pardon.

The father Lebrun relates a story which differs from the preceding only in the morality of the actors. This time it is a father who wishes to turn his son from the bad course of life he is leading. The tapestry of the chamber is cut, and a spectre secretly introduces himself through it while the young man is reading. Suddenly, a voice sounds in his ear: "Amend your ways! Amend your ways!" He did amend his ways, it is said, but he might also have become a madman; the father assuredly played a hazardous game.

Listen again to these two stories taken from the same author.

"A domestic living in a house in *la rue Saint Victor*, having been sent down into the cellar, rushed out of it in great terror, declaring that she had just seen a ghost between two of the casks. Of course, she was laughed at. Two or three of the more courageous members of the family then went down into the cellar, but they came back as speedily and as much terrified as the poor domestic. Immediately, the report spread in every direction that there was a ghost in the cellar, and more

than twenty witnesses *de visu* were to be found who testified to the truth of the story. Such strong testimony was well calculated to perplex ignorant and credulous minds, yet it was all the effect of chance and human weakness. The cart belonging to l'Hotel Dieu having been overturned near the house where it was said the ghost had appeared, the bodies it contained were thrown out on the pavement, and one of them falling through a hole into the cellar, was lodged between the casks, where it remained in an upright position. Hence the mistake and consequent panic."

"The tenants of a house at Lyons, situated on *la place des Terreaux*, were obliged to leave it, being unable longer to endure the terror they had for some time nightly experienced at the sight of a frightful spectre which made the rounds of all the apartments, uttering dreadful howls. So widely spread did the fear of it become, that several years rolled by without there being found any one courageous enough to approach, much less inhabit this fatal house. The proprietors had almost relinquished the idea of being able to let it, when its story reached the ears of a soldier in the regiment of the Count d'Artois. He was an intrepid young fellow, and far from being afraid of ghosts, was continually saying that he never should be satisfied until he had seen one. Here was an opportunity to gratify his wish. A great reward was offered him as an inducement to brave the peril. . . . Taking with him into the house a good stock of wine, tobacco, and candles, he resolutely awaited the arrival of the spectre. The night was almost spent, and he was about giving up in despair, when all at once a horrible noise, an unearthly sort of bellowing roar reached his ears. Whereupon, he placed himself on his guard, grasped his pistol, and without moving, looked tranquilly in the direction of the advancing spirit. The countenance of the soldier frightened the ghost; he was not accustomed to finding such sentinels, and he who had caused so much fear to others, was for once, himself afraid: he took flight. The soldier pursued him: he descended the stairs, the soldier did the same, keeping the pis-

tol all the time pointed at the back of his ghostly enemy. The spirit at last rushed through a trap door at the foot of a staircase, leading into a vault beyond. Our intrepid soldier did not hesitate to leap down after him. What was his astonishment to encounter there, in place of an assemblage of fiends, gathered to the *sabbat*, a very goodly company of men, among whom he recognized persons of his acquaintance ! The spectre immediately unmasked, striped himself of his lugubrious apparel, and threw himself at the feet of the soldier who had terribly scared him. You are impatient, sir, to learn the *dénouement* of this adventure : the company was composed of some very honest counterfeiteurs, who had bethought themselves of this stratagem, in order to be able to work at their business unmolested." (*Histoire des pratiques superstitieuses*, iv. 417 to 424.)

The soldier was made to sit down ; he ate and drank with them the rest of the night, and when morning dawned, he advised them to seek other quarters, telling them that for his part, he came to discover the mystery and to obtain the reward. How many haunted houses might have been delivered from their phantoms, if they had been visited by the soldiers of D'Artois, pistol in hand !

Thus we see the amount of the supernatural which requires explanation, largely diminishing in proportion as we look into it. A multitude of miracles, possessions, and apparitions are not worthy the honor of a serious discussion. The same remark applies to presentiments in general, likewise to many dreams and self-styled prophecies.

In regard to presentiments, I would say that as they are unconsciously founded on the knowledge we possess of facts, as we have presentiments of things which reason shows us to be probable, or at least possible, as we forget, moreover (and I have before spoken of this), the ninety-nine presentiments unfulfilled, remembering only the one which seems to be realized, as we instinctively complete the prevision after the event has taken place, it naturally follows that nothing can be less extraor-

dinary. Let us not forget, in addition, that the very impression produced by certain presentiments, only too often assures their ulterior confirmation. M. Brierre de Boismont (223) mentions a letter received from a person who had the good sense not to die after being warned by a particular dream that his death would take place within twenty-four hours ; this is the conclusion of the letter ; " If I had been so weak as to believe in the idea, I should probably have been dead at this moment."

This was a dream in which a presentiment had manifested itself. Presentiments and dreams, they are all the same. Our soul is pre-occupied by ideas of which we are perhaps unconscious. In this state, it engenders a great number of images more or less startling, which trouble both our waking and sleeping hours. Among these images, it sometimes happens that one nearly coincides with the event ; that alone is related, transmitted, and finally offered as an argument to support the theory of dreams and presentiments.*

If we pass in review, one after another, the most famous dreams related in history, we shall find in them all, the character I have just indicated, and which is in itself so very insignificant, that the problem of the supernatural, reduced to such elements, would not merit the attention of sensible men.

I have heard of a Scotch clergyman who, being away from home, saw in a dream, his house on fire and his children in peril of their lives. He made haste to retrace his steps ; the fire had indeed burst out ; the clergyman darted into the flames and dragged forth his young son. I admit the entire truth of the fact ; but we are not told if this same clergyman did not

* I make on the subject of dreams the same reservation that I have already made on the subject of miracles. I do not maintain, for I do not know, that God has never worked miracles since the days of the Apostles, or that he has never sent supernatural dreams. I maintain first, that the continuation of these facts is nowhere announced by Scripture ; secondly, that the stories which have reached us, bring their refutation with them. It is evident, moreover, that God makes use of our dreams to admonish us, and to lead us back to the right way, just as he makes use of all the thoughts of our minds, all the sentiments of our hearts, all the events of our lives.

have, both before and afterwards, hundreds of dreams not less definite, but which were passed over in silence, because they were not confirmed by the event. We are not told if the known negligence of a domestic, the frequency of fires previous to this occurrence, the violence of the wind or some other circumstance of the sort, did not facilitate the prevision. In regard to the child rescued from the flames, it is quite clear that this coincidence adds nothing to the value of the dream. It was impossible for the house to burn without danger to the child, and it was equally impossible for his father to dream of the fire without having this image first presented to his mind.

It is still more easy to give a natural explanation to dreams that have a historical celebrity. That King James, knowing his son to be in London during the plague, should have seen, in a dream, this son with a bloody cross on his forehead, and that he should afterwards have received news of the young man's death, is all perfectly simple. That Calpurnia, the wife of Cæsar, should, in a dream, the eve of the day on which he was killed in the senate, have seen him pierced by a dagger, will not astonish those who know to what threats, and to what increasing danger the dictator was continually exposed.

A circumstance, borrowed from some of the ancient writers, concerning two friends who, arriving one night at Megara, were lodged in separate houses, is often quoted in this connection. Scarcely has one of the two men fallen asleep than he sees before him his friend, who, with an air of the deepest sadness, announces that his landlord has formed the project of assassinating him. Persuaded that his dream is playing him false, the sleeper obstinately refuses to move. The image and the entreaties are renewed; until, at last, he is on the point of going to seek his friend, when the latter appears to him a third time, pale, bloody, and disfigured. "Wretch," cries he, "you did not come when I implored you! Now, it is too late. But the least you can do, is to avenge my death. At sunrise, you will meet at the gates of the city, a cart filled with

manure ; stop it, and order it to be unloaded ; you will there find my body concealed." To this I have nothing to object, except that the authority of Cicero in no way proves, either the reality of the fact, or the correctness of the details, which alone give it an air of the marvellous. It is possible that two travellers may have lodged at Megara, that one of them, secretly impressed by certain incidents, may have felt an uneasiness which translated itself into a dream. It would be astonishing if great crimes could always be accomplished without furnishing some evidence of preparation on the part of the agents, whose physiognomy, or previous bad reputation, often unconsciously cause vague presentiments in the minds of the witnesses. True, there is still the cart of manure, but I demand another investigation, and until that has taken place according to form, I shall look upon this embellishment as apocryphal.

If presentiments are only processes of reasoning (sometimes well founded) which are carried on in our minds without our knowledge, and after the facts are known to us ; if dreams are only presentiments in the mind of a man asleep, I do not hesitate to add, that the predictions retailed through the world, are only these same presentiments clothed in a more pretending form. They are all one single phenomenon, a phenomenon, moreover, that owes its marvellousness, first, to the omission of its myriads of blunders, and secondly, to the unconscious form which the process of reasoning here assumes.

Some of the most celebrated predictions are only very natural presentiments, such as might originate in an observing and sagacious mind. The Duc de Saint Simon, whom I like to quote, because of his unquestionable integrity, relates with much admiration, a pretended prophecy of Vittement. It was at the period when the fortunes of Fleury were in the ascendant. He had just received the cardinal's hat : former preceptor to the king, whom he inspired with absolute confidence, it was not difficult to foresee that he would become prime minister, and maintain the post a long time. With a know-

ledge of these circumstances, we may judge if any superhuman gifts were required on the part of Vittement to enable him to utter the following prophecy. "His sovereign power," said he to Bidault, "will endure as long as his life, and his reign will be without impediment or trouble. He knows how to bind the king with bonds so strong, that the king can never break them. What I here tell you, I know perfectly well. I cannot tell you more, but if the cardinal's death should take place before mine, I will explain to you what I cannot explain during his life."

I am not much more impressed by the prophecies of Savonarole, on the entrance of the French into Italy. "He had always predicted the coming of the king," writes Philip de Comines, "saying that he was sent of God to expel the tyrants of Italy, and that nothing could resist him. He also said, that the king would come to Pisa, would enter its gates, and that on that day, the State of Florence would cease to exist. And thus it happened, for Peter de Medicis was driven out that very day." To foresee the French invasion, and its consequences to the Tuscan State, was by no means impossible. Let us remember, moreover, that other prophecies of Savonarole, relative to the reformation of the church by the sword, were not confirmed by the event, and have, therefore, as was to be expected, remained in the shade.

It is related, that the Archbishop of Vienna announced to Louis XI. the death of Charles the Bold. At a moment, when Louis XI. was celebrating mass in the church of Saint Martin de Tours, the archbishop embraced the king, and said to him, "Sire, may God give you peace and repose. You can have them if you will. *Quia consummatum est*. Your enemy, the Duke of Burgundy is dead; he has just been killed, and his army routed." I do not know that the anecdote was not arranged after the event; the addition of two or three small words, more exact in their meaning, does no harm in such cases. Be that as it may, it is very certain that the state of things at that time existing between Charles the Bold and the

Swiss, made it very safe to divine that the desperate struggle of Nancy (the probable moment of which was known) would terminate in the ruin, and in all likelihood, the death of a prince so violent and high-spirited as the Duke of Burgundy.

There was no lack of predictions relative to the French Revolution ; and, indeed, how should it have been otherwise ? The whole world felt the coming of the great tempest. Louis XV. himself was continually repeating : " This will last quite as long as I shall." When Mount Vesuvius begins to tremble, no one at Naples is ignorant that the eruption may be expected. Therefore, I am by no means astonished when I am told, that the Father Beauregard, in the year 1776, preached a sermon at Notre Dame, containing these words : " Yes, thy temples, Lord, will be plundered and destroyed, thy festivals abolished, thy name blasphemed, thy worship proscribed. But, what do I hear, great God ! what do I see ! To the Holy canticles that echo through these sacred arches in Thy honor, succeed lewd and profane songs. And thou, infamous divinity of Paganism, unchaste Venus, thou comest even here, audaciously to take the place of the living God, to seat thyself on the throne of the Holy of Holies, and to receive the guilty incense of thy new worshippers." It would be strange, indeed, if, in carefully searching among the oratorical declamations of an age in which social convulsions were universally anticipated, and in which the Catholic Church especially, saw rise up before it the terrible array of its past, there had not been found some language that might afterwards be made to harmonize with the irreligious reaction, the revolutionary saturnalias, and the detestable parodies of the goddess Reason.

I know only one prediction deserving the name, that of Cazotte. . . . What must we think of that, and how far has La Harpe exaggerated the truth concerning the presentiments of the *illuminated* ? I strongly mistrust prophecies that bear no *certain date*, the publicity of which has not been in some sort signed and registered before the event. When they are made known afterwards, we are very apt to accommodate

them to the facts. If I might here be permitted to express my whole thought, I would say that Cazotte probably prophesied in general terms, like Father Beauregard. Perhaps he declared to the philosophers and grand ladies who surrounded him, that the national catastrophe would crush them all ; perhaps he even spoke of poison in addressing Condorcet, who professed a *penchant* for this sort of suicide ; perhaps he spoke of conversion in addressing La Harpe ; but the famous details, those which make up the supernatural part of the oration, the twenty-two razor cuts of Chamfort, the story that Vic d'Azir caused his veins to be opened six times in one day during a fit of the gout, these are evidently added by the author at the time he wrote out his recollections. The associates of Cazotte who survived him, did not give themselves the trouble to contest so small a matter. Now, this small matter is everything, and predictions made known in season can alone reasonably escape the suspicion of such embellishments.

Once for all, therefore, let us get rid of this marvellous of bad alloy, which, in reality, rests on no foundation whatever. One man has lied boldly ; a second has honestly added embellishments ; a third has given undue force to predictions of a general nature ; a fourth has encountered one of those chance coincidences that dwell in the memory of the people. Of what value are they all ? I answer, none. The explanation of such prodigies existed long ago ; human credulity is indefatigable in its complacency. Do we not all know it ?

Such things as these have no claim to be considered marvellous ; but there are some, which, with a juster title, appeal to the attention of thinking minds. Upon them we shall concentrate our investigation. Confronting real problems, we shall attempt to give them a solution ; not a random, but a positive solution, founded on the laws of common sense.

Random solutions have always been in vogue. They have contributed to the strengthening of superstition, for an error badly attacked is by no means eradicated ; it takes only the deeper root. I will cite but a single example : the immense

part that the system of *small bodies* has played in the natural explanation of prodigies. This system, very worthy of interest as a vague presentiment of the nervous fluid, the emission of which is still contested, and the reality of which, the tables, turning without contact, have completely demonstrated, this system, I say, is none the less puerile as a solution of the problem of the supernatural.

Read Plutarch's dialogue on the cessation of oracles ; you will there find philosophers, who state with the utmost gravity, that certain atoms have the property of imparting power to predict the future. Small bodies producing this effect, are constantly issuing from the earth. As the earth produces the plant, so does it exhale vapors that communicate the faculty of divination. Is the vapor subtile and abundant, it agitates the priestess, and dictates to her appropriate verses. Has the vapor less power, the enthusiasm diminishes, as also does the merit of the verses. Do the atoms become more rare, we must content ourselves with vile prose. Do they, at last, entirely disappear, the oracles are dumb.

It may easily be imagined, what a capital opportunity such theories as the above, furnished to the scoffers, who, with a show of seriousness, demanded what powers then were to be attributed to the prophetic atoms, and invited the philosophers to tell them what relation existed between the lungs of a bull and the victory or defeat of an army.

But the system of small bodies is not discouraged ; it has survived from century to century, and perhaps it has owed its persistence to the grand latent truth, which, without its knowledge, has served as its base. Nevertheless, leaving all fluids out of the question, it is impossible not to be astonished at the coolness with which the disciples of Des Cartes assigned reasons for their extraordinary facts. This was the period in which the divining wand performed its most illustrious exploits ; it turned when held over the precious metals ; it turned when held over springs of water ; it turned when on the track of murderers. According to these gentlemen, nothing could be

more simple ! Why should not the small bodies which exhaled a louis-d'or, put a stick in motion ? Why should there not have remained on the banks of the Rhone (in spite of the north wind), the corpuscles exhaled by the assassin whom Aymar pursued, corpuscles powerful enough to agitate his hazel branch ?

From a theory such as this, to that of corpuscles emitted by the moon or stars, and their influence upon our destiny, the distance is but a step. Amulets and talismans make good their claims in the same manner, and Satanic possessions by means of material infections or miasmata, are likewise comprehended in this theory.

If I have summed up, in a few words, the natural explanations that have had the greatest success, it is because I am anxious to establish an absolute contrast between the simple solution anticipated in our times, and the desperate attempts witnessed in preceding ages.

Among the extraordinary facts we have to examine, because of their really extraordinary character, first in importance are those that may be explained by nervous excitement.

I say nervous excitement, not the nervous fluid, or any other fluid. Independently of all fluid action (at least it is so thought), there are, in a state of strong excitement, manifestations of vigor, of dexterity, of sensibility and insensibility, which strike us with astonishment. As this is not contested, I have no occasion to dwell on it.

Everybody is familiar with the attack on Oran by the Spaniards, who in the enthusiasm of the assault, succeeded in scaling the walls ; now, not one of these conquerors could, the next day, when their ardor was cooled down, have executed this wonderful feat. Another story in illustration of the same fact is as follows : A partial explosion of powder having taken place in the arsenal of a town in one of the French cantons of Switzerland, a very natural terror seized the workmen, and

rushing to a small aperture in the walls they all passed through it ; yet this aperture was so very narrow that when they afterwards attempted to repass, they found it impossible.

The most cautious physiologists and physicians admit that moral excitement is capable of acting powerfully on the health. It effects almost instantaneous cures ; it occasionally changes the exterior form of certain parts of the body.

Both our faculties and our senses are susceptible of a development which sometimes seems miraculous. Cabanis speaks of singular diseases in which the organs of sense become alive to impressions that, in the ordinary condition of the body, are not perceived by them. " There are some invalids who can distinguish microscopic objects with the naked eye ; others find their way without difficulty through the most profound darkness. There are some who follow the track of human beings like a dog, recognizing, by the odor, objects that these persons have used or merely touched. I have seen still others whose taste had acquired a particular delicacy, and who knew how to select food, and even remedies, which appeared to them really useful, with a sagacity in general observed only among animals. (Septième mémoire : *De l'influence des maladies sur la formation des idées et des affections.*)

We find nothing of the supernatural there. The accidental development of the senses is a fact of daily experience. The touch of the blind man acquires unparalleled sensibility ; if he is walking about a chamber, he feels the wall, as it were, while some distance from it, and always pauses in time. There is, in an asylum at Lausanne, a poor man blind from his birth, as well as deaf and dumb ; he can receive no intelligence of events occurring around him, either through the senses of sight or hearing, yet the approach of persons causes to him a sensation as acute as though he saw and heard them coming along the corridor.

Saint André describes the consequences of the sting of the tarentula, the dexterity, the agility, the wonderful dance, and we know from other observers, that the effects manifested

in persons who believe they have been stung, are not less extraordinary than those produced by a real wound.

There are no facts better established than those wherein it is shown that an amount of fasting which in an ordinary state would produce death, causes no fatal result in a trance state. M. Brierre de Boismont mentions a young girl who was subject to trances, and who, during five successive weeks, took no other nourishment than the horn of a deer, and that only during a few of the last days ; the countenance retained its color, the pulse continued natural. General Daumas gives curious details in relation to a sect that exists in Kabylie. " In the country of Beni-Raten, a celebrated Marabout, Cheikh-el-Madhy, pretends to conduct his disciples to holiness in the following manner. They are each one confined separately in a small cave or cell, hardly large enough to permit any movement of the limbs or an erect position of the body. Their nourishment is gradually diminished for forty days, until it does not exceed the size of a fig in volume. Some of them, indeed, do not eat in twenty-four hours as much as could be contained in a locust pod. In proportion as they thus separate themselves from material life, the disciples acquire second sight ; they are visited by dreams from on high ; in short, the mystical relation is finally established between them and the Marabout, in which their dreams coincide, and they experience the same visions." (*Mœurs and Coutumes d'Algérie*, 216.)

Facts of this sort are not, then, miraculous. It is sufficient for me to have indicated this, without entering into the details. I say nothing, therefore of the famous maiden of Grenoble, who is reputed to have eaten nothing during four years ; of the Benedictine monk, who, it is said, lived throughout Lent without eating or drinking ; or of the various saints and persons affected by possessions, who are celebrated for their abstinence. Everybody will know what allowances to make in such matters for errors of testimony as well as for errors of the physiological phenomena. There is not a single prodigy, no matter how

great its reputation, to which these two very simple observations may not be applied.

It is still less difficult to explain by nervous excitement certain extraordinary developments, whether of sensation or intelligence. The trance in its different stages, produces not only astonishing strength and dexterity, excessive acuteness of the senses, momentary suspension of the requirements of the body, an abnormal condition, in short, of the physical being ; it also gives to the moral being, an absolutely new physiognomy. The history of the Camisards and that of the adherents of the Deacon Pâris embrace some incredible circumstances, to which I shall hereafter return. Within the first two hundred years after the coming of Christ, appeared Montanus, who set himself up as a prophet. His two disciples, Priscilla and Maximilla, who also talked like oracles, even sometimes expressing themselves in strange tongues, and always manifesting an enthusiasm, apparently genuine, were undoubtedly in a state of exaltation.

The American *revivals*, I must confess, present some features that pertain to the same category. With due respect for the greater number of the clergymen who convene *camp-meetings*, I am none the less bound to protest against operations, which open the door to nervous excitements and lead to a confusion between the action of faith and that of the nerves. Such a course was never pursued by Jesus Christ and his apostles ; nothing is more foreign to the Gospel than *operations*, whatever may be their object. I have, then, no words but those of condemnation to utter against these protracted meetings, where a sort of religious *mise en scène*, the length of the sermon, the frequency of prayer and singing, the very aspect of an immense encampment and a vast forest, or the contagion of ideas and sensations produces tears, sighs, convulsions ; where the congregation, the women especially, fall over backward, crying Glory ! Glory ! I should not love my brethren of the United States, I should not render justice to their magnificent, evangelical and

missionary labors, to their living orthodoxy, to the glorious establishment of Church separated from State, and distinct from the world, if I feared to point out the scandal of these religious awakenings. Scripture shows us no *ecstatics* ; when Paul spoke at Ephesus or at Corinth, we are not told that any of his hearers became ill in consequence, that they vented their enthusiasm in shrieks and howls, or rolled on the ground in agony. In that simple and tender preaching of good news, there was nothing which appealed to the imagination or the reason ; therefore, the emotion of his flock had nothing artificial in its cause, or singular in its results.

My main object, however, in alluding to the religious awakenings of the New World, is to show how far the influence of the nervous condition affects the moral faculties of man. As regards his intellectual faculties, they are, in such cases, capable of receiving a prodigious development. The *ecstatics* themselves declare that they have two souls, that a strange voice speaks through them, that they suddenly receive ideas which were previously unknown to them, and expressions with which they were never before familiar. Uncultivated and ignorant minds discuss political questions, social interests, philosophical and religious topics. Their horizon is enlarged, their language is refined, they become eloquent ; the peasant girl, whose tongue is accustomed only to *patois*, speaks the purest French, and the unlettered man expresses himself in Latin.

Now, is there anything of the supernatural in all that ? Certainly not. We have here a physiological condition, which reveals treasures of reminiscences stored away in the mind of the patient without his consciousness, but none the less stored away there. The peasant girl has heard French spoken ; she does not know it at the time, and yet it is engraved on the innermost tablets of her unconscious memory, where nothing is ever really obliterated ; in a state of ill health or unnatural excitement, she finds herself in possession of the French language. In the same state, the merchant who has hardly

learned his rudiments, and who has never studied Latin, finds himself familiar with the Latin tongue, often perplexing his learned physician, whom he insists upon addressing in that language.

I have obtained this last fact from the physician who observed it. Examples of the other might be multiplied, almost to infinity. Perhaps one of the most striking is the account of an English servant girl, who, during her illness, recited in the Hebrew tongue, passages from the Bible. The case excited a great deal of attention and inquiry, and it was finally discovered that she had previously lived at service, in the house of a clergyman who had often read the Hebrew Bible aloud in her presence. Now, without ever having comprehended or consciously retained a syllable, the result proved that it had all taken up its abode in the secret store-house which preserves our faintest impressions and remembrances, a faithful storehouse, whose key we do not possess but we shall possess it some day, and then will be resolved the distressing problems continually presented to us in the mental alienation of some, the impaired intellects of others, the gradual extinction of the faculties in old persons and in the dying, the apparent destruction of the intellectual and moral man. If we would more carefully observe what is passing within ourselves, we should deprive materialist incredulity of its most formidable arguments.

We thus see that many wonders transform themselves into natural accidents, the moment we learn how to estimate nervous excitement. That which presents itself as a direct result of noise, motion, ecstasy, or illness, has no claim to be considered as a divine miracle or a Satanic prodigy.

Some persons hold this first explanation to be almost unlimited in its application. According to them, nervous excitement accounts for everything ! I cannot participate in this view, and without denying the importance of the explanation, I do not believe it covers the whole ground. It seems to me

that Animal Magnetism furnishes a great number of facts to which this theory imperfectly applies. The dependence of the magnetized on the magnetizer, magnetic action exercised at a distance (if it be real, as the report of M. Husson and other documents would seem to prove), the biological phenomena and the automatic passivity by which it is characterized, the rigidity or physical insensibility produced at will, the penetration of the thought especially, that grand fact in which are condensed all the acts of somnambulist clairvoyance, the whole of magnetism, in one word, and the experiments growing out of it, exact, in my opinion, the intervention of a fluid. Those who refuse to acknowledge this fluid, condemn themselves either, systematically to shut their eyes to many undoubted facts, or to give them an unnatural and inadequate explanation by means of nervous excitement.

Nevertheless, I admit that without the Turning Tables, in which the elevation without contact positively brings to light the action of some fluid or physical agent, we should, of necessity, be compelled to abide by the explanation of nervous excitement alone. But science has just taken a great step forward, and we have no longer any right to reason as though we were ignorant of the elevations without contact, and the other phenomena of Turning Tables. We are then in possession of a second explanation which adapts itself with admirable accuracy to a great number of the self-styled prodigies.

I shall not here enter largely into details ; they will find a more appropriate place in special chapters, particularly in the one devoted to that portion of the supernatural apocrypha with which Animal Magnetism has been blended. My object now, is to establish the existence of fluid action.

In what does this action consist ? What is the precise nature of the fluids of which I speak ? Are there several, or is there rather, only one ? Is it not possible that the various imponderable fluids are only transformations or different manifestations of the single fluid ? The physical agent, whatever it may be, that is designated by the term fluid, is it not already

found at the base of simple nervous excitement, and do not the two explanations thus coincide, the second being only the more extended and extraordinary development of the first? A reply to these questions will certainly not be demanded of me. I should give evidence of unpardonable presumption were I to pretend to resolve the grand problem which has so long occupied the minds of thinking men, and which cotemporary science now studies with an attention entirely new. I can only refer in a few words to the tendency of prevailing opinion on this point.

In the article by M. Arago, contained in *l'Annuaire* of 1853, he expresses himself as follows: "Analogous or inverse effects (speaking of Mesmer's experiments, and the report published by Bailly, Franklin, and the other commissioners of the Academy of Science), analogous or inverse effects might evidently be occasioned by a subtle, invisible, imponderable fluid, by a sort of nervous fluid, or magnetic fluid, if it be preferred, circulating through our organs. The commissioners thus avoid speaking of *impossibility*. Their thesis was more modest; they were content to say that *nothing demonstrated* the existence of such a fluid." (437.)

This, then, is the real point of departure. In the beginning, fluid action was recognized as possible; but nothing had, as yet, demonstrated it.

Everybody, however, was not of this opinion, and, ere long, the illustrious Jussieu separated from his colleagues, by taking the ground that "many well verified facts, independent of the imagination, and for him beyond doubt, were sufficient to make him admit the existence or possibility of a fluid or agent, which flows from man to his fellow man, . . . sometimes, even, by a simple attraction exercised at a distance."

In the eyes of Jussieu, the fluid in question is identified with caloric. What matter! we are to demonstrate its existence, not its nature.

Its existence seemed not very doubtful, either to La Place or Cuvier. According to one of these men (*Calcul des probabilités*,

348), "it is little philosophical to deny magnetic phenomena, merely because they are inexplicable, in our present state of knowledge, . . . ;" according to the other (*Anatomie comparée*, vol. ii. 17), "the results obtained on persons rendered unconscious before the commencement of the operation, those obtained on other persons after the operation has rendered them unconscious, those obtained from experiments on animals, scarcely permit us to doubt that the proximity of two animate bodies in certain positions, and accompanied by certain motions, has a real effect, independent of any influence exercised by the imagination of either party. It likewise appears equally clear, that the effects are due to some sort of a communication which is established between their nervous systems."

In as far as I am concerned, I shall not go beyond the limits traced by Cuvier. There is a *communication*; the imagination here goes for nothing, and the best proof of this (a proof ignored by Cuvier), consists in the fact, that inert matter is put in motion by this communication, which is so powerful on men and animals. No one is yet prepared to define it. Theories here, are only pure hypotheses, such as it is necessary to propose in order to discover a law. Let us, then, speak of it as an hypothesis, not otherwise.

One of the boldest and most curious systems is that of Baron de Reichenback. He believes he has found a fluid which is neither caloric, nor electricity, nor terrestrial magnetism; it has the character of a real, cosmical force, both positive and negative combined, circulating through all bodies, and emanating from the sun in incommensurable quantities. His *odylic light*, for such is the name he gives it, is called upon to play an immense part, to renew the aspect of the world, and to give us, at last, the age of gold.

This is the romance; but the reality is equally great and beautiful. The universal fluid announced by Mesmer, seems to make its way, in spite of our repugnance to it. Many distinguished and prudent physiologists, whose views are far from coinciding with those of M. Reichenback and M. Gregory, ask

if the nervous fluid does not explain (as well as these mysteries can be explained), the transmission of the commands of the will to our different muscles. Indeed, the problem exists not only external to us in our fluid action upon other men and inanimate objects—it exists in us. We carry within our own breast, the question of questions. By what means are performed hundreds of muscular motions not willed by me, that are necessary for the final accomplishment of my single desire? Who addresses to my muscles the *orders of detail*, by means of which I write these lines, or move my hand over the key-board of a piano?

Their reply begins as follows: that, perhaps, the nervous fluid, flowing from the brain, passes along the nerves in a manner similar to the passage of electricity along the telegraphic wires, contracting the different muscles, just as electricity moves the index. Sir John Herschel has exhibited this theory in detail (*a preliminary discourse of the study of Natural Philosophy*), a brief analysis of which I here present.

Among the remarkable effects of electricity brought to light by the studies of Galvani and Volta, there are none more striking, perhaps, than its influence on the nervous system of animals. The origin of muscular action is one of those profound mysteries of which we may hardly dare hope ever to find an explanation. Nevertheless, physiologists have, for a long time, suspected the presence of a fluid that is conducted from the brain to the muscles, by means of the nerves. Now, is it not probable, that the nervous fluid, if it exist, is identical with the electric fluid? It doubtless seems strange that the electrical equilibrium should be disturbed in an animal organization composed entirely of conductors; but we have the example of the torpedo or electric eel, and other fish of the same species, that, being also composed of conductors, give shocks, the electric nature of which cannot be contested, although no sparks are disengaged, and no electric tension can be established. Before the invention of the Voltaic pile, the effect produced by contact with the torpedo was absolutely inexplicable; since then,

striking similarities of structure have been observed between the two apparatus, that of the torpedo being likewise composed of layers separated by a fluid substance. It is therefore proved that animal economy allows of electric tension in spite of conductors. How is it possible, then, not to be impressed by this fact, that Voltaic electricity, transmitted along the nerves of an animal even after its death, produces a very marked muscular action? Why may we not abandon ourselves to suppositions involving action of the brain, an apparatus arranged, it would seem, with reference to producing that form of electric fluid observed in the torpedo? Why not believe that the fluid thus produced, moves our muscles, serving as an agent between them and the will?

This hypothesis, developed by Herschel in the book above referred to (third part, chapter sixth), has been modified by a celebrated German physiologist, Doctor Muller. He distinguishes between electricity and the nervous fluid, but he makes the latter act in a manner which reminds us of Herschel's description. According to him, the primitive fibres of the nerves are all attached to the brain, in order there to receive the directions of the will. Placed side by side, they may be compared to the keys of a piano, upon which our thoughts are successively concentrated, thus giving birth to vibrations or currents of the nervous principle in a certain number of fibres, and consequently to the muscular motions corresponding to them.

I do not pretend that the hypothesis is true, or that the problem is solved; I believe that its solution still retreats before our advances. When you shall have substituted the distribution of impulsions among the keys of a nervous key-board, for the distribution of orders among the different muscles, you will not have rendered the phenomenon more comprehensible. Nevertheless, these speculations all show that intelligent men are in pursuit of a fluid action, and that they cannot conceive of the operations of humanity without it.

Serious investigations lead us to admit the existence of a ner-

vous fluid or a particular force, bearing more or less analogy to the other forces of nature which at this day are designated by the names, electricity, light, heat, magnetism, capillary attraction, weight. It would seem that this nervous fluid, being endowed with power to attract and repulse, should have its two poles. It would seem that after the example of animal electricity (which should in general be positive in men and negative in women, according to Doctor Muller), the nervous fluid must abound in persons endowed with an energetic temperament, and chiefly accumulate in them, when their will is strongly concentrated.

The reader will know how to distinguish between that which is hypothetical and that which is henceforth certain. The hypothesis relates to the precise nature of the fluid or force, to the definition of the *rôle* of this fluid, as intermediate agent between our will and our muscles, to its identity or relationship with the other imponderable fluids. But without positively affirming anything in this connection, without anticipating by a single step the progress of physiological researches, without attributing to the fluids an exceptional nature that would suspend them between matter and intelligence, by avoiding to assimilate them openly with the first, we have a right to declare that fluid action is not doubtful, and that it gives the cue to many strange facts which ignorance formerly classed in the domain of the supernatural. It is remarkable, moreover, that the genius of Des Cartes should have partially divined this grand law, and that in attempting the theory of animal spirits, he should have shown, as it were, a presentiment of fluid action.

The latter furnishes us, we have said, the natural explanation of many extraordinary facts.

And indeed, if we begin at the end, that is to say, with the phenomenon of Turning Tables, we shall find that by application of the theory of the nervous fluid, their various motions cease to be miraculous or diabolical. If my brain, acting like a Leyden jar, emits and directs a fluid current along my nerves,

if this fluid is also emitted by the other members of the chain, it is evident that our combined action will soon form a sort of electric battery, the influence of which will be felt conformably to our thought ; we shall communicate a rotation, we shall produce, even at a distance, energetic elevations.

Take, for instance, those phenomena of Animal Magnetism that are everywhere to be found in the ancient operations of sorcery, and that have caused the funeral pile to be lighted for so many innocent persons ; you will be astonished to see with what precision they adapt themselves to the theory of fluid action. And I speak of Animal Magnetism in its most general acceptation, I speak of the particular state in which our sensations and faculties submit to so strange a modification ; now, it seems to me impossible to deny that if a similar state be produced by the sole effect of disease, it is likewise often produced by the effect of a powerful will. In vain do our opponents shut their eyes to a demonstration everywhere to be seen, in vain do they attempt to fall back on material somnambulism in order to escape an artificial somnambulism, or on idiosyncrasies in order to escape the action of the magnetizers ; what they admit is not better proved than what they reject, and, it must be confessed, not less mysterious. I would say, with Cuvier, that an influence which overcomes distance, which makes itself felt by those who are absolutely ignorant of it, by animals as well as by men, cannot be seriously contested.

With it, we comprehend those accidents of biology related in the Quarterly Review, to which I have already alluded in the first part of this work. We are there told of men transformed into automatons, passively accepting all the sensations attributed to them by a dominant will. The emission of the nervous fluid alone, completely explains what some have attempted to account for by a mere suggestion. Let any one try to suggest sensations to the person biologized, let him even try to bring on the biologized condition without the presence and action of a large quantity of magnetic force, no result will be obtained. But let magnetization take place (and

that it sometimes does take place without passes, no one is ignorant), the fluid currents of the magnetizer will immediately awaken in the biologized person all the sensations of sight, hearing, taste, smell and touch ; he will have the same impressions as if his eyes saw, as if his ears heard, as if his fingers touched. This must be so, for we judge of exterior facts only by our subjective impressions, and if the subjective impression is produced, it is impossible for us to doubt the reality of the exterior facts.

A large part of ancient and modern hallucination may here find its explanation. So with other phenomena, which the inquisitors have declared to be decided cases of possession. In many instances, the physical insensibility of the accused was so great that Laboureur, king's advocate of the bailiwick of Dijon, in the 16th century, said it was useless to put them to the torture (*Traité des faux sorciers*). They often thus escaped the torture, but not the funeral pile. Witness the woman spoken of by Boquet, a writer on demonology, who being found by her husband in a state of cataleptic insensibility, was denounced to the judges and burned, in spite of her protestations of innocence.

If catalepsy may, as in this case, induce the absolute suppression of sensation, let us not be in haste to conclude that fluid action plays no part in the phenomenon. We are, in fact, ignorant of the office performed within us by the nervous fluid, independently of all foreign influence, while we know that magnetizers produce at pleasure, this effect upon persons submitting to their action.

I would say as much of that phenomenon which is, perhaps, the most interesting feature of magnetism—the penetrative power of the mind. If it may be manifested in absence of exterior provocations, it is also manifested as an effect of them, and it is precisely this fact which establishes the reality of fluid action. How can we help seeing the analogy between the biological phenomenon and that of which I now speak ? Here is a person magnetized by me, whose intelligence seems to

enter into direct contact with mine ; my thoughts become his thoughts, his lips serve to express what I feel. Do we not touch with the finger the currents of the fluid, which, directed by the will of the magnetizer, produce in the magnetized, impressions experienced by the former, or render him sensible to the impressions and ideas of a third ?

Whatever may be the operation, in regard to the precise nature of which, it will be remembered, I affirm nothing, two things remain certain : the penetration of the thought has taken place, it has taken place very particularly in virtue of an act of will, and in virtue of magnetization. It is, then, extremely probable that it springs from fluid action. Remark, moreover, with what simplicity is thenceforth explained the supernatural part of magnetism.

A somnambulist describes the habitation, relates various circumstances concerning the person with whom he is put *en rapport* ; he defines this person's disease, and indicates the proper medical treatment. What has been done ? The magnetizer has put him in a particular state, where the intellectual contact is effected, either with himself or with the individual who interrogates the somnambulist. Now, it is in vain to seek further ; we discover not a single authentic act of divinatory clairvoyance which exceeds the one just mentioned. The history of magnetism, as well as that of ancient possessions, contains hardly anything that cannot be explained by the penetration of the thought.

Apart from divinatory clairvoyance, which is invariably reduced to this explanation, there is still that particular clairvoyance which seems to be manifested by sight at a distance, through opaque bodies, and without the assistance of the eyes. Those who take the pains positively to contest the existence of these facts, while they feel compelled at the same time to admit analogous facts in natural somnambulism, choose a singular position. The natural somnambulist who follows his physician at a distance, sees him enter into such and such houses, and correctly announces his approach ; the natural somnambulist, who, with closed eyes, walks boldly over the roofs of houses,

with closed eyes executes a picture, or corrects the writing of a manuscript, is he a less extraordinary phenomenon than the magnetized somnambulist who enters into contact with distant objects, or who can read a book without the assistance of the eyes? I cannot think so. It is, therefore, in my opinion, highly imprudent to declare such phenomena impossible. If they are real, which I by no means affirm, they singularly enlarge the domain of fluid action, and proportionably restrict that of the supernatural. It consequently follows, that even the most wonderful facts recorded in the old sorcery proceedings, may be explained by the particular condition into which we are thrown by the action of the nervous fluid upon us, sometimes our own, sometimes that of another.

All this is, doubtless, very mysterious; the particular contact which certain fluid influences appear to establish, the contact of intelligence, the visual contact with remote objects, through opaque bodies and without the assistance of the eyes, these are natural laws which strike us with astonishment; but it is not more surprising to see a thought fluidically communicated to others, than to see a thought electrically transmitted in a moment from London to Edinburgh, where, by means of writing or printing, it assumes a body.

We are now prepared to account for much of the would-be supernatural. The Benedictines of Madrid, who, in the 17th century, passed for being possessed by evil spirits, seemed to read each other's thoughts, and to divine what happened at a distance. Their superior, Donna Theresa, knew, it was said, the subject of their conversation before she came within hearing of it. Others, affected by possessions, would suddenly fall asleep or into a state of exaltation, pronounce long discourses of which they did not remember one word when the crisis was past. The employment of Latin phrases was only a very natural effect of the same crisis;* in an age when the use of

* Should there be any persons disposed to seize hold of my words as an argument against the miraculous character of the gift of tongues, I would ask them to read the account of the Pentecost, related in the second chapter of *Acts*. They will there see

that tongue was universal, in a church whose worship was celebrated in Latin, it was natural that the nuns should have preserved certain latent reminiscences, the manifestation of which was afterwards produced by the influence of nervous excitement or fluid action. A paroxysm of fever, the intoxication of hasheesh or that of wine, occasionally produces analogous results. The Maréchal de Villars, relating the wonders effected in this relation by the Camisards, added : " We have seen the Duke de la Ferte, after he had been drinking, speak English in presence of Englishmen. We have heard them say : ' I presume he speaks English, but I do not understand a word he says . . . ' It might well be difficult to understand him, for he had never learned a word of English." The Latin, Greek, and Hebrew of the prophets of the Cévennes, doubtless bore a strong resemblance to such English as that, although the causes of their nervous exaltation were infinitely dissimilar.

Not only may ecstasy or intoxication awaken memories

that all the circumstances, without exception, are adverse to the assimilation they would make. What, indeed, takes place in cases of nervous excitement, ecstasy, intoxication, or disease ? In the first place, man is not in possession of himself, he is violently excited ; now there is nothing similar to this in Peter and his companions. Secondly, these tongues are most frequently spoken in a partial, imperfect, and even unintelligible manner ; now, the proselytes gathered together at Jerusalem understand the disciples so well, that they exclaim : " How hear we, every man in our own tongue, wherein we were born ? " Moreover, the nervous phenomena is composed only of reminiscences ; but the disciples speak in tongues of which they have never heard a syllable uttered. " Parthians, and Medes, and Elamites, and the dwellers in Mesopotamia, and in Judea, and Cappadocia, in Pontus, and Asia, Phrygia, and Pamphylia, in Egypt, and in the parts of Lybia about Cyrene, and strangers of Rome, Jews and proselytes. Cretes and Arabians, we do hear them speak in our tongues the wonderful works of God ! "

These Galileans upon whom was thus suddenly bestowed the faculty of perfectly speaking so many idioms with which they had never had the least contact, surely bear little resemblance to the ecstatics and their recollections. They who make these comparisons, still more ridiculous than impious, are not careful enough to observe that the phenomena of development and reminiscence, are produced only in a state of disease or somnolency ; that they are most generally only very imperfect imitations of strange tongues ; that in the case even where the form is perfect, owing to old resemblances between the tongues in question, the sense is incoherent, and shows the effect of the pathological crisis to which the speaker submits. They forget to contrast these characteristics with those which distinguished the preaching of the first disciples ; they were neither diseased nor somnambulists, and if they had uttered incoherent ravings in strange tongues, I doubt if they would have been so successful as they were in converting men to Christianity !

of which we were never before conscious, and furnish a facility for speaking (more or less well) languages previously unknown to us, but they modify impressions, sometimes completely inverting them. A person who has been eating hasheesh will hear in Spanish, a discourse addressed to him in Italian: a certain sick child will suddenly plunge into classical studies which he has hardly commenced, and of which he has the utmost horror; he will translate everything that is said to him into Latin, employing only this language himself, and speaking it with wonderful purity.

One must be blind not to perceive the grandeur of the still unfathomed mysteries, which are concealed in our nervous system. The key to many wonders is to be found there, not elsewhere. Pure and simple nervous excitement joined to fluid action, the existence of which has been placed beyond controversy by the elevation of inert bodies without contact, clearly gives us the natural explanation to much of the would-be supernatural. Trace the phenomena through all their various gradations, from the development of the powers and faculties to physical insensibility, the penetration of the thought, and the employment of foreign languages, you will not for a single instant enter upon the domain of miracles. I admire the power displayed by a man, who, with his eye, tames ferocious beasts; I am impressed by the lucid vision of a somnambulist, who, in some way, becomes sensible of the interior arrangement of the organs he wishes to cure; but I see in these prodigies of the nervous system, nothing more than the application of a physical law.

Before taking a new step, the most important of all, it behooves us to give an account of the road we have travelled. How far are we advanced, what are the extraordinary facts which our explanations have already despoiled of the character attributed to them by a superstitious ignorance? What still remains for us to explain?

We commenced by excluding, in a measure, from our examination, the immense accumulation of fraudulent possessions, prepared apparitions, wonders resulting from coincidences, anecdotes arranged after the event, presentiments, dreams, and predictions, all got up at the expense of the most familiar facts, and the most elementary reasoning.

Entering, then, upon the study of phenomena truly extraordinary, I have shown that simple nervous excitement explains a first and notable portion of these phenomena, that it engenders prodigies of courage, force, and dexterity, that it develops the senses beyond the power of imagination to conceive, that it produces medicinal effects, that it so modifies the organization as to render man able to endure prolonged fasts without grave inconvenience, that it makes him eloquent, that it calls forth reminiscences of which the mind was previously unconscious.

I have next directed my attention to fluid action. I have proved that however badly defined its relation to ordinary nervous excitement still continues to be, it constitutes a physical fact of the highest importance, and one which we are no longer permitted to doubt, after the experiments of the Turning Tables. Under this head are ranged, first, the phenomena common to this category and the preceding, reminiscences, for example, and the employment of foreign tongues incidental thereto, as well as accidents of rigidity and absolute insensibility ; secondly, the characteristic operations of Animal Magnetism and biology, the communication of sensations, the penetration of the thought, the intellectual or fluid contact under all its more or less certain forms of interior sight, of sight at a distance, and of sight without the assistance of the eyes.

This is the point to which we have arrived ; the supernatural apocrypha is much reduced, but it is not suppressed. Many prodigies, both ancient and modern, refuse to be included in either of the categories above enumerated. Chiefest among the prodigies of ancient times, I would mention sorcery with its excursions to the *sabbat*, its transformation into wolves, and

its Satanic wonders confessed in detail by hundreds of thousands of miserable wretches who knew the consequences of their confessions. Among the prodigies of modern days, I would instance certain brilliant miracles witnessed by entire populations. I would instance the celestial music heard by the American *spiritualists*, the flames they behold, the suspension in the air of men and articles of furniture, to which they testify. These things demand a new explanation, which is to be found in the theory of hallucination.

This theory is most essential. If any of the adversaries of the supernatural have exaggerated it, their error has arisen from the fact, that denying fluid action, and admitting the incontrovertibility of testimony, they were forced to generalize beyond measure an explanation, which, no more than others, possesses the privilege of universal application. He who esteems the predictions of sorcerers as true, merely because they are supported by testimony, will, with a bad grace, doubtless, afterwards condescend to explain them by hallucination. He who taxes Animal Magnetism with absurdity, will have made no great advance, when, in presence of his biological accidents, his penetration of the thought, and his clairvoyance, he has solemnly pronounced the word, hallucination. He who laughs at the nervous fluid, will not gain much by invoking hallucination, when he is shown the elevation without contact, of the Turning Tables. But to us who have been careful to reduce testimony to its just value, and to estimate the part of fluid action, hallucination presents itself as the complement and the admirable crown of the natural explanations. It comes to fill precisely the void which preceding explanations have left.

I do not venture to give any definition of my own regarding hallucination ; that task I leave to M. Brierre de Boismont, who has brought to the subject great knowledge and sagacity.

"Sensible signs," he says, "form the exclusive materials of hallucinations ; everything that determines a strong impression on the mind may, under given circumstances, produce an

image, a sound, an odor, etc. Thus, when a man has, for a long time, abandoned himself to profound meditations, he often sees the idea that absorbs him clothe itself in a material form ; the intellectual labor ceasing, the vision disappears, and he explains it by natural laws. But if this man lives at an epoch when the apparition of spirits, demons, souls, and phantoms are matters of general belief, the vision becomes a reality. . . .”

“The prolonged concentration of the thought upon an object, results in determining an ecstatic state of the brain, in which the image of the object is soon produced, and affects the mind as though it were really perceived by the eyes of the body. It is to this mental disposition that we must attribute the visions of celebrated men. Their hallucinations had often no influence over their reason, especially when they were connected with the general beliefs of the times, or when they took place during the ecstasy we have called physiological.” (*Des hallucinations*, 5, 14.)

M. Calmeil, in his turn, and with the authority of his talent, presents us with valuable details concerning the nature of this grand phenomenon.

“Hallucination partly carries the world in its own brain ; it realizes up to a certain point the suppositions of the Berkleyists, who pretend to establish that it is not positively necessary for the Universe to exist, in order that it may be perceived as it manifests itself to our senses. It is certain that from the moment the encephalon and the soul are reunited, we can no longer be sure that there positively exist external to us, animals, plants, odorous or sapid particles, sonorous waves, matter with the properties of resistance, cold, heat, smoothness or brightness, merely because the sight, hearing, taste, touch or smell, are affected in such and such ways. . . . It is well established that persons visited by hallucinations, are sensitive to impressions of sight, hearing, taste, touch, and smell. . . . Almost everything that is related of evocations, apparitions, possessions, ghosts, spectres, shades, *simulacres*, familiar spirits, phantoms, manes, lares, *farfadets*, goblins, *ignes fatui*, vampires, fantastical visions,

and Spirits, both incubæ and succubæ, has had its origin in the brain of individuals affected by hallucinations. . . . Among the hallucinations of hearing described in the writings of the Ascetics, there are some which are represented as taking place during an ecstatic rapture. . . . Tasso was pursued by the most cruel hallucinations ; he often heard, as he himself complains in his letters, loud sounds, prolonged ringing in the ears, and peals of bells, which froze him with terror. A certain friend of this great poet, who was one day present at a conversation Tasso fancied he was holding with an invisible being to whom he addressed words as eloquent as their sentiment was elevated, soon observed that Torquato was, for the moment, so absorbed in himself, that he evidently did not hear his friend, who intentionally interrupted him. . . . Catharine de Sienne, in her ecstatic transports, believed that she received visits from her Saviour, whom she called her divine spouse." (*De la folie*, i. 4, 13.)

Such is hallucination, a phenomenon which, under the influence of reigning superstitions, becomes general and quite extensive. We shall prove that it is far from being confined to the homes of lunatics ; men of sound minds, and celebrated for the power of their intellect, may submit to its empire ; an entire multitude may be equally under its control. Without in any degree adopting the extravagant theories of Berkeley, above quoted by M. Calmeil, without agreeing with Kant that our sensation alone has a logical reality, because we are not prepared to demonstrate by regular arguments that it corresponds to an exterior fact, it is evident to us that the subjective side of man should be taken into consideration, and that physiology should not overlook the exceptional cases wherein a personal impression, deprived of all objectivity, is produced. "The nervous fibres," writes Malebranche, "may be excited in two ways, either by the end which is outside of the brain, or by the extremity which is plunged into the mass. . . . If these filaments are agitated within the brain, no matter by what influence, the soul perceives something external."

I am ignorant of the scientific value of this explanation, and do not vouch for its correctness. I mention it, because it forcibly expresses the two sources of our sensations, the internal and the external source. It cannot be denied that the second sometimes acts alone ; but it is not to the philosopher of *la Vision en Dieu* that I would address myself for its definition. Whoever contests all action of the soul upon the body, or refuses to man the faculty of knowing anything except through his union with the Being who knows everything, shows a disposition to exaggerate the part of subjectivity. Now, it is my opinion, that we should endeavor to avoid resembling Marphurius, who said to Sganarelle :

"Change, if you please, this manner of speaking. Our philosophy orders us not to set forth any decisive proposition, but to speak of everything with uncertainty, and always to suspend our judgment ; for this reason, you must not say : I have come ; but, it seems to me I have come."

"It seems to me !"

"Yes."

"Zounds ! It does indeed seem to me, since it is actually so."

"That by no means follows, and a thing may seem to you without being really true."

"That by no means follows !" Marphurius was right, and although the peculiar characteristics which establish a palpable distinction between hallucinations and actual sensations may be omitted, it is evident we ought all to follow his example, and avoid the positive tone. Sganarelle is a fool when he exclaims, "What ! I am not here, and you do not speak to me ?" Marphurius is a sensible man when he replies : "It appears to me that you are there, and it seems to me that I speak to you ; but I am not positive that it is so !" And if Sganarelle thinks to settle the question with his cudgel, if he fancies he has refuted the philosopher when the latter commits the inconsistency of taking the blows for real ; if he assumes to rally him in these terms : "You must not say that I have beaten you,

but, it seems to you that I have beaten you," he will only prove that he is a brute as well as an ignoramus.

In order that hallucination shall compromise no certainty, it must be described with fidelity, not as being the exclusive attribute of invalids and lunatics, but as being also produced 'a sensible and healthy men, by reason of the exceptional empire of a dominant idea and an extraordinary nervous shock. In these terms, the theory of hallucination is not only inoffensive, but it is true.

Each one of our senses may be a victim to hallucination, the sight and the hearing especially. I begin with the first. Nothing is of more frequent occurrence than visions of angels and demons. The Cardinal de Brienne saw his bed filled with scorpions. The poet Harrington saw bees, flies and birds continually issuing from his body. Ben Jonson, the man of letters, witnessed terrible combats between the people of antiquity. Cardon, whose son was implicated in a capital crime, gazed upon a bloody spot, the dimensions of which were constantly increasing. The *Revue Britannique* (July, 1830), speaks of visions which beset the unfortunate Bachzko of Koenigsberg, fifty years ago, while he was occupied in his political labors : a negro, with a hideous countenance, always seated himself opposite to him ; a monster, with the head of an owl, peered at him every night from between the curtains ; serpents twined themselves round his legs. Two centuries earlier, the English mystic, Pordage, witnessed, in company with the inspired John of Leyden and his other disciples, a most magnificent scene : the powers of hell, in two chariots drawn by lions, bears, dragons and tigers, passed in review before them ; following in their train came the inferior spirits with claws, ears of cats, their limbs contorted and deformed. This, I would beg the reader to remember, is already one example of collective hallucination.

Hallucinations of sight are of frequent occurrence in Sweden ; scarcely a day passes that phantoms are not seen to haunt certain houses, that ghosts do not visit the living, and hold conversations with them. These things have so often happened as

to leave no room for doubt. The persons affected by possessions in the Middle Ages also saw within their own bodies, numerous devils, who, under various forms, kept themselves concealed there.

And let it be distinctly understood that I do not now speak of lunatics, although I may return to this branch of the subject, I shall not mention the celebrated madmen whose hallucinations fill the books of M.M. Esquirol, Lélut, Brierre de Boismont, etc. I confine my attention to people in possession of their entire reason, and who, under the influence of strong impressions, see, hear and touch imaginary objects. They are certain of having seen, heard, and touched ; they have often done it, if they may rely on their sensations.

I therefore say nothing of M. Berbiguier, surnamed the scourge of familiar spirits, and his three volumes filled with records of hallucinations. I shall content myself with a passing reference to the celebrated hallucination of Charles VI., while I make only a brief allusion to the visions of Kotter, which excited considerable attention at the commencement of the 17th century ;—the angel who appeared to him on several different occasions to announce the misfortunes of Germany, and who, by reiterated threats, compelled him to make his public declaration before the magistrates of Sprotaw ;—to the three suns and three moons which filled the heavens ;—to the troops covered with splendid armor, and engaged in desperate conflict. I prefer, in closing this first branch of the inquiry, to dwell a few moments on the hallucinations of sight to which the Camisards were subject. With eyes open and directed towards heaven, their inspired men beheld armies of the angels, millions of the blessed clothed in white robes, victories gained by the celestial troops over the military forces of Louis XIV.

This brings me to the hallucinations of hearing, not less frequent among these poor, persecuted people. Compan, one of their prophets, distinctly heard the songs that were sung before the throne of God ; even he himself sang most melodiously in order to become united to these holy harmonies, Nor were these

hallucinations the especial privilege of one or two persons, everybody sometimes participated in them. Charras (*Théâtre sacré des Cévennes*) writes : "Although many people have ridiculed the singing of psalms which has in various places seemed to come from the far off regions of the atmosphere, I can here affirm that I, myself, have several times heard it with my own ears. I have more than twenty times heard this divine melody in broad daylight, and in the company of other persons, in places remote from habitations, where there were neither woods nor holes in rocks, where, in one word, it was impossible for any human being to lie concealed. We took pains to satisfy ourselves of all this, and moreover, these celestial voices far surpassed in beauty and harmony any sounds that could be produced by the voices of our peasants." It is also known that the bewilderment resulting from ecstasy was carried so far in some cases among our Cévenol women, that bending their heads down towards their stomachs, they would say : "Listen to my child, who is prophesying."

We might give as counterpart to the above mentioned hallucinations, those of Charles IX., who after the day of Saint Bartholomew, lost his sleep, because of the heart-rending voices that sounded in his ears. Stranger still, and proving how far the phenomenon is contagious, is the fact that Henry of Navarre, afterwards Henry IV., having been summoned into his presence, distinctly heard the same cries.

Nor is it necessary to be a fanatic in order to experience this sort of hallucination. Lord Herbert was by no means a fanatic ; yet he hesitated to publish his work against Christianity, until a noise coming from Heaven, decided him.

What difference is there between his impression and that which everywhere pursued Tasso, when, by the dictation of angels, he wrote the beautiful verses preserved in the library at Ferrara ?

In regard to hallucinations of taste, I shall say but little. The biological experiments of which I have elsewhere spoken, offer numerous examples of this nature. The person, however

strong minded or intelligent he may be, who in this particular condition experiences all the sensations of a sumptuous repast, and tastes by turns different sorts of wines, while his palate is actually refreshed by nothing more than a glass of pure water, this person is the victim of a hallucination as perfect as possible.

The same experiments produce the hallucination of smell. Of this, all biology aside, most of us are probably acquainted with many examples. I know a lady, who, having offered her hospitality to a clergyman whom, judging from the habits of his family, she supposed to be an inveterate smoker, was during the night tormented by the idea that her guest, established in a neighboring chamber, was indulging his dominant passion, and that certain dresses of hers, badly protected by a thin partition, would become impregnated with the odor of tobacco. So firmly did this idea take possession of her mind, that she distinctly smelt the hated odor, and remarked it to her husband. Early in the morning, she rang for her maid; "Marianne," said she, "go to the door of Mr. . . . , give him my compliments and politely ask him to desist from smoking." The answer returned was that never had pipe or cigar passed the lips of Mr.

Hallucinations of smell are frequently allied to those of sight; the apparition of a saint or an angel, is accompanied by the most fragrant odors, that of demons produces the sensation of heavy fumes of sulphur.

Hallucinations of touch are also real, although much less frequent than those of sight and hearing. Sorcerers and magicians, to confine myself to them, felt the touch of the hairy devil who transported them to the *sabbat*. They were sensible of the rapidity of their flight through the air, of the cold wind of night as it swept across their faces; they were sometimes beaten during the journey, and the impression of the blows was as painful and distinct as if real rods had been exercised on their shoulders.*

* Let me not here be accused of reasoning in a circle, now attempting to prove hal-

I shall say nothing of the general hallucination which deceives all the senses at the same time, because it is seldom met with, except in cases of lunacy. Now, such cases, although interesting in themselves, and calculated to throw light on the action of minds in full possession of their reason, should be left out of a study, the results of which they would compromise. If I have spoken, in passing, of Tasso, of Charles VI. or any other illustrious personage whose reason was bewildered, I have given the principal part of my attention to hallucinations that call forth even in the most healthy minds, a superstition, an intense pre-occupation, a reigning idea, a disposition to ecstasy.*

Bodin, the great French publicist of the sixteenth century, mentions in his *Démonomanie* the case of a hallucinated person, who, in consequence of having abandoned himself to religious contemplation, became subject to sensations which caused him great joy ; a supernatural being would frequently knock at his door, enter, and familiarly pull his ears ; this being also presented himself under different forms, that, among others, of a luminous ray, and gave him, on the part of God, serious admonitions.

Bosroger (*la Piété Affligée*) gives analogous details of the nuns of Louviers, who were, in his time, possessed by devils : "Sister Barbe, of Saint Michel, saw repeatedly, in her cell, a great number of lighted candles. . . . I pass over in silence the lighted flambeaux against the railing of the church at the periods of her communions. I say nothing of all the phantoms and men who appeared in her presence, persecuted her, and, after causing her much trouble and uneasiness, took flight up the chimneys. . . . Sister Marie, of Saint Nicholas, in broad daylight, perceived two horrid forms : one

lucination by sorcery in order afterwards to explain sorcery by hallucination. If I speak of the hallucination of touch among sorcerers, it is in regard to those who were carefully watched night and day, and who, consequently, did not go to the *sabbat*. Yet they experienced on different parts of their bodies all the impressions of a journey through the air, and the ill-treatment inflicted by the demons.

* I have quoted and shall continue to quote many examples from Doctor Brierre de Boismont, and Doctor Calmeil, *passim*.

presented the figure of an old man with a long beard ; the other form was merely that of a large black head. . . . The visits of apparitions to Sister Anne, of the *Nativité*, began about the year 1642 ; it is perfectly astonishing what hideous figures were almost constantly assumed by this detestable enemy in presence of the poor girl ; how, in this condition he stayed all night in her cell, immovable before her ; how he walked in front of her wherever she went, even into the choir, performing all sorts of buffooneries to divert her. . . . He struck her rudely, and tormented her every instant. . . . One day, during holy mass, a crucifix appeared before her eyes and said : " My daughter, my spouse, my well beloved, I come to deliver you from your affliction." . . . The first time she went to chapel for her *neuvaine*, as she was about to commence her humble prayer, a ray of sun more beautiful than anything she had ever before seen, shone upon her face. She heard a voice issuing from this ray. . . . During the fasts, she perceived before her the most tempting viands and human forms inviting her to eat ; wherever she went dainty odors pursued her." . . .

Sister Marie, of the Saint Sacrement, has herself published the account of her sufferings. These things show by what perpetual hallucinations the poor nuns were afflicted. " The five senses of nature," as Sancho Panza says, are successively or simultaneously compromised. They see, hear, touch, smell, taste, that which has no objective reality, and so the matter goes on, until they are finally brought to the stake ! Now, in spite of this tragical ending, the general character of the possessions of Louviers is such that no one, at the present day, would venture to give them any serious consideration, nor do I hesitate to quote them as incontestable examples of hallucination.

Hallucination is always produced in the direction of reigning ideas. The people of the Middle Ages saw devils ; at the present day we have spirits, their revelations, their concerts ; they are most active in displacing furniture, and this seems to be their principal mania.

The hallucinations of mystics have naturally a peculiar cha-

racter. What did not Jean Rothe, Bœhme, and Kuhlman see and hear ! The latter passed from hell to heaven ; one day he was beset by millions of demons ; another day he beheld Jesus surrounded by his saints. During his whole life, he was everywhere accompanied by a luminous circle, which he always saw on his left hand.

The famous Kentish nun, Elizabeth Barthon, made ethereal voyages ; she received the orders issued by the Virgin Mary, who directed her to enter a convent. She might have continued a long time in that position, if she had not been so imprudent as to declare that the angels had predicted to her the death of Henry VIII. The choleric monarch caused her to be decapitated.

But that which more than anything else contributes to fix the character of hallucinations is their epidemic and collective nature. In presence of such a fact we lose the right to throw all responsibility upon disease or mental alienation. If the complete and absolute illusion of the senses thus propagates itself, we must naturally conclude that it does not necessarily depend on a pathological condition, but that the impression of dominant ideas gives rise to it, and that it will consequently reappear each time that a new idea takes a powerful hold of the mind.

At the period when all the world believed in spectres, all the world saw them. During the pestilence at Néocæsarea, every body saw phantoms enter into houses ; so in Egypt, in the time of Justinian, everybody saw black men without heads, sailing on the sea in barks of bronze. During an epidemic which depopulated Constantinople, everybody saw demons passing from house to house, and producing death wherever they went.

I say everybody, in order to indicate the character of generality pertaining to hallucinations, which invaded entire populations, meeting no resistance ; a character which history has

preserved in not attributing the phenomenon to individuals alone, but to cities. It must be well understood, moreover, that I say this under the restriction of my opinion in regard to testimony. I am persuaded that many anecdotes are false ; that many are exaggerated. I believe that in cases where a false sensation has been incontestably perceived by a collective number, many persons have lent themselves to it with that unconscious insincerity which accommodates itself to the general impressions, and which afterwards maintains with emphasis, what was at first only vaguely perceived.

How can we doubt, moreover, the epidemic character of the impressions and hallucinations? Has not the Maréchal de Villars spoken of a city where all the women and maidens prophesied after having come in contact with some Cévénole prophetesses? Has not Thucydides related the general invasion of spectres which accompanied the great plague at Athens? Is it not certain that among other epidemics, a belief in the terrible apparitions that were the harbingers of death has been propagated from place to place with immense rapidity?

Hallucinations which transform clouds into armed troops engaged in combat, have often, in times of national struggles, taken a contagious turn. Pliny says, that during the war of the Romans against the Cimbrians, the people were frequently alarmed at sounds of trumpets and clashing of arms, which seemed to come from the sky. Pausanius writes that long after the battle of Marathon, there could still be heard on the famous field, the neighing of horses and the shock of armies ; persons who visited the spot out of curiosity, could not distinguish the sounds, while those who traversed the plains without premeditated design, heard them perfectly. At the battle of Platea, a terrible cry resounded through the air, which the Athenians attributed to the god Pan ; this so frightened the Persians that they took flight, from which circumstance, it is pretended, that the word *panic* derives its origin. "A short time previous to the feast of the Passover," writes Josephus, "an incident occurred, which I should hesitate to relate, lest it

might be regarded as a fable, if the persons who witnessed it were not still living, and if the misfortunes that followed it had not confirmed its truth. Just before sunrise, many people, in different parts of the country, saw in the skies, chariots filled with armed men, which drove to and fro among the clouds, and finally surrounded the city, as if to hem it in. The day of Pentecost, the priests having been all night in the inner temple celebrating the service of the Lord, heard a noise, and immediately afterwards, a voice repeated several times: 'Let us depart hence!'

The chronicles of all nations are full of these wonders, the reality of which I most assuredly do not guarantee. Yet, it seems to me demonstrated that, if the prodigies themselves have not existed, the illusion has often existed to a greater or less extent, and such is the fact upon which I insist.

When Antiochus was preparing to carry war into Egypt, men on horseback, arrayed in cloth of gold, and armed with lances, were seen riding to and fro in the heavens; their helmets, shields, naked swords and lances were plainly to be distinguished; knights armed at all points, were fighting hand to hand in a bloody sky. In the reign of Charles VI., in that of Charlemagne, people witnessed aerial combats between sorcerers. At the battle of Antioch, the crusaders saw Saint George, Saint Demetrius and Saint Theodosius, come to their assistance. M. Amédée Thierry relates that at the attack of the Gauls on the temple of Delphi, these barbarians were frightened by the apparition of three heroes whose bodies were buried in the environs of the city.

"It will, perhaps, be asked," adds M. Brierre de Boismont, who is my authority for these statements, "how any considerable body of men could thus be the dupes of the same illusion. Independently of the reasons we have given, and among which, ignorance, fear, superstition and disease play an important part, the contagious influence of example must not be forgotten. A mere cry was sufficient to spread terror throughout a multitude of men. An individual who believed he saw super-

natural things, lost no time in imparting his convictions to those who were not more enlightened than he." (*Des hallucinations*, 116).

In the epidemics of possession, it often happened that if a certain nun thought she heard diabolical or celestial music, it was not long before her companions also distinctly heard the same sounds. It still oftener happened that the disgusting images created in the imagination of one of the nuns made their way into the minds of all the others successively. One should read (or rather one should not read), in De Lancre (*Tableau de l'inconstance des mauvais anges*), details respecting the sorcerers of Labourd, related by that terrible counsellor with the utmost sincerity. Entire families, whole populations, daily live in presence of spectacles, the reality of which cannot certainly be admitted by the stoutest credulity. Now, all these people see, hear and touch; they are not more sure of their own existence than of the horrid facts that are incessantly taking place around them.

We have here, then, an established truth: collective and epidemic hallucinations are everywhere to be found in history. This is a fundamental point, and I beg the reader not to lose sight of it. All the phantasmagoria of the supernatural apocrypha crumbles to pieces before this simple remark, which establishes the veritable nature of hallucinations, and shows its importance. Therefore, does M. de Mirville take pains to protest "against the doctrine of *collective hallucinations*, against that truly monstrous error, established and propagated at the present day in all our medical schools, the positive adoption of which would be soon followed, first, by the complete destruction of all history, and then, that of all religion." (97.)

It results from the facts above mentioned; in particular, from the great fact of the diabolical visions which extended to multitudes the moment a process of sorcery had given the signal of the epidemic, and which disappeared as soon as the cessation of these proceedings had restored the imagination to its normal condition, it results from these facts that collective

hallucinations are not only real, but that they are produced on a formidable scale. When you shall have made the part of errors of testimony as large as possible, there will still remain a sufficient number of incontestible epidemic illusions, to place the reality of this phenomenon beyond a question.

If M. de Mirville opposed only the definitions given by the medical schools, I might be of his opinion. While some pretend to rank persons afflicted by hallucinations among madmen, and summon us to consider Socrates as a lunatic, others seem to admit that hallucination is scarcely an accident, that it reconciles itself with our normal condition, that we may have illusory sensations, and yet preserve our good sense.

I trust my readers will not confound such views as these with those I have just maintained. In emphatically establishing the profound distinction which separates insanity from hallucination, I have not thought to claim that the latter is a sensible act, or that a dispassionate, well-balanced mind can be subject to it. This would be to sacrifice the authority of the reason. If, indeed, there be no line of demarcation between our real and our false sensations, then all faith must be staggered by the same blow. The person affected by hallucination, who is not insane, is a man under the influence of great nervous derangement; collective illusions are, in the first instance, nervous epidemics combined with dominant error in supernatural matters.

It is by means of hallucination thus conceived, that I undertake to demolish ancient and modern sorcery. Not a single vestige of one of these marvellous stories remains, when we begin our work by removing the frauds, exaggerations, errors of testimony, the almost unconscious complacency of the spectators, and when we finish by a consideration of the individual or collective sensations, the power of which is, in impressionable persons, increased a hundred fold by a particular state of nervous excitement.

As for the doubt which it is pretended that our explanations throw on the Biblical supernatural, I repeat, for the tenth

time, we do not believe in the Bible because of this supernatural, but in this supernatural because of the Bible. The attestations accompanying the Divine revelations are clear and strong, independent of those by which it is attempted to sustain miracles and visions ; the testimony of Jesus Christ, to which is added the collateral testimony of our own conscience, communicates to the events recorded in the Old and New Testaments, a character of certainty that would also strike us as evidence, were it not for the interested resistance of our evil hearts. If we were reduced to the necessity of proving Scripture by the miracles, we might be opposed by objections arising from the perpetual errors of the most sincere witnesses, from the action of natural causes which seem occasionally to produce marvellous effects, as well as from the fact, that hallucination becomes all the more probable, in proportion as belief in the cause takes possession of the mind. It is important to know how to look these objections in the face, and we admit that none of them would be absolutely irrefutable if we had unfortunately been compelled to take our stand on the unsubstantial basis of miracles transformed into actual and principal proof. In vain would we dwell on the habitual calmness of Biblical scenes, the infinite distance that separates them from the scenes of nervous disorder in which the supernatural apocrypha is always engendered ; our opponents might, with reason, reply, that the narrative had been arranged after the fact, and that things did not happen according to the relation. But the man, who, starting from a historical reality, which our most conscientious opponents are unanimous in proclaiming, goes direct to the person and teachings of Christ ; the man, who, having learned of him that God has infallibly manifested the truth through the canonical books, and infallibly assumed the collection of these books, afterwards descends into his own heart, and asks himself if it be possible to shut his eyes to the glowing divinity of the Scriptures, that man contemplates the Biblical miracles in all their majesty ; his faith moves in a sphere

where the part played by earthly hallucinations, cannot disturb it.

The theory I propose does no harm, then, either to the general credibility of our perceptions, or to the authority of God's book. It is supported, moreover, by so many concordant observations, that it must make itself universally accepted. The question, indeed, is not of an isolated phenomenon, unconnected with anything else in our psychological experience. If hallucination were an accident, if we could perceive none of the symptoms which precede, prepare the way, or explain it, I can understand that it might be regarded with suspicion. But this is not the case. By the side of hallucinations whose origin is materially undiscernible, erroneous perceptions proceeding solely from the intellectual and moral man, there are others which can be traced to a previous physical sensation, and which offer a sort of clue to the science that would study this grave subject.

M. Brierre de Boismont lays stress on this difference, as making a profound distinction between hallucination and illusion. According to his ideas, the first seems to originate in the nerves to form the external image, while the second appears to follow an inverse method ; hallucination is subjective, illusion objective ; the one is a purely cerebral product, the other has a material object for its base. (108, 109, 123, 124.)

Whether such a distinction has or has not any foundation, it remains certain that illusions very naturally prepare the way for hallucinations. After once comprehending that the work of the imagination develops and distorts a real sensation furnished by the nervous apparatus, we have no trouble in also comprehending that the same faculty creates at once, the entire sensation, and that it causes people, in other respects very intelligent, to be preoccupied by some dominant idea. In illu-

sion, exterior objects undergo a prodigious transformation ; a stone, a bit of tapestry is metamorphosed into a phantom, a cloud becomes a regiment of cavalry, internal pain is converted into toads or serpents ; the head of a sturgeon served upon the table of King Theodoric, takes the form of the senator Symmachus, unjustly sacrificed. In hallucination, properly so called, mental obsession assumes a body which has no dependence on any real incident. Is that more incomprehensible than the other ?

Some other examples of each may aid us to see our way more clearly.

The celebrated painter, Reynolds, on leaving his *atelier* where he had been a long time at work, mistook the lamp-posts for trees, and men and women for bushes agitated by the wind. The image of the picture he had been painting, had so wrought itself into his brain as to become assimilated with all the sensations of the artist, compelling him to see a rural landscape in the streets of London.

M. Andral once saw at his side for the space of twenty-four hours, the dead body of a child, the sight of which had strongly impressed him in the morning. Newton was very much surprised when, after collecting the rays of the sun in a mirror, he perceived in an obscure corner of the apartment an exact reproduction of the solar spectrum.

The action of intense thought was never manifested with more brilliancy than in the famous experiments of Digby and his associates on the palingenesia, or resurrection of plants. So extraordinary are they, that I should not venture to speak of them, if the English men of science in the 17th century had not given the matter their serious attention, and had not pretended to obtain the reproduction of sparrows, after obtaining that of flowers. As it is impossible to suppose such men to be completely ignorant, or guilty of gross and concerted fraud, we have no alternative but positively to admit the existence of a collective hallucination caused by the vivacity of the idea which haunted their minds, and thus produced its own realization.

They took a flower, burned it, and then collecting all the ashes, converted them into salts by means of calcination. Placing these salts in a glass phial, mixing with them certain substances, and heating the compound, they saw a stalk, leaves and flowers make their appearance. This is wonderful, is it not? Unfortunately, the plant thus produced, never survives the experiment. As soon as the heat ceases, the spectacle vanishes, and nothing is found in the bottom of the phial except what was put in at the commencement: ashes were put in, ashes still remain. It is true that for a moment everybody saw the stalk, leaves, and flowers; they saw them over and over again; they were able to describe, to sketch them; the official reports testify to their truth.

Father Kircher, a learned Jesuit, endeavored to explain this vegetable palingenesia in the following manner. According to him, the seminal virtue of every substance is concentrated in its salts; as soon as the heat puts them in motion, they rise in the phial and move round in an eddy; the salts become free to arrange themselves in the same situation, and form the same figure as nature primitively gave them; the atoms that were in the root of the plant resume their original place, so also those that composed the stalk, leaves and flowers. We admit that nothing can be more simple! . . . or at least that the members of the Royal Academy of London in that instance, had, like other simple mortals, submitted to the law of hallucination.

The connection of ideas comes, in its turn, to facilitate the understanding of such a law. Why is it, that in winter, when passing by a wall where, in Spring, I have inhaled the odor of violets, I experience all the sensations of that sweet perfume? Why is it that a mere view of the ocean produces in certain persons, all the sensations of sea-sickness? The exact and perfect renewal of physical sensations takes place then, without any objective cause, and by the sole power of an idea which has been awakened in our minds. A recent number of one of the English reviews, relates an instance of a man, who, having in childhood eaten a quantity of sugar cakes just before his first

confession, was never able to return to confession for more than twelve years afterwards without experiencing the same taste in his mouth. A lady who had been ordered to inhale exhilarating gas, and to whom nothing but atmospheric air was offered, experienced all the effects of the gas with which her mind was exclusively occupied.

We have mentioned illusions and the connection of ideas ; let us also say a word in relation to dreams, which certainly bear some analogy to hallucinations, and which will contribute to throw light on our subject.

Hallucinations and dreams cling together. It was in dreams that most of the sorcerers attended the *sabbat* ; it was in waking hours that the *loups-garous* committed their depredations, yet who will dare pretend that the second phenomenon differs essentially from the first ? I dream by night that I see, hear, touch, taste ; I imagine, in broad daylight, that I experience the same sensations, which are, in both cases, equally false and equally real.

Equally real, is to say too much perhaps. The sensations of the man awake, who examines himself, and whose hallucination is limited to the mass of the impressions of the day, without anything rising up between this recollection and others, without there being in the general condition of the observer a change analogous to that produced when he passes from sleep to waking, the sensations of this man seem more positive, and consequently more astonishing. But that does not prevent dreams from also being very extraordinary, or from aiding us in the study of hallucination, since with it, they belong to the category of sensible perceptions, which have their origin in the thought alone.

During my dreams, I visit different countries, and converse with various persons. I fly through the air, I fall over precipices, and the impression is so strong on my mind as to awaken me.

During my dreams, my imagination seizes the least external incident to metamorphose and enlarge it. This is exactly the

process we have remarked in illusions. I hear a light noise ; the impression instantly becomes a part of my dream, and complacently adapts itself to the ideas which, at the moment, occupy my mind, whatever they may be.

Reminiscences and the association of ideas operate in dreams as in waking hours. Still more, the barrier between these two conditions is not so insuperable that I cannot continue to see with open eyes after I am awake, the terrible object whose apparition interrupted my slumbers. Abercrombie, in his work on the intellectual faculties, relates that a distinguished physician started up out of sleep at the sight of a gigantic baboon. He rose and made for a table in the middle of the apartment. This movement completely awoke him, and recognizing the objects around him, he perceived near the wall, at the other end of the chamber, the baboon, making the same grimaces that he had seen in his dream.

The transition from dreams to hallucination is here most palpable, nor is it the only thing to be observed. Among the magicians and sorcerers of the Middle Ages, the hallucinations of waking hours and the dreams of sleep were absolutely identical ; governed as they were by traditional belief, the society of the devil had acquired, in their eyes, a tangible reality which everywhere pursued them.

We have seen epidemic and collective hallucinations ; there are also numerous examples of epidemic and collective dreams. Does any one, in some remote Hungarian village, chance to speak of the recent exploits of the vampires, many of the inhabitants are immediately visited by dreams, in which they see their relations rising up out of the tomb, and coming to suck their blood.

The barrier between waking and sleeping is more easily passed than we generally imagine. It is not rare to meet men who, in dreams, have composed some remarkable works. The famous Sonata of Tartini, known as the *Sonata of the Devil*, was thus composed. Tartini had fallen asleep, after in vain trying to finish his work ; while he was in this condition, the

devil visited him, and executed a strain on the violin, which he wrote out when he awoke.

Here, the hallucination or the dream combines with the development of the faculties, that is to say, we meet at the same time, the two effects which the dominant idea usually produces. It would be well worth the trouble to inquire into these wonders of our organization, before falling into ecstasies over those of the supernatural apocrypha. With the study of man before us, his nature, his illusions, his associations of ideas, his dreams and his hallucinations ; with the unfoldings of memory, strength and skill developed by the action of a reigning idea, it is not necessary to seek further for the explanation of prodigies attested by history.

Let it also be observed, that a more thorough investigation of the subject of dreams would lead to a discovery of many other strange phenomena, throwing light on a mode of existence in which man gives body to his thoughts, apart from all ordinary conditions of sensation. Somnambule sleep, in particular, would furnish more than one observation of this sort.

Biological experiments would furnish no less. Surely, hallucination cannot be more complete than when I see and touch what you order me to see and touch.

Insanity itself might afford us much instruction on this subject. And yet, between it and hallucination, there are fundamental differences. Nothing has more contributed to the discredit of the natural explanation of sorcery, than its adoption of a theory which classes as insane, Joan d'Arc, Socrates, and all other distinguished people who have been affected by hallucinations. If, at the present day, we should proclaim the American "Spiritualists" to be positive lunatics, instead of showing that the phenomenon which has burst out among them results from the common laws of our nature, and has always been produced among men, even of the soundest minds, whenever certain absorbing ideas have reigned with unusual violence ; if we

should propose to submit these "spiritualists" to medical treatment, we would thereby only furnish arguments against us to the champions of the supernatural.

This has been precisely the fate of the systems, in other respects very scientific, which have seemed to insinuate, that because lunatics are subject to hallucinations, everybody troubled with hallucination is a lunatic ! To maintain such a theory, would be to play into the hands of our opponents. "What !" say they, "is your grand explanation, your famous discovery, limited to that ! You have discovered that madmen have hallucinations : that one fancies himself a king, that another sees himself a tea-pot or a grain of wheat, that this man hears the ticking of a watch in his head, that that man receives blows from a cudgel, or boxes on the ear by means of an invisible hand ! We have known all this a long time ; yet we should hesitate, notwithstanding his familiar demon, to lodge Socrates in one of the cells of Bicêtre ; we do not believe that the thousands of *possédés* or sorcerers, who formerly appeared in this or that country, were deprived of their intellectual faculties.

To such an objection, I do not see that we should have any answer. We must, then, take a more advantageous position, and show the profound distinction that separates the lunatic from the man affected by possession or hallucination.

This distinction does not consist in the fact that the hallucinated individual reasons falsely on one point, being perfectly clear-headed on all others. The same thing indeed, is to be perceived in many lunatics. With them, whatever may be the subject you suggest, always excepting one, they will astonish you by the correctness of their memories, the force of their arguments ; but touch the sensitive point, immediately a really calm and clear apprehension gives place to the most complete bewilderment.

It results from this, that if hallucination were only a partial derangement, it would be none the less a derangement. But it is by no means the case, and for the following reason :

The essential character of mental derangement is, that the

faculties themselves are injured, and that, consequently, false perceptions cannot be remedied even by the most palpable demonstration of their absurdity. Take a man, for instance, who, perfectly rational in other respects, fancies himself to be a grain of wheat, and buys up all the eggs he can lay his hands on, in order to make immense omelets, as well as to destroy the race of fowls, by whom he is in danger of being devoured ; endeavor to convince him that a grain of wheat does not buy eggs, that it does not draw a purse from its pocket to pay for them, your reasoning is in vain, you will not produce the slightest impression. With a hallucinated person, the result will be very different. In him, the faculties are perfect, but their regular exercise is momentarily perverted by the action of delusive ideas, and by extreme excitement ; in this particular state, his impressions are clothed with an objective reality, and he thinks he sees and hears what exists only in his imagination. He is, therefore, accessible to reason regarding the very object even of his hallucination. Make him touch with his finger the illusion of which he is the dupe, prove to him that his sensations cannot correspond to the facts exterior to him, he will reflect, and he will be convinced. If, in the Middle Ages, any attempts had been made to cause those poor women affected by possessions to see that the pretended apparition of demons was the work of their enemies, got up to convince them of their relations to Satan and their lost condition, they might have been cured of their hallucinations, at least, if they were not, in the meantime, driven absolutely mad. An American, who has been present at the celestial concerts, will confess and throw off his hallucination, if you demonstrate to him that other persons in the same place have heard nothing, that the sounds have reached only the ears of the initiated, that even among the latter, more than one has perceived no distinct sensation, has experienced merely the nervous contagion of the general ecstacy, and has succeeded in persuading himself only through the exertions he has made to persuade others.

This is not a slight difference ; it is a fundamental distinc-

tion. The essential character of hallucination is not that of insanity.

Thus we see many persons affected by hallucination, who mistrust their sensations, who analyze them, and succeed in getting rid of them. Doctor Brewster has related several examples of hallucination thus controlled by persons under its influence. Still further, M. Brierre de Boismont cites cases in which the hallucinated person does not wait the termination of the delusive sensation to make his decision, and to conclude, from the calmness of the individuals by whom he is surrounded, that the spectacle which strikes him so forcibly, is void of all external reality.

We here touch the extreme limit of hallucination, the point where it hardly merits to preserve the name, for the sensation that is suspected by its subject, can have no complete existence.

We are, then, far removed from insanity ! Hallucination presents itself to us as a phenomenon compatible with absolute reason. Indeed, it would sometimes seem to be the attribute of certain choice souls, among whom the circulation of ideas has greatest activity. Dion has his visions as well as Socrates. It is impossible to speak here of disordered or even of weak minds ; we must confine ourselves to the remark that the greatest men are obliged to submit to the consequences of false ideas, and that in the number of these consequences, hallucinations sometimes figure. Wherever we meet a nervous and impressionable organization on the one hand, a strong prepossession in favor of gross errors relating to the supernatural world on the other, we see erroneous sensations gradually gaining ground, commencing ordinarily with the ignorant, to end with the learned ; commencing with women, to end with men ; always preserving the double character of reconciling themselves with the perfect integrity of the intellectual faculties, and gravely compromising their exercise on a given point.

I would by no means be understood to declare that halluci-

nations are in themselves, good. On the contrary, nothing is more humiliating to mankind than the coincidence, in the same individual, of the most complete intellectual life and the grossest illusions. Hallucinations of great men, hallucinations of philosophers, hallucinations of ecstasies, hallucinations of the ignorant and superstitious, hallucinations produced in the darkness of the Middle Ages, and hallucinations produced in the middle of the 19th century, challenging its intelligence, and giving the lie to its pride ; these things are neither rational nor glorious, although they allow the integrity of the reason to subsist.

One last word before leaving the subject.

If it be certain that hallucination (that with which we are now occupied), is profoundly distinct from insanity, it is not less certain that insanity has its hallucinations, and that a study of the latter throws much light on that of the former. The hallucinated person is certainly not a madman ; nevertheless, between the madman and the man in full possession of his reason, the difference is not so great as is generally imagined. We should always remember the speech of Corvisart, as he showed Charenton to the emperor : " Sire, between these diseased brains and yours, there is not the thickness of a sheet of paper."

It is necessary, then, that we should carefully inquire into the action of diseased brains, and pay particular attention to all phenomena that are produced by any morbid condition whatever. Independently of the special affection named intoxication, and which, under the influence of spirituous liquors or hasheesh, gives rise to multitudes of dreams and hallucinations, to fever, hypochondria, and nervous diseases, the inflammatory affections furnish curious examples of deceitful sensations. I cannot better close this portion of my work, than by establishing this fact, and by contrasting illusions, the cause of which is purely physical, with those the cause of which is essentially moral. The latter have alone occupied our attention, but we should, perhaps, form a most incorrect idea of them, were we

entirely to neglect the others. We might imagine a wider difference between the two categories than actually exists ; we might almost forget that hallucination, even in men of sound minds, and in the enjoyment of physical health, takes place only by the action of false ideas which disturb the intellect, and nervous derangements which disturb the body. Let us say one word, then, only one word, of the hallucination of invalids in opposition to that of lunatics.

M. Brierre de Boismont describes numerous invalids in whom fever was accompanied during the waking condition, by the most horrid and distinct visions. He further says : "The hypochondriac, a veritable converging lens in which all the rays come to a point, is necessarily predisposed to hallucinations and illusions. This constant study, the fixedness of which nothing can interrupt, is favorable to their production. Thus, it is common to hear these invalids complain of detonations, hissings, musical trios, strange voices ringing through their brains. . . . Some of them fancy they feel the motion of an adder or a fish in one or several parts of their bodies." (198.)

Catalepsy, epilepsy, and hysteria, are also followed by a cortege of images born in the brain, the reality of which is not to be doubted. Dr. Gregory mentions a certain poor convulsionary, whose attacks, in general, came on only after an old woman in a red cloak had struck her on the head with her cane.

The best proof that hallucinations may be caused by disease, consists in the fact that there are some which come with it, go with it, and are suppressed by a purgative or a bleeding. (See page 420, and following.)

The best proof that hallucinations may be independent of all disease is that there are some which no medication will cure. Who would think of putting in the hospital those persons in whom hallucinations are produced by sorcery or "spiritualism?" Who, in such cases would recommend diet, shower-baths, or cupping?

M. Brierre de Boismont himself, who may be reproached with not having established a sufficiently distinct line of

separation between hallucinated persons and the insane, has too much sagacity not to protest against a confusion which the arrangement of the topics in his book, where examples of mental alienation superabound, would seem to favor. "By what lesions," he writes, "will you explain the false sensations of the child who in his terror sees devils, assassins, and robbers, or those of the man endowed with reason, who sees passing before his eyes, landscapes, cities, troops of men, &c., without being the dupe of these fantastical forms? Do you attribute this psychological phenomenon to a few drops of blood, more or less, to a nervous erethism?" (476.)

The explanation would throw no more light on the case of the man who is the dupe of his delusive sensations, or on that of the collection of men who submit to the same contagious hallucination, who contemplate it for hours in succession, who frequently see it reappear.

Let us therefore make up our minds to admit the two categories of hallucinations; those directly and exclusively engendered by a physical cause, insanity, drunkenness, or disease; as well as those engendered by a moral cause, terror, preoccupation, superstition, or the peculiar nervous condition which prepares for and accompanies ecstasy.

That this second category is real, is shown by the fact that the character of hallucinations is almost always determined by reigning ideas. Every period has its own hallucinations. The indecent visions perceived by all the possessed women of the Middle Ages, the filthy atmosphere in which all the hallucinated persons, without exception, then moved, find their explanation in the nature of the images put in circulation by traditional belief and golden legends. Since the mind of man has been nourished by other food, apparitions have assumed a different character, and I venture to affirm, that, by the grace of God, they will never go back to the old.

Even in the Middle Ages, the crusaders have their particu-

lar hallucinations, in which celestial knights, saints, and demons, bearing the lance and shield, play an essential part.

At the present day, we see neither warriors in spiked armor, nor the disgusting scenes of the *sabbat* ; their places are filled by fluidiform spectres, extraordinary locomotions, a supernatural mixed up with physics, mechanics, and chemistry.

It is a fact perfectly well known that the hallucinations of northern regions do not resemble those of warmer climes ; that hallucinations of the country do not resemble those of the city ; that hallucinations of seamen do not resemble those of landmen.

It is, moreover, impossible not to remark that general and epidemic hallucinations, those which best serve to explain the pretended supernatural, are seldom met with except at times when social commotions, philosophical and religious systems, or received opinions, impart to the mind a violent shock. Even then, they rarely attack any others than those who are subject to vivid impressions, and who, without being either insane or diseased, are a prey to prejudices which fill the heart, subdue the mind, and produce a nervous contagion throughout the whole being. Thus it may be observed, that Shakspeare, that great unconscious philosopher, never represented any of his characters as seeing and hearing spectres or sorcerers, excepting those who were agitated by excessive emotion.

We are now in possession of a sufficient theory. Hallucination accounts for many *soi-disant* supernatural facts, which cannot be explained by fraud, vulgar credulity, simple nervous excitement, or by fluid action. We shall be confirmed in this view as we enter upon the special studies embraced in the third part of our work. We shall see prodigies one after another disappear, and that, without in any degree compromising historical or religious certainty, without disturbing scientific certainty. Hallucination can no more be opposed to our experiments than errors of testimony can be opposed to our faith

Faith rests on no testimony of man, and experiments in which the marvellous does not appear, lend themselves to no hallucination; this fact has long been practically demonstrated. We have the right to say that the experimenters have been deceived, that they have not taken sufficient precautions, that they have not properly observed the facts, or that they have drawn unreasonable conclusions; we have not the right to parody in relation to them, the famous words, "It is your lethargy," and to reply to all their affirmations: "You thought you saw; but these things existed only in your own mind! It is your hallucination!"

Hallucination (I mean that of the man, healthy in mind and body) remains in general, the appanage of subjects connected with the marvellous. If it shows itself elsewhere, it is in persons under the influence of those nervous conditions which are more or less intimately related to ecstasy. With regard to the man plunged in such a condition, the sensations produced by exterior objects do not exceed in clearness, intensity, or duration, those produced by the hallucinations of sleep and waking, the latter especially. Whatever has been seen, heard, touched, or done by sorcerers and *loups-garous* of certain epochs, is, in their eyes, evidence not to be contested. Yet the purely subjective nature of these incidents cannot be doubted, when we remember that the children devoured by the *loups-garous* are still alive and wonderfully healthy, that the sorcerers pass in their beds, the time they devote to excursions to the *sabbat*, that nothing more is necessary for the multiplication of sorcerers than a process of sorcery, which seizes hold of the imagination, that these processes may be interrupted and sorcerers destroyed by altering the current of ideas, that visions change, are weakened, or disappear, according to the modifications of the dominant thought.

Here terminates the portion of my work which relates to the supernatural in general. No one will be astonished, I trust, that I should have treated it so much in detail, for the subject was new, or nearly so, although it is also as old as the world.

We were called upon to make our way through a labyrinth of facts, testimony, theories, and creeds; to separate the true from the false, and to reject the second without compromising the first. Up to the present time, the enemies of the supernatural apocrypha have been unjust to the Biblical supernatural, the adversaries of traditional witchcraft have denied the existence of the devil. They gave us the choice, between a sweeping acceptance of all superstitious traditions whatever, and a sweeping rejection of everything which is miraculous or prodigious.

It was important, then, to state the question in its true terms; such was my first care. I next sought to solve it; to solve, not to evade it. I knew, indeed, many sensible protestations against the fables of the Middle Ages; but protestations are not demonstrations. The question has most generally been met by ridicule or indignation, or, indeed, a mode of reasoning somewhat after this fashion:—there is something to accept and something to reject; the marvellous, doubtless, exists, but it is exaggerated; there have been sorcerers, but not so many as is imagined; there have been apparitions, but the reports far exceed the truth; the souls of the dead or demons may indeed play a part in cotemporary “Spiritualism,” but rational people cannot believe all they hear.

I have endeavored to avoid these insipidities, the common resort of a prudence that knows not what to believe. In place of remaining satisfied to take a middle course, I have tried to establish principles. I have not been content with vaguely repeating: “There are so many things we do not understand! the supernatural is so immense! our capacity is so small!” Renouncing this convenient humility, which is not so humble as it seems, I ask myself if God has not granted to us the means of resolving this problem, and if a modesty which should refuse to lay hold of them, would not resemble infidelity?

I have consequently ventured to take up the fundamental questions; and first, the great question of testimony. I have shown that its value, very real in matters which pertain to our

competency, becomes almost nothing in those which touch on the supernatural. I have challenged my opponents to admit as real, everything that is sufficiently attested. I have pointed out the particular causes for suspecting the marvellous things which our opponents would attempt to make us accept.

After having shown the contradiction that exists between this sort of testimony and reason, I have shown another contradiction which Christians should regard as decisive, and which men, strangers to the faith, should also hold as very important. That which testimony affirms in point of the supernatural, is denied by Scripture. Scripture does not authorize us to believe, either in the unheard-of prodigality of Satanic or Divine miracles, in the probable continuation of miracles after the Apostolic age, in a puerile and ridiculous Satan, in a Satan, the rival of God, and partaker of his sovereignty, in the gross materialism of possessions by contact, in Dualism, or in the mass of tradition which shamefully sums itself up in the fear of the devil, in the terror of his pretended punishments, and in the forgetfulness of his too real temptations. Where testimony says yes, the Bible says no, and *vice versâ*. We must decide, then, between the two. No one can, at the same time, receive the supernatural of the Gospel and that of tradition.

This point established, one duty yet remained. The supernatural condemned by reason, and impossible to the eyes of faith, preserved none the less an appearance still calculated to disturb the faith and the judgment. I was anxious, then, to prove, in conclusion, that there is nothing in this supernatural but the name ; nothing which cannot be accounted for by the most simple explanations. Setting aside gross credulity and fraud, properly so considered, I have shown that extraordinary facts range themselves under three heads: nervous excitement, fluid action, and hallucination.

What I have thus indicated in general terms, it shall now be my endeavor to exhibit in detail. The principles being established, it is time to pass to their application. Such is the design of the third part of this work, where we shall see defile

before us all the forms of the supernatural apocrypha, false miracles, spurious sorcery, the marvellous portion of magnetism, the ranks closing with the speaking tables and their spirits, in honor of which, all the rest have been resuscitated.

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SCIENCE vs. MODERN SPIRITUALISM.

A TREATISE ON

TURNING TABLES,

THE

SUPERNATURAL IN GENERAL, AND SPIRITS.

TRANSLATED FROM THE FRENCH OF

COUNT AGÉNOR DE GASPARIN,

BY E. W. ROBERT,

WITH AN INTRODUCTION

BY REV. ROBERT BAIRD, D.D.

VOL. II.

NEW YORK:
KIGGINS & KELLOGG, PUBLISHERS,
123 & 125 WILLIAM STREET.

1857.

ENTERED according to Act of Congress, in the year 1856, by

KIGGINS AND KELLOGG,

In the Clerk's Office of the District Court of the U. S. for the Southern District of New York.

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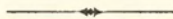
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The Third Part.



S P I R I T S .



CHAPTER I.

SUPERNATURAL APOCRYPHA.

FALSE MIRACLES.

A WHOLE book might be written on this subject, but let the reader give himself no uneasiness ; I shall not write it. I do not forget that the essential point of our discussion is the Satanic, rather than the Divine supernatural. I shall confine myself, therefore, within the limits of what is strictly necessary to demonstrate the apocryphal character of the Catholic, Jansenist, and even Protestant miracles, with which ecclesiastical history, since the death of the apostles, has been overloaded. Were I to pass them by in silence, I should give an indirect encouragement to sorcery, for it cannot exist, except in an atmosphere thoroughly saturated with the marvellous, and the prodigies of the devil find credence only under cover of prodigies of another nature.

It is necessary, moreover, and this I know by my own experience, that the minds of Christians should be disembarassed of these extraordinary manifestations, by which they are disturbed and troubled. As long as we vaguely admit the continuation of the signs which accompanied and sanctioned the first preaching of the Gospel, it is impossible that questions, each more perplexing than the other, should not present themselves for our solution. Why is the preaching of the Gospel no longer accompanied by the same signs ? Why do they seem to be granted to the enemies of the Gospel ? Why

are the epochs in which the world has been most forgetful of the Gospel, the most highly favored in this respect? Why do they share this privilege with the Buddhists—with the various branches of Paganism?

Thence, to ask ourselves, if there is anything that merits the name of truth, if the words truth and error correspond to realities; thence, to look upon all miracles with suspicion, and place those of the Bible in the same category with those of tradition, is not so far as one might believe. Let us, then, dispel the nightmare that possesses us; what we have already begun on the ground of principle, let us complete on that of facts.

But a difficulty here presents itself. Of what facts shall we speak? What are the facts that properly belong to the subject of the present chapter? Nothing is more badly classified than the Divine and the Satanic prodigies. We are all disposed to rank among the former the wonders of our friends, and to leave to the latter the wonders of our adversaries. Catholics, Jansenists, Protestants, each attributes the extraordinary acts of the others to the devil. They all reserve miracles to themselves alone, according to their adversaries only Satanic prodigies. Now, this is natural enough, for they all understand that the truth alone has a right to miracles, if miracles there be.

What, then, is the proper course for me to pursue? Shall I make a Protestant classification on the same principle that others make a Catholic classification? Not so. I shall not refuse the miracles of any party; I will take them from all quarters, and here examine whatever any communion holds to be miraculous. We shall, in this way, be enabled successively to study, and impartially reject the Protestant, Jansenist, Mystical, and Catholic miracles. I trust I may be pardoned for not increasing my task by adding thereto, the enormous proportion of orthodox miracles of the Eastern Church, although the interest connected with them, in consequence of the recent Turco-Russian conflict, may lead some to expect it.

In commencing this work, I am first struck by the surprising prodigality of miracles since the Apostolic period. Previous to that time, moderation had been the constant character of the Divine wonders ; but as soon as there were no longer either prophets or apostles, the windows of heaven were opened, and the deluge commenced. As I have already remarked, the first generation of the Fathers does not speak of miracles ; they begin with the second generation ; the third sees them everywhere, and the inundation continually increases, in proportion as we recede from the Age of the Apostles, until, at length, a return to evangelical light and civilization gradually reduces the number of these quite too abundant prodigies.

And they are not only abundant, they are of gigantic dimensions. Between them and the miracles of Scripture there is the same difference as between the Apocryphal and Canonical Gospels. The apocryphas never believe they can say enough ; they must have great wonders ; they connect them with the earliest infancy of the Saviour, with the history of his mother, of Joseph, of his grandfather, and his grandmother ; they call into action animals, trees, and, in fact, give us a legend in place of a gospel ; a thaumaturgus, instead of the Son of God.

The feelings excited in our minds as we read these apocrypha, we experience in a still stronger degree, on taking up the history of the miracles of more recent date. We find ourselves in presence of a fabrication of prodigies everywhere accomplished, at the north, and at the south, at the east and at the west, without measure, as without end ; we witness their regular as well as irregular fabrications, for there are centres of production which operate throughout the year, or upon a given day, with as much facility as precision.

Now, what are we to think, when, from this boundless profusion we turn to the Divine Annals, in which the lives of the greatest prophets are marked by but few revelations, some of them by not a single miracle ! Where are those of Abraham,

of Job, of Samuel, of David, of Solomon, of Esdras, of Nehemiah? Where are those of John the Baptist, of whom it is said, he is "more than a prophet?" (*Matthew*, xi. 9.) How poor does Jesus Christ himself appear to us in miracles, if we compare Him to the least of the devotees—to the humblest of the saints!

Yes, Jesus is the Judge before whose tribunal I will arraign your incessant wonders, and your irrefragable testimony. The exorcists of the present day suspend their man two successive hours in the air, while the Bible tells us that Jesus refused to the Jews the sign from Heaven which they so earnestly implored. And what reproach did the apostle Paul address to these same Jews? "The Jews require a sign." (*1 Corinthians*, i. 22.) They were animated by the spirit which afterwards progressively invaded the Church, and of which the Talmudic tradition, full of prodigies as it is, bears the incontestable stamp. God has never encouraged such a spirit; He gave to the apostles the power to perform some miracles, and He even signalized their ministry by this particular mark, occasionally imparting to the faithful extraordinary gifts in the proportion judged useful, and in places where the establishment of the Gospel demanded such a manifestation. But miracle for miracle, the miracle such as the Jews required, such as has been continually required by the men of tradition, the permanent institution of the miracle, God has never consented to, and the servants of God now, with still stronger reason, hold the language of Paul, "The Jews require a sign;"—"we preach Christ crucified, unto the Jews a stumbling block."

To preach Christ crucified, this is the great and perpetual mission of the Church; faith in Christ crucified is the true miracle. The sinner converted, the proud made humble, the troubled soul finding peace, the dead restored to life, what would you have more marvellous than these? If extraordinary signs necessarily accompanied the foundation of Christianity, Christianity is now able to maintain itself without them; the

miracle of conversions suffices to it. I mean, of course, real conversions, those which bear fruit, those which give us men, not full of hypocrisy or affectation, but men, simple, devoted, without a devotional garb, without conventional formulas, men who respect the truth sufficiently to feel a horror for the intolerance charged to protect it, men who renounce themselves, who give largely to the poor, whose right hand knoweth not what their left hand doeth, men who never waver from the path of duty even to serve the interests of piety, who sacrifice their popularity, if need be, their just and noble ambition, rather than sacrifice a single injunction of their conscience, a single command laid down in the Word of God.

The religion which is continually producing such men, enriching them while making them poor, fortifying them through faith in a free and perfect pardon, taking from them all esteem for their own works and for their own strength ; the religion, which has resolved the problem of virtue without pride, of humiliation without degradation ; which creates the "new man," without making him a stoic or an ascetic ; which separates him from the evil of the world, without separating him from its social duties and its legitimate interests ; which unites him to Christ without laying waste the heart, or uprooting the affections God himself has planted there, such a religion will never be deprived of miracles.

And what miracles, great God, do we see substituted in their place ! Miracles to the advantage of error, miracles against the Gospel, miracles in honor of persecution, miracles in the name of armed resistance ! Where are the Protestants who seriously believe that God has impressed the seal of his revelations on doctrines everywhere condemned in the New Testament ? Go, Christians of the Cévennes, reply to persecution by revolt ! Kill ! Defend your faith, sword in hand ! Offer this bloody commentary upon the words of the Holy Books : " Whosoever, therefore, resisteth the power, resisteth the ordinance of God." " For the weapons of our warfare are not

earnal !” (*Romans*, xiii. 2 ; *2 Corinthians*, x. 4.) Where are the Catholics who regard with indifference the following declaration : God glorified the Inquisition by miracles ; God sanctioned the long train of wickedness which led to and followed the revocation of the Edict of Nantes, by visiting the Camisards with a diabolical possession !

Our highest nature, then, protests against such doctrines. The question of miracles becomes complicated with a question of morality, and our conscience is the last thing we surrender to the golden legends woven into our creeds.

Protestantism is naturally less rich in miracles than other faiths, because it lives in presence of the Scriptures, and rejects tradition. Yet, it has not always been so faithful to its principles, as not sometimes to participate, on this point as on others, in the opinions by which it is surrounded, and we therefore see that Protestantism lays claim to a certain number of miracles, perfectly proved, as a matter of course ; there is no lack of testimony in their support.

Have we well considered the difficulties we encounter by admitting the genuineness of the supernatural manifestations which it is asserted have appeared in great abundance, and by successive epidemics since the times of the Apostles ? Is it very certain that these difficulties are overcome by attributing to demons all the miracles it would be inconvenient to attribute to God, when, moreover, they are distinguished by no special characteristic ? I doubt if tender consciences are so easily tranquillized. They require to perceive a direct connection, an exclusive relation, between the truth and miracles ; they must have visible marks whereby to recognize the supernatural of which the origin is infernal.

I would remind them that Montanus, and other heretics, did not exhaust the fountain of miracles and predictions. No party has ever failed for want of marvellous signs, and we might almost apply to miracles the saying of Pascal : “ It is easier to find monks than reasons.” The Jansenist Saint Épine, powerfully refuted the no less brilliant miracles of the

Jesuits. Miracles were performed in favor of Madam Guyon and the *maxims of the saints*, they were performed in favor of condemnations pronounced at Rome.

Whoever has studied the works of Swedenborg, is aware of the fact that in the midst of this abominable trash, certain predictions are to be met with, the accomplishment of which it seems difficult to contest, and that certain of his apparitions are better demonstrated than those of the most celebrated saints. The Swedenborgians of the present day still converse with angels, and live in the supernatural as fish live in water.

I would here briefly allude to the miracles of the Irvingites and the Mormons. In some other century, they might have had more success. According to present appearances, the first possessed not the gift of tongues, but the much less extraordinary gift of uttering a series of inarticulate sounds; while the second recommend to the world the new religion contained in the Bible of Joe Smith, always telling of their past prodigies, without ever performing any wonders in the presence of witnesses.

We are, then, free to pass on, there being nothing here that will, in any way, change the terms of the problem. In default of the Irvingites and the Mormons, we meet with Jews, Mussulmans, and Pagans; they have all abounded in miracles. Those of the Jews are attested by Josephus, and fill the two books of the Talmud. Those of the Mussulmans have neither greater nor less certainty than the miracles of the Christian legends; their amulets work cures and protect from evil; their dervishes, their marabouts, produce rain and fine weather; they have even at Maroc, on the borders of Ouad-Noun, a speaking mountain.

And the Pagans! how numerous are their miracles, to commence with the Indian gymnosophist Calanus, who, mounting his funeral pile, predicted the premature death of Alexander the Great, and who, not contenting himself with vague expressions, fixed the place and the moment of its occurrence, within

three months, at Babylon ! Has not Iamblicus, the enemy of Christianity, related a multitude of miracles, independent of those he himself performed ? Have Plotinus, Porphyry, all the Alexandrians, remained inactive in this respect ? And has Buddhism been left behind ? Gaudama, the famous Buddha, worshipped by three hundred thousand men, or thereabouts, worked more miracles than there are grains of sand on the sea-shore. Ceylon is still the theatre of the exploits of his disciples ; by means of the *prayer of the three refuges*, or by means of the *three reflections*, the monks of the Buddhist convents acquire a supernatural power ; their practices, their asceticism, the repetition of their formulas, obtain incredible results, unless, however, a moonbeam should chance to destroy the effect of the pious incantations !

I pause. It would be fatiguing and useless to make the tour of the world in order to prove the existence of prodigies in all latitudes ; they are found among all nations, in every form of worship, nor have travellers ever yet touched at any island without discovering thereon some form of the supernatural.

It is worth our while to reflect on this fact, for an impartial comparison of the proofs that confirm it, is not always as unfavorable to the Pagan or Mohammedan miracles, as we are disposed to think.

Having made the foregoing remarks, I enter upon the main subject of this chapter, and as well-directed *severity* commences with one's self, I shall first do justice to the Protestant miracles.

The principal object of my discussion, which I shall endeavor to keep within reasonable limits, is the history of the pretended Canisard prophets. With the exception of this important fact, I see nothing worth the trouble of refutation. That certain young girls should have had visions ; that a Protestant ecstatic of the 17th century, Christine Poniatovi, should have deserved a place by the side of Thérèse ; that Jung Stilling

should have mixed up Divine revelations with the mystical and quite too piquant account of his adventurous life, is not at all astonishing. The explanation may be sought in the character of the persons, and this explanation suffices.

The narration of a miracle, properly so called, has repeatedly been hazarded among us ; but for men reared in the school of the Bible, men who have remarked its celestial moderation, who are familiar with its declarations, and who have observed the historical march of traditions always attended by a train of prodigies, anecdotes of this sort have little charm. The more they believe in the Biblical supernatural, the more they mistrust the supernatural apocrypha. Thus, it constantly happens, that miracles, which, on their first appearance, are welcomed with enthusiasm, are, in the end, looked upon as doubtful. This was the fate of the miracle which, about twenty years ago, appeared in the columns of the *Christian Observer*, and various other journals. It represented a woman affected with palsy, as recovering the use of her limbs, rising up and walking at the voice of her pastor, who commanded her in the name of Christ. Biology has since demonstrated that the impossibility of acting sometimes results from a purely subjective idea, and that this impossibility is removed by modifying the idea. Science has not been contented with this observation, too special, perhaps, and which does not seem entirely applicable to a durable condition of the body ; it has proved that strong nervous excitement, such as may be produced by the expectation of a miraculous act, is calculated to bring about very extensive physical effects.* Henceforth, facts like the one above mentioned, will no longer be regarded by us as miracles,

* Here again, I must protest against all similarity that our opponents may attempt to establish between this cure and the miracles of the Bible. They state the question very badly when they ask us if certain Biblical miracles might not also be explained by a moral impression leading to a physical revolution? They forget only two things: first, that miracles which comport with this explanation, are surrounded by other miracles which do not comport with it; that side by side with the cure of paralytics, or convulsionaries, Scripture presents us the resurrection of the dead, sight given to those who are born blind, water gushing out of the rock, the opening of the Red Sea, the first-born of Egypt all perishing in one night; secondly, and especially, that we do not

but as natural revolutions, which, moreover, it is scarcely necessary to say, cannot be accomplished without the permission of Him, whose blessings are manifested in every event of our lives.

Before entering upon a brief examination of the Cécénol prophecies, I must say a few words in relation to an analogous fact, which, in our own times, has occurred in another part of Europe. A sort of epidemic sprung up in Sweden, in the years 1841 and 1842, bearing a most significant name : the *preaching malady*. The signal seems to have been given by a young girl sixteen years of age, Lisa Andersdocter, who, all at once, felt herself compelled to sing canticles, and who soon joined preaching to singing. She often fell into trances, or a state of vertigo. She pretended that every word she uttered was by direct inspiration of the Holy Spirit, and that she could neither add to nor take anything from it. Lisa soon had a multitude of imitators, especially among the young of both sexes. In vain did the government and the clergy oppose the contagion ; their intolerance, which was, perhaps, one of the principal causes of the movement, was not able to check it. The people generally took the part of the inspired ones ; they even found a certain number of partisans among the ministers, who were, in consequence, called *Lasareprester*.

I have no wish, the reader may be assured, to deny that there was something worthy of respect in the sentiments of the Swedish preacheresses. I am aware, that in this country, where habits of formalism and of persecution have been maintained side by side with the Episcopal organization, the religious life has been fettered in its development. Under such circumstances, it often happens that not being able to flow through the regular channels, it breaks the barriers, and finds vent in anomalous directions. But, whatever may be the sincerity and piety of

believe in the Bible, because of the miracles it contains, but in the miracles because of the Bible, which testifies to them ; so that the Divine signs related in the Holy Book are placed under the guarantee of the incomparable proofs upon which the Old and New Testaments rest.

the illuminated Swedes, the illumination is none the less a deplorable fact, which ought to be repudiated without hesitation. The prophecy of Joel is, of course, often quoted in this relation. "And your sons and your daughters shall prophesy;" but we have elsewhere seen it is inapplicable. The visions and prophecies of the illuminated are also highly extolled; and this is precisely the circumstance that renders them suspicious; they traverse both heaven and hell; they predict future events, including their own death, nor do I run any risk of being contradicted when I affirm that the event has almost always belied the prediction. In one word, they give evidence of nothing miraculous; in the first place, because there is nothing in these cases which nervous excitement has not always produced in ecstasies; in the second place, because there is nothing in them that is not in direct opposition to Scripture, which nowhere attributes to evangelical preaching the character of a contagious disease, principally attacking young girls and producing spasms and convulsions.*

This brings me to the Camisards, for nowhere have these deplorable symptoms been more persistently or brilliantly produced. It is without the slightest embarrassment that I make this admission. The more I am imbued with sympathy for their faith and admiration for their devotion, the more do I feel the necessity of utterly rejecting the grave errors which were the work of the men and not of their religion. It is of the utmost importance in the history of Christians, not to confound that which pertains to their sin with that which pertains to the Gospel.

* I do not affirm the accuracy of all these details, for they are furnished by their adversaries: my observations have reference only to the *inspired* preachers of Sweden. In regard to the religious awakening which, thanks be to God, has also been produced in this country and which certain circumstances, persecution among others, have sometimes confounded with the phenomena of ecstasy which seem to be manifested at the same time, it is wholly distinct from them. In the eyes of an enervated, formalist, and intolerant church, everything that shows signs of life appears equally suspicious; it indiscriminately denounces both ecstasies and Christians. But this is only a stronger reason for repudiating the incident of *inspiration*, which, in whatever degree it is produced, threatens to engraft itself on the glorious work of Spiritual regeneration commenced in Sweden, and thus really pervert and compromise it in the opinion of the world.

I am perfectly aware of the existence of two systems ; one believes itself bound to praise everything, or at least, to excuse everything when friends and co-religionists are in question ; the other regards it as a duty to condemn everything deserving censure, irrespective of friends or foes. The last system is mine ; I believe, not only, that it is the most sincere, I believe it is the best. There are things which we ought not to leave to our adversaries to say. Let us anticipate them, let us prove that our principles are principles, and that no consideration can make them waver. Thus our commendations will have value, our attacks will be taken seriously, we shall inspire even our enemies with respect, we shall exercise a salutary supervision over our own church, for it will be strong only so long as it is faithful, and whoever overlooks its faults, deprives it of one means of success. Such were the sentiments of the Apostles ; the vices of the Jews and Pagans doubtless grieved them, but it was to the wrong-doings and errors of the Christians that they reserved the public expression of their strongest disapprobation. They were jealous over them, "with a godly jealousy." (2 *Corinthians*, xi. 2.)

A similar jealousy instigates me loudly to disavow the Cévénol prophecies, as I always feel bound to disavow the, sometimes, grave faults of reformers and reformed churches. I have only one fear, in such matters, that of being too indulgent. Far from being interested in inventing infallible reforms and an impeccable Protestantism, I am interested in calling crime and error by their right names, in order that I may be justified in calling truth, truth. I am unwilling to forget that the Scriptures alone are infallible, that Jesus Christ alone is without sin, and that this is the fundamental doctrine of a communion which clings to no tradition, to no man, which recognizes no other rule than the Bible, no other head than the Saviour. Even the most distinguished members of the Protestant family, the Scotch Presbyterians and the French Huguenots, have been led astray ! This must indeed be candidly confessed. The atrocious persecutions inflicted upon the first, justify neither the

resort to arms by the Covenanters, nor the affectations of costume, doctrine, and language in which many of them indulged ; the long patience of the French martyrs under Francis I. and Henry II., did not sanctify their appeal to force in the succeeding reigns ; the abominable iniquity of the system established by Louis XIV., without provocation or pretext of any sort, was no excuse for the revolt and religious trances of the Camisards. They were victims of a refined and unheard-of oppression ; who denies it ? The first, and principal share of the crime attaches to the king, Madame de Maintenon, Letellier, Louvois, Father Lachaise, the bishops who demanded the extermination of the heretics, and those, who, like Bossuet and Fénelon, were content to approve it ; but that is of little consequence. Can the intrinsic nature of a bad act or of a false doctrine be changed, because of the provocations and extenuating circumstances which should be taken into consideration in a moral estimation of the persons ?

But the persons here are of much less importance than the acts and the doctrines. I challenge the most declared enemy of the Camisards, to contemplate without admiration and without emotion, their love for God, their firmness in the midst of torture, their heroic courage, which held in check the fortunes and armies of Louis XIV. Let us visit their galley-slaves, let us go among their prisoners of the tower of Constance ; let us follow their convocations in the desert, which, thanks to God, survived the preachings of the prophets and the campaigns of Cavalier ; let us follow them under the ministry of Brousson and other pastors, all destined to martyrdom, and we shall be assured that their prophesying was only an incident, a preparation, a corollary and a punishment for their resort to arms, and that it did not prevent, in these poor Christians, the manifestation of the most touching piety.

But as it is of the incident, not of the Camisards themselves, I have to speak, upon it I must concentrate the discussion. And first, to present the facts.

Persecution had burst out, more ingenious and more perse-

vering than that in the first ages of Christianity. Even before the formal revocation of the edict of Nantes, schools were suppressed, temples razed to the ground, Protestants were excluded from all the liberal professions, from all the art and trade corporations ; soldiers were stationed in their houses ; attempts made to carry off their children, and bring them up in the Catholic faith. The revocation of this edict, in 1685, was the crowning stroke to their misery ; their ministers were exiled ; the rights of fathers and mothers were trampled under foot ; the marriage of Protestants was declared null, their children became illegitimate in the eyes of the law ; they themselves were considered as Catholics ; cruelly punished if they practised their worship in any part of the kingdom, and not less rigorously dealt with if they attempted to leave it. The imagination can scarcely represent to itself a situation like this, lasting not for one month or one year, but for a long succession of years. The prisons were full of victims, the galleys also ; the devoted pastors who still sought to preach the gospel to their brethren, were either strangled, or broken alive on the wheel ; the bodies of men and women who on their deathbeds had refused the Catholic sacraments, were drawn on a hurdle and buried on the highway.

It was the duty of Christians to endure these persecutions to the end, invoking blessings on their executioners, and praying for the king. It was their duty and their privilege. Thus had they formerly done under the Pagan emperors ; thus had they since done under the first Valois. But the earlier Christians had aspired to power ; they had seized and abused it ; those of the sixteenth century experienced the same temptation ; the Cévénols, in their turn, believed themselves able to reconquer their religious liberty with fire and sword.

This insurrection was preceded by the deplorable phenomena of which I am about to speak ; they prepared the way for it, they constantly accompanied, and they survived it. There had already been prophets and especially prophetesses in 1688 ; some still existed twenty years later, after the capitulation

of the Camisards. Yet these ecstasies were so strictly connected with the war, of which they had been the first rumblings as they were the last echo, that the re-establishment of peace (what a peace !) led to their gradual extinction. The religious organization was then courageously undertaken and carried on by men who anticipated the sacrifice of their lives, and who, all of them, indeed, died for the cause. The influence of the prophets was at length gradually superseded by that of the pastors ; direct revelation retreated before written revelation ; the true authority, that of the Bible, resumed its exclusive empire.

But we have not yet come to that. Let us, on the authority of the *Théâtre sacré des Cévennes*, of Brueys, and of Fléchier, give a few details in regard to the Cévenol prophets. I shall not attempt to write their history ; my object is merely to point out their characteristic traits, without any pretension to chronological order.

The gift of prophecy was transmitted by breathing into the mouth of the neophytes. "Receive the Holy Spirit," said the prophets who performed the ceremony, and immediately the newly-elected began to *speak by the spirit*, and were, in their turn, endowed with the power of breathing upon other aspirants.

Thus we see that they did not hesitate to repeat the very act of Christ himself, who breathed upon his apostles, saying to them : "Receive the Holy Spirit !" We may judge from this first trait, what was the delusion of these poor Camisards. Let us now turn to the description of the phenomena which accompanied the exercise of the prophetic gift. It is gathered from the very fountain-head.

Elie Marion expresses himself as follows : "When the Spirit of God takes possession of me, I feel a great warmth in my heart, and its vicinity, which is sometimes preceded by a shuddering of the whole body. At other times, it seizes me all of a sudden, without my experiencing any presentiment of it. When I find myself seized, my eyes immediately close, and this Spirit

causes an agitation of my body, making me sigh heavily and give vent to broken sobs, as though I had difficulty in breathing. I quite often experience very severe shocks, which are unaccompanied by any sensations of pain, nor do they deprive me of the power to think. I remain in this condition for a quarter of an hour, either more or less, before I utter a single word. Indeed, I feel that this spirit performs in my mouth the words he wishes to make me pronounce, and which are almost always accompanied by some extraordinary agitation or motion, or at least by great fear. There are times when the first word that I am to pronounce is already formed in my mind ; but as a general rule, I am ignorant of what is to be the termination of the word the spirit makes me commence. It sometimes happens that I think I am about to pronounce a word or a sentence, when my voice utters only an inarticulate sound. During the whole time of these visions, I always feel my spirit tend towards my God. . . . It is to God that I entirely abandon myself in my ecstasies, in the government of my tongue, my mind being then occupied in thinking of God and in listening to the words uttered by my mouth. . . . While I speak, my mind is attentive to the words of my mouth, as though they were a discourse pronounced by another, and they always leave an impression more or less vivid on my memory." (*Avertissements prophétiques d' Elie Marion*, 6)

These are, certainly, not the usual methods by which the Holy Spirit proceeds. Peter, preaching on the day of Pentecost, did not listen to the words of his mouth ; Paul, writing his epistles, was not astonished at the words formed by his pen, he was not ignorant of the letters it was about to trace, nor did he abandon his hand to any other action than that of his will. Nothing is more contrary to the idea of inspiration, such as is taught us in the Scriptures, than this transformation of the prophet into a machine, by means of which the Holy Spirit forms sounds, or traces characters intended to express revealed truth. Every inspired word is a human as well as a divine word, and if it contain mysterious dogmas, predictions, prom-

ises, the whole bearing of which the sacred interpreter himself cannot grasp, and on which he dwells without comprehending all their significance, it would be insanity to deny that it contains a still greater number of exhortations than the prophet presents to his brethren, that he comprehends, that experience has taught him how to apply to the wants of his hearers or readers. Now the preaching of the Cévénol prophets has no other character ; it is made up of pious exclamations, calls to repentance and fidelity ; the passivity of the prophet is, in such cases, the evident sign of disease. Inspiration does not proceed thus.

Neither is it accompanied by a *cortège* of physical woes, nervous disturbances, shudderings, and sudden heat. Let us listen to further details : “ One of my brothers received an inspiration, and a few moments afterwards, I suddenly felt a great warmth in the region of my heart, which gradually spread throughout my body. I also found myself somewhat oppressed, and was compelled to utter deep sighs. I restrained myself as long as possible, because of the company. Some minutes after, a power I could no longer resist, entirely took possession of me, forcing me to make loud cries, interrupted by heavy sobs, and I shed torrents of tears. . . . I passed a peaceable night, but when I awoke, I fell into agitations similar to those which, since that time, have always seized me in the trance state, and which were accompanied by very frequent sobs. . . . The further I proceeded, the greater became my consolation, until finally, praise be to God ! I entered into possession of this blessed contentment of mind, which is a great gain. I found myself entirely changed ; things which had been most agreeable to me before my Creator gave me a new heart, became disgusting and even abhorrent to me. And, indeed, it was a new joy for my soul, when, after a month of silent ecstasies, if I may call them thus, it pleased God to loosen my tongue, and to put his word into my mouth. Even as his holy Spirit had moved my body to awake it from its lethargy and confound my pride, his Will had also moved my tongue and opened my lips, to make use of

these feeble organs, according to his good pleasure." (*Théâtre sacré des Célestes*, 66-68.)

And the prophet goes on to describe the wonder he experienced when a stream of words, of which he was not the author, issued from his mouth. At the time of his first inspiration, the Holy Spirit had said to him: "I assure thee, my child, that from the womb of thy mother, I destined thee for my glory."

Opening the same work (*Théâtre sacré*), at page 43, we there find the no less significant declarations of Jean Cavalier: "I felt as though a hammer had struck heavily on my chest, and it seemed to me that this blow had excited a fire within me, which burned in all my veins. This threw me into a sort of fainting fit, and I fell on the floor. I immediately arose without experiencing any pain, and as I lifted my heart to God in inexpressible emotion, I was struck by a second blow, with increased heat. I instantly redoubled my prayers, speaking and breathing only by deep sighs. Soon after, a third blow shattered my chest, and set me all on fire. . . . I had a few moments of repose, and then I suddenly fell into agitations of the head and body, which were very great, and similar to those I have since had."

Jean Cavalier adds, that a consciousness of his sins immediately filled his soul. The whole scene took place during the preaching of a young prophet, who concluded his sermon by directly addressing him. His attacks were always accompanied by prayers, tears, and he was a prey to such violent agitations, as to be repeatedly thrown on the ground, and forced to remain there. He was nearly nine months in this condition, during which time his tongue was never loosened. Finally, one Sunday morning, God opened his mouth. "For three times twenty-four hours," he says, "I was continually under the operation of the Spirit, in different degrees, without drinking, or eating, or sleeping, and I often spoke with more or less vehemence, according to the nature of the things."

There are no portions of even the most touching of these

accounts, which do not clearly indicate a nervous condition. Tears themselves, the natural sign of repentance, have never had, in the churches directed by the apostles, this spasmodic and contagious character. Among the Camisards, everybody shed tears when a prophet entered into his transports; they wept even when they did not comprehend the sense of his words, which were sometimes pronounced in an unintelligible tongue.

To prophecies were added visions. Whenever they found themselves in face of the enemy, the prophets and prophetesses saw thousands of angels descending from heaven, and coming to enlist in their ranks. If we may believe Fléchier, the event did not always correspond to these magnificent promises. He gives the following account of one of their battles: "They mutually embraced, and breathed in each other's mouths, in order to communicate the Holy Spirit; then they boldly went forward to meet the enemy, possessed by the idea that they had become immortal and invulnerable, or that, at the least, they would be restored to life in a few days. But they were surrounded, and it is the common opinion that three or four hundred of them were killed or wounded." (*Lettres choisies*, i. 394.)

I believe this to be true, although Fléchier numbers the dead with a satisfaction not very evangelical. I also really fear that Brueys, whose testimony is still more suspicious, nevertheless had reason for affirming that the Cévenol prophets sometimes resorted to ridiculous methods of overthrowing their enemies. Their breath first, and then the word *tartara*, seem to have been employed with this object. We read in *l'Histoire des fanatiques de notre temps* (i. 180), that "the prophets and prophetesses advanced to meet the troops with a furious air, blowing upon each other with all their strength, and crying in a loud voice: '*Tartara! Tartara!*' They foolishly believed that they needed nothing more to enable them to put to flight an army of warriors; but seeing that the latter marched steadily forward, bringing destruction upon the inspired ones as upon the others, these lunatics themselves took flight."

This is the statement of an enemy, and of an enemy so cowardly, that he cannot admit what the Maréchal de Villars and other antagonists of the Camisards have vied with each other in admitting : their heroism. Nevertheless, I am not disposed to set aside those portions of the truth which enemies, like Brueys, can alone see. The evangelical cause, thank God, will never have need to conceal the faults of any of its defenders.

The Camisard prophets rank, in many respects, among the most noble defenders of the Gospel, and I certainly shall not be so unjust as to repudiate them, because, under the influence of terrible circumstances, they committed grave errors. But the more I admire the Christian firmness they displayed in the midst of massacres and tortures, the more do I feel urged to distinguish between that sincere piety which looked to Christ, to Christ alone, on the wheel as in the combat, and the lamentable delusions which rather indicated a nervous epidemic, than the serious and sanctifying action of faith.

The Covenot prophets believed themselves directed in all their determinations by the Holy Spirit. Prolonged fasts were thus appointed for their observance, and under the influence of the peculiar condition of their organization at this time, these were easily endured. This is a fact of frequent occurrence in history, and one that I have already had occasion to remark. Elie-Marie relates that being at London, in 1706, he was repeatedly ordered by the spirit to preserve a protracted fast, which produced neither weakness nor hunger. "I had my inspirations," he adds, "every day, excepting the 23d, with agitations which were at least as violent as usual. And even the last day, the 28th, I received three inspirations, which I do not think had happened to me before. . . . I would say, in passing, that these fasts were to precede extraordinary things." (*Théâtre sacré*, 82.)

We are not to believe that the prophets of Languedoc considered themselves as objects of pity. Notwithstanding their convulsions and their sufferings, notwithstanding the tortures for which they were reserved, they experienced a joy, beyond

expression. Independently of their real piety, to which I have rendered homage, I am constrained to avow that this joy found its source in the idea of a direct and personal contact with God, of a supernatural guidance. There is so great an attraction in this idea, that the best Christians have always been obliged to guard themselves against it. Our ignorance and our pride are always tempted to overleap the space which separates the ordinary help of the Holy Spirit from his extraordinary gifts, the divine assistance of infallibility, and the communion of the redeemed with their Saviour by a special inspiration. All is not false in the unworthy raillery directed by Shaftesbury against the Camisard enthusiasm. (*Letter on enthusiasm.*) It is very true that many of those who took refuge in England, regretted their former emotions, and that in comparing the calmness of ordinary life to the delights of ecstacy, they shed bitter tears.

I have sketched a few of the principal traits of the Cévénol prophecies. I would now thoroughly analyze their nature. It is well worth the trouble, for we have, as yet, but little more on this grave subject than invectives without justice, apologies without discrimination, or stories without authority. Some have confined themselves to a relation of the facts without, in any way, characterizing them; others have allowed themselves to be carried away by very natural sympathies, and have admitted the reality of the miracle; while there are still others, who have listened only to their hatred, and have pronounced the word possession. Were the men of whom I speak *possédés*, were they prophets, or were they poor Christians invaded by a nervous epidemic? This is the question.

Possédés! I will not do this insinuation the honor of seriously discussing it. To insult the persecuted is, indeed, to abuse one's advantages. But there is a party whose work is never finished. However cruel and refined may be the religious terrors that it organizes, we may be sure it has not said its last word. In the times when it was the fashion to slaughter, it slaughtered; in the times when the world consented only to

shut up schools and places of worship, it shut up schools and places of worship ; in all times, it calumniates. Whoever has glanced at the history of the Camisards, knows in what light to consider these demoniacs of a new species, who, throughout their grave errors, towards which I am as little indulgent as any one, continually manifested the most sincere piety, prayed to God, sang psalms and hymns, loved Christ, who experienced in no common degree the feeling of repentance for their sins, and who joyously laid down their lives, accepting unheard-of sufferings for the sake of the Gospel.

If the first hypothesis is unworthy our attention, it is not thus with the second. Were the prophets of the Cévennes true prophets—did they reveal a true revelation—did they perform true miracles? My answer is already known. It will be easy to justify it, without resorting to the general principles I have elsewhere established, whence it results that any manifestation whatever of the supernatural, is, at least, suspicious, simply because it takes place after the Apostolic period.

My reasons are of two natures : first, the marvellous facts here quoted to us may be explained without the aid of miracles ; secondly and especially, miracles could not have been accorded to the Camisard prophets as a divine sanction of their aberrations.

On the first point, the demonstration is easy. That men, women, and even little children should have become capable of pronouncing long discourses, that they should have fancied themselves controlled by a strange power, that they should have believed they gave utterance to ideas which were not theirs, is not at all different from the known results of a nervous epidemic, or of intense preoccupation. If some of the prophets in the habit of speaking *patois*, spoke pure French while in the ecstatic state, or even mingled with their exhortations, words borrowed from other languages, we already know what are the prodigies of development and reminiscence called forth by a certain physical and moral condition. Our wonder further diminishes, when we learn that the pretended

strange tongues do not appear to have been recognized or understood by any of the persons present.

A certain prophet perceived, it is said, the persecutors at a great distance ; Clary repeatedly read what was passing in the minds of other men ; he thus baffled the arts of two spies ! These are the habitual phenomena of clairvoyance and penetration of the thought, produced by fluid action, in the experiments of Animal Magnetism.

The same Clary was made to undergo the trial by fire, from which he came out without experiencing either pain or suffocation ! This seems more difficult to account for ; yet, when we reflect, we cannot help making two or three remarks. In the first place, the witnesses may have been mistaken ; in the midst of such a state of excitement, and with men habitually moving in an atmosphere of the supernatural, we must not expect any rigid criticism ; the trial was scarcely proposed ere its success was looked upon as certain ; they were far from difficult in regard to the details. And then at what period was the account of these things written ! A few years after the occurrence of the events, when the minds of the narrators were still under the impression of the most affecting remembrances, under the influence of a most natural feeling which led them to exaggerate, to embellish, to set aside details calculated to throw doubt on the miracle, and thus to construct the legend of the Camisards, as all other legends have been constructed, with that relative sincerity which is determined to see things under their most brilliant aspect. I am sure that Clary passed through the flames, but I am not equally sure that he remained there as long as it was pretended. I grant that the dry branches may have been piled up as high as he, but I cannot assert that they were not light brush-wood, and consumed in an instant. I remember, in short, that the consequence of certain states of ecstacy, is insensibility and a sort of impenetrability of the body. There have been numerous examples of this insensibility ; without speaking of etherization, we are all more or less familiar with natural nervous crises, and other

crises produced by the action of magnetism, which entirely suppresses pain.

The phenomenon of impenetrability has been less studied, which is not to say, however, that it is less certain. The *Secours* of the cemetery of Saint Médard, will soon furnish us its irrefutable proof. We shall there see women, who receive on their breasts heavy blows from fire-dogs, and at their side, another woman, the salamander, who passes through the flames with as much impunity as Clary. In presence of such facts, we have only two alternatives : either to admit the natural modification of the organism, a sort of ecstatic induration of the tissues ; or to acknowledge the event to be supernatural. Now, in proportion to the ease with which I can conceive that natural impenetrability may have its limits, the more difficult does it become for me to conceive of a half-miracle. Clary, the Salamander, the crusader who bore the true spear, and all those who have come out unscathed from the trial by fire, would have perished on a regularly constructed funeral pile of reasonable dimensions ; the Jansenists who received thrusts with spits, and blows from fire-dogs, would not have been impenetrable to the axe of the executioner. The history, in fact, which shows us so much relative impenetrability, shows us not a single instance of absolute impenetrability. The unfortunate ones condemned to the fire, have invariably been consumed, and at the blow of the sword, heads have regularly fallen ; there is no exception to this rule. Try, then, to form some idea of a miracle, or even a Satanic prodigy, which preserves from the fire-dogs and does not preserve from the sword, which protects from fire those who are placed there in a state of freedom, and which does not protect those who are bound in the middle of it !

Thus far, then, we observe nothing more than natural effects of our nervous constitution, in relation to which, so little is yet known. The miracle of Clary must be rejected, and we return to the grand fact, the only one of any real importance, or at all characteristic, the fact of inspiration.

Now, I ask, how is it possible that this fact, such as it is here presented, should not have opened the eyes of all those who have been disposed by a very legitimate sentiment of sympathy, to look only upon the favorable aspect of the Cérénol prophecies. Here is something that speaks louder than all sympathies.

Not content with equalling the Apostles, the Camisard prophets hold a language that no Apostle, certainly, either would or should have held. Those who assembled at Tanzue and who wrote to the judge of Saint-Pierre-Ville, summoning him to release the prisoners, all represented themselves as Holy Spirits ! Indeed, it is always directly, and in the first person, that the Holy Spirit speaks through them. That which the Apostles never did throughout their ministry, that which only a few of the prophets under the old covenant were called upon to do when they employed the terms : " Thus saith the Lord," these women, these young girls, these children, are all allowed to do continually. " I tell thee, my child," is the invariable introduction to their exhortations. As I have already remarked, the prophet who is the organ of the revelation, is at the same time the hearer ; it is most frequently addressed to him ; he is absolutely passive.

In such discourses, predictions, properly so called, cannot be wanting. This is still another sign by which it will be easy for us to recognize the reality or falseness of the inspirations. Now, it is most often the case that the prophets confine themselves to threats, which, from their generality, make all special application of them impossible, or which are only the reproduction of Biblical declarations : " I will come when the world does not expect me ! Ah ! how many people will be surprised, how many troubles will happen in a few days, in various parts of the earth ! . . . My children, speak boldly ; my children, do not fear the torrent which overflows the bank ; I will dry it up in a few days. Rely upon my promises, which are certain and faithful. My voice will, in a few days, sound through the heavens, a marvellous voice, which shall bring terror upon the

fish of the sea. The earth will tremble and be afraid. (*Avertissements prophétiques*, 177.)

Apart from the too precise expression, "in a few days," which occurs several times, the whole of this revelation is confined to a vague imitation of passages in the Holy Books. A few days after the prediction, it was grievously contradicted by the event. I shall, however, not insist upon this circumstance, being fully aware that the prophetic style comports with the indication of times which seem near at hand, though they are so, only in the eyes of him "to whom a thousand years are as one day."

But certain of the Cévénol prophets seem to have given to their thoughts a still more decisive form. Fléchier mentions one, who, arrested by the military, declared that in a fortnight from that time his pardon would be granted, and he should go to Paris to convert the king ! I shall not believe this on the word of the Bishop of Nîmes, but my conclusion in regard to their predictions, is as follows : if it is not proved that the Cévénol prophets predicted falsely, neither is it proved that a single one of their predictions was ever justified by the event.

I now come to the two symptoms, which more than any others, perhaps, render the hypothesis of miracle inadmissible : the Cévénol prophets counselled armed resistance, and sometimes, even, cruel reprisals ; the Cévénol prophets had convulsions.

As regards the employment of carnal weapons, it is not necessary to remind the reader that this is explicitly forbidden to Christians (2 *Corinthians*, x. 4). Jesus Christ did not say to his disciples : You shall be peaceable and submissive, so long as you are not oppressed. He said to them : "Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you and persecute you." (*Matthew*, v. 44.) He did not say to his Church : Invoke the most fearful punishments on the head of the enemies of the Gospel ; he said to James and John, who wished

to call down fire from heaven upon their adversaries : "Ye know not what manner of spirit ye are of !" (*Luke*, ix. 55.) Paul did not write to his brethren : Resist as soon as resistance is possible, and whenever persecution seems insupportable ; he wrote to them in the very reign of Nero : "Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers. For there is no power but of God ; the powers that be, are ordained of God. Whosoever, therefore, resisteth the power, resisteth the ordinance of God. . . . Wherefore, ye must needs be subject, not only for wrath, but also for conscience, sake." (*Romans*, xiii. 1, 2, 5.)

If there is, then, an incontestable dogma, it is that of submission to established powers. (I do not inquire where these powers reside in a constitutional government.) If there is a single duty written in large characters on every page of the New Testament, it is that of never resorting to violent means in the defense of evangelical truth, never resisting our persecutors, with force, never cursing them. And yet it is maintained that God, contradicting himself, sent to the Camisards a direct revelation, contrary to that received by the Apostles ! This is impossible, and the question of miracles is solved for all those, who, glancing at the contents of the *Théâtre Sacré des Cévennes*, see there the calls to arms, the maledictions, the inflammatory appeals, instigating them to bloody retaliation. The men who held this language may have been deluded Christians, they were not prophets. We shudder, when, after having read the sacramental words : "I tell thee, my child," we are introduced to discourses which breathe only a spirit of warfare and a hatred, which, in any other than a Christian point of view, would seem only too justifiable. But our point of view is here that of Christianity, since the question is of prophecy ; now, the Holy Spirit does not preach hatred, it does not order the destruction of priests, active as they may have been in shedding innocent blood. Yet we are told of the execution of a wretched curé, who knelt at their feet, imploring pardon for his crimes ; of a priest precipitated from the top of his church steeple ; of

certain merciless judgments pronounced by the organ of the prophets, which make us recoil in horror. That these men were driven to extremity, is no excuse ; the Holy Spirit cannot be so driven. It does not teach us to defend the Gospel by opposing evil to evil ; it teaches us to " overcome evil with good." (*Romans*, xii. 21.)

The convulsions of the Cévenol prophets is an equally strong argument against their pretended inspiration. Before speaking of the facts, which, unfortunately, were real, I would first allude to the circumstances that produced them ; the responsibility of these melancholy scenes should rest on the really guilty ones. For many long years, the poor Protestants of Languedoc and Vivarais had been subjected to persecutions, the perseverance and cruelty of which, it would be difficult for us, at the present day, to conceive. The deepest and holiest sentiments of their nature were wounded ; without any provocation whatever, they were deprived of their temples, their schools, their places of public worship, their rights as citizens, their rights as fathers and mothers. Yes, the institution of the family itself, was, with them, to all intents and purposes, abolished ; now, in the midst of the inexpressible emotions caused by so many accumulated woes, in the midst of *dragonnades*, insults, ruin, they were, by the exile of all their ministers, bereft of the enlightened counsels, of which they were more than ever in need. The ecclesiastical organization, which was at a later period, formed anew in the desert, had been destroyed at the first onslaught. Is it, then, difficult to conceive that a community so unfortunate, so agitated, so unexpectedly deprived of the elders or ministers, whom the Apostles had established in all the churches, should have fallen a prey to a nervous epidemic and to direct inspiration ? In removing the ministers, a place was prepared for the prophets.

The epidemic and nervous character of the phenomena which were then manifested, cannot be doubted.

One sign alone suffices to make this evident. The spirit of prophecy appeared first among women and children. It

rapidly invaded entire neighborhoods ; fire does not spread more swiftly among the prairies of the New World. Thousands of women, according to the Marquis de Guiscard, commenced to prophesy ; the Maréchal de Villars speaks of a town in which all the women and young girls prophesied, all without exception. The *Théâtre sacré des Cévennes* (17) fixes the number of children who prophesied at one time, at not less than eight thousand. He quotes the following declaration of Pierre Chamau, from which we may infer the physical and moral condition of those poor children : “ I knew at Tyès, a man by the name of G——, whose little boy, only five years of age, prophesied. Several times, in my presence, he was, through the power of the Spirit, seized with violent agitation of the head and every part of the body. After that, he spoke, he predicted misfortune to Babylon, and disturbance in the Church. He exhorted loudly to repentance ; but the poor little fellow was sometimes so agitated, that his words became incoherent. He always spoke in good French. He made use of these expressions : “ I tell thee, my child ; my child, I assure thee.” (19.)

The infant prophets multiplied to such a degree, that their enemies grew weary of arresting them. They bore their ill-treatment with unexampled firmness ; the dungeons in which they were huddled together, resounded with the psalms sung by their young voices. Orders were finally issued to make no more such prisoners. Some of them would really have required the care of a nurse. We have here the statement of Jean Vernet and Jacques Dubois. (*Théâtre Sacré*, 15, 32.)

“ About a year previous to my departure, I went with two of my friends to visit another friend, Pierre Jacques. While we were together, a daughter of the family came to call her mother, who was seated with us, and said to her : ‘ My mother, come see the infant.’ Whereupon the mother also called us, telling us that we might see the speaking infant. She added that we had no occasion to be frightened, and that this miracle had already happened. We all immediately followed her.

The infant, three or four months old, was lying wrapped up in the cradle, and it had never spoken or walked of itself. When I and my friends entered, the child spoke distinctly in French, in quite a loud voice, considering its age, so as to be plainly heard in every part of the chamber. It exhorted to repentance, just as I have seen others do when in a state of inspiration. . . . We all prayed and wept around the cradle. After the ecstasy had passed away, I saw the child in its ordinary condition. Its mother told us that its body had been agitated at the commencement of the inspiration, but I did not observe it when I entered."

"I have seen at Quissac, a boy only fifteen months old, in the arms of its mother, and who was affected by violent agitation of the whole body, particularly of the breast. He spoke with sobs, in good French, distinctly and in a loud voice, but with occasional interruptions, which rendered it necessary to listen with the utmost attention, in order to hear certain words. The child spoke as though God were speaking through his mouth, always making use of this expression to give certainty to his words : 'I tell thee, my child.'"

Jaques Dubois adds that he has seen more than sixty children between three and twelve years of age, who were in a similar condition. We will take that for granted ! But in regard to the nursing babies spoken of, I must be allowed to think that their certificates of baptism were not communicated to the witness. Those who are familiar with the customs of the south of Europe, where children are often kept longer at the breast than in the north, will have no difficulty in believing that Dubois might have been deceived in the age of the little prophets. When, in addition, we remember the natural tendency of the human mind to embellish and exaggerate ; when we remark, moreover, that the discourses were so incoherent that they could not always be understood, we shall arrive at the conviction, that the children, who were, doubtless, more than fifteen months old, were seized with spasms, accompanied by cries and confused words, among which, figured

those in most common use around them. Nothing more clearly demonstrates the fact of the epidemic and nervous contagion. The shock was communicated to these poor children, and in consequence of the well-known development of reminiscences and faculties, they reproduced, first, the convulsions, and then the prophecies, in the style of those that were continually taking place beside their cradles; they servilely repeated them, not forgetting the formula: "I tell thee, my child." The Scriptures which speak of the Hosannas sounded by the children of Jerusalem upon occasion of the triumphal entry of the Saviour, and which thus clearly explain the words of the eighth Psalm: "Out of the mouths of babes and sucklings hast thou ordained strength;" the Scriptures nowhere present us with the spectacle of eight thousand prophets in short clothes, repeating the refrain of a monotonous inspiration, and showing by the agitation of their limbs, the physical disturbance of their system.

Now, this is the point to which we must return. The convulsions, together with their epidemic character, settle beyond dispute, the nervous condition of the Cévénol prophets.

Jurieu thus expresses himself in his *Lettres prophétiques*: "A certain man, who, at a time when it was the fashion to imprison the prophets, thought of nothing less than prophesying, one night, on going home from a meeting in company with other villagers, suddenly fell, as if seized with the falling sickness; he threw himself on a bed of snow two feet deep; then, with his eyes closed like a person asleep, he began to preach and to prophesy."

This is one example among a thousand. "I have seen at Aubessargues," says Guillaume Bruguier, "three or four inspired children, between three and six years of age. While I was in the house of a certain Jacques Boussignes, one of his children, three years old, was seized by the Spirit, and fell on the ground. He was greatly agitated, and struck his breast violently with his hand, saying, at the same time, that his sufferings were caused by the sins of his mother. He added that we were in the last days, that it was necessary to fight valiantly. . . . I

was also present on one occasion, when the little Suzanne Jonguet, who was four or five years of age, fell into agitations nearly similar to those of the little Boussignes. She spoke aloud, distinctly, and in good French, and I am sure that when she is not in the ecstatic condition, she speaks only *patois*. . . . While I was at Terroux, I saw a little girl six years old, named Marie Suel, who, after violent motions of her body, and particularly of her chest, which lasted a quarter of an hour, began to speak. Her father and mother, two of her brothers, and several other persons were present with me. She said that we all of us did nothing but offend God ; that we must alter our conduct and live better in the future. She added that Babylon would be shortly destroyed." (*Histoire sacrée*, 36.)

Jacques Dubois (33) also speaks of a child, who, in his presence, fell into agitations of the head and chest, talking in a loud voice, in good French, and likewise predicting the approaching ruin of Babylon.

The brother of Brugnier began to prophesy at fifteen years of age. "When the Spirit seized him, he ordinarily fell on the ground, and became very pale. While we were together at a meeting of about two hundred persons, in the neighborhood of Aubessargues, he was placed as sentinel on a tree close to the meeting ; I saw him fall from this tree, more than twelve feet high, he having been suddenly seized. He was not injured. After various agitations, which lasted about a quarter of an hour, he said, among other things, that there were people at the meeting who had come to betray it." (37.)

Jacques Rebout, "who had received pardon," also fell, without doing himself any injury, from a rock six feet high. He had been suddenly seized by the Spirit. There were similar falls in all the marches and counter-marches of the Camisards. Claude Arnassan relates the following fact, which seems to bear the marks of real epileptic fits : "There was at my father's house, a shepherd named Pierre Bernard, who was a poor idiot. He sometimes entreated me to take him to the meetings, but I dared not do it, for I mistrusted his weakness, and consequently,

his indiscretion. I ventured once, however, and took him to a meeting that was held at night. When we had arrived there, I observed that he fell on his knees, in which attitude he remained nearly two hours. At the end of that time, he fell down as though dead, and his whole body became strongly agitated. The next day he had a relapse, and his agitations were infinitely more violent. As he fell over on his back, his body was raised and tossed about, as though he had been shook by a strong man. We were afraid that he would be wounded, and three of us tried to hold him, but it was impossible to stop the violence of his movements. He continued in the same condition, striking himself, and the sweat pouring from every part of his body. The same incidents occurred to him two or three times before he spoke ; but, finally, his great Master having opened his mouth, the first thing he said was that he had been thus tormented because of his sins." (31.)

All the testimony unites in establishing the universality of the *agitations*. The movements of the head, of the chest and the stomach, were the most ordinary. Isabeau Charrus established the following distinction : "When the inspired ones preached or exhorted in public, their agitations were not very great, and did not last long. . . . But when they predicted the judgments of God, and spoke of other things concerning the future, it almost always happened that they first fell on the ground. The head, the arms, the chest, and the entire body, were sometimes affected by severe shocks, and they seemed to have a certain difficulty in breathing, which prevented them from speaking with facility." (35.)

The epidemic character of the convulsions is not less well established than their frequency. I shall not dwell on what is told us by Brueys, who affirms that the greater number of the inspired ones felt the Spirit take possession of their bodies, only when they supported on their knees the head of some prophet fallen into convulsions ; that this Spirit often entered by the thigh, which seemed to be of iron, and that he penetrated thence throughout the body, which was agitated by a shudder.

He relates several facts, among others that of the contagion submitted to by Madam de B . . . the widow of a counsellor to the parliament of Grenoble. She became inspired, it was said, in consequence of having listened to the improvisations of the prophetess Isabeau. It is added, that, persecuted by the intendant of Dauphiny, she fled from his power, and took her course along the banks of the Drôme, in order to gain her native place, situated at Liveron. Nearly three hundred persons who heard her speak, were seized with the prophetic spirit.

But what does all this signify? The proof of the epidemic is gathered more from its progress than from its witnesses, and no one can have followed this invasion, which commences with a few individuals to spread throughout their immediate neighborhood, no one can have studied the phenomenon daily attendant on the steps of the prophets, communicating prophetic gifts in every direction, sometimes to entire populations, without becoming convinced that a sort of nervous disorder was, at that time, prevalent in the Cévennes.

The striking analogy that exists between the characteristics of the Cévenol prophecies and those of somnambulism, will complete this demonstration. I take, as an example, the most celebrated of the prophetesses, Isabeau Vincent, ordinarily called the shepherdess of Cret. In this singular, incoherent woman, who prophesied a long while against Catholicism, and finally became a Catholic, we find united, in an eminent degree, the features which distinguish the pathological condition of the self-styled inspired ones. None of them had a greater number of paroxysms; none of them inoculated more persons with the "gift of the Spirit." Now, is there any reason for not believing her the subject of a sort of somnambulism? "Sometimes," writes Doctor Calmeil, "she seemed to be overcome by a profound lethargy, from which all attempts to rouse her were in vain; calling, shaking, pinching and burning even, had no effect to disturb this apparently slumbering condition, in which she often sang psalms in a clear and intelligible voice. The movements of her lips were moderate, exempt from spasms, her ges-

tures measured and appropriate. After having sung, she could be heard improvising prayers, reciting long paragraphs from the Bible, commenting on the Holy Scriptures, apostrophizing the inspired ones, pronouncing sermons full of power." (*De la folie*, ii. 300.)

Jurieu has made the remark, that on awaking from these crises of sleep, which sometimes lasted four or five hours in succession, Isabeau no longer remembered the ecstatic preachings with which the time had been almost entirely occupied; she felt no fatigue, and declared that she had slept very well. I mention these somnambule fits, not that they were common to the prophets generally, but because, having established them in the case of the shepherdess of Cret, they complete the picture of the nervous epidemic, whose reality we have maintained.

Will it now be necessary for me to prove in detail that such a condition cannot accompany the gifts of the Holy Spirit? If any one has had courage to read, in this relation, the ecstasy of the Apostle Paul, or the pretended convulsions of Balaam, he will already have anticipated my arguments.

The passage bearing reference to the ecstasy of Paul, is to be found in the second epistle to the Corinthians: "It is not expedient for me, doubtless, to glory. I will come to visions and revelations of the Lord. I knew a man in Christ above fourteen years ago (whether in the body, I cannot tell; or whether out of the body, I cannot tell: God knoweth); such an one caught up to the third heaven. And I knew such a man (whether in the body, or out of the body, I cannot tell: God knoweth); how that he was caught up into paradise, and heard unspeakable words, which it is not lawful for a man to utter." (xii. 1, 4.)

Now, what relation is there between this event and the crises of the Cevenol prophets? Did Paul have the falling sickness? Did he experience violent shocks, agitations of the head, the chest, and other parts of the body, when he was about to preach the Gospel? By no means. But God, in his wisdom, saw fit to transport to Paradise this pious witness, who was to endure

so much suffering, and to give a foretaste of celestial joys to this man who was to encounter so many trials on earth. God did that, and he concealed from his servant the precise mode of his translation : " Whether in the body, I cannot tell."

Was it, at least, an incident of frequent occurrence in the case of the Apostle, as were the prophetic paroxysms among the Camisards ? Not at all. The fact appeared to Paul so extraordinary and exceptional, that he hardly dared mention it, lest he should seem to glorify himself. It is, indeed, quite enough that such a privilege should be accorded even once in a long life : " fourteen years ago."

I have spoken of privilege. All the Apostles, all the prophets of the primitive church, did not then have their ecstasies, as all the Cévénol prophets had. None of Paul's cotemporaries appear to have received the same favor : " I knew a man in Christ."

In short, ecstasy was so little resorted to as a means of Divine revelation, that Paul carefully abstained from describing what he had seen, or relating what he had heard in this state of rapture : " Unspeakable words, which it is not lawful for a man to utter."

How, then, are we to regard the only passage, by which it is attempted, at all hazards, to justify the nervous epidemic that visited the poor Camisards ? We are to regard it as an allusion to the miraculous rapture which was, on a single occasion, accorded to a single Apostle, and which remained without direct connection with the exercise of the prophetic gift, and unaccompanied by convulsions.

But Balaam ! Balaam had no more convulsions than Paul... What do we read in the twenty-fourth chapter of *Numbers* ? " And he took up his parable and said, Balaam, the son of Beor, hath said, and the man whose eyes are open hath said : He hath said, which heard the words of God, which saw the vision of the Almighty, falling *into a trance*, but having his eyes open : how goodly are thy tents, O Jacob, and thy tabernacles, O Israel !" Our adversaries would try to make us dis-

cover here, a sort of epileptic, who falls on his back, his eye fixed and staring, and in this dignified situation, uttering magnificent blessings placed by the Lord in his mouth, and boasting, moreover, of his condition. "And the man whose eyes are open!" Why do they not ask how it is that the same phenomenon was not reproduced in any other prophet of the Old and New Testaments? Why do they not ask if a more natural signification might not be attributed to the words of Balaam? Now, to commence with the expression which first presents itself, which recurs several times, and which evidently controls the rest, what are we to understand by a man "whose eyes are open?" An epileptic rolling on the ground, with staring eyes, or a *seer*? It is impossible to hesitate. The men "whose eyes are open," seers, are everywhere to be met with in the Bible; it was natural that Balaam, in commencing his discourse, should refer to the fact that he was a seer or prophet. But in his character of seer, he "saw the vision of the Almighty falling into a trance." Is there any cause for astonishment in the fact, that at the moment when the venal prophet is compelled to prophesy faithfully, he should be led to mention his respectful and absolute submission in presence of divine revelations? As soon as the vision shows itself to the open eyes of the prophet, he prostrates himself with his face to the ground, he not only prostrates himself, but he is overwhelmed by the manifestation of a sovereign will, the empire of which he cannot resist.

Vain will it be to seek, we shall discover in the Scriptures no trace of prophetic convulsions. They are to be found in Paganism; the priestesses of Delphi experienced physical invasions of the nervous crisis, preparatory to their pretended inspirations. The God! Behold the God! The howling dervishes of Islamism, the sorcerers who figure in the *balas* of the negro idolaters, the inspired men of India, Kamtschatka and Polynesia, indicate their supernatural condition by their disordered movements. This gross and impious error has been reproduced in all times and places, even in the bosom of Chris-

tian civilization—even among men of real piety. We have a remarkable example of this in the people of the Cévennes ; we are furnished with another in the Shakers or trembling Quakers, whose deplorable errors deservedly scandalize all who witness them, although it would doubtless be unjust to dispute their religious sincerity, because we are obliged to dispute their good sense.

Their measured movements are one means of producing the trance and the visions by which it is accompanied. Herein consists the foolishness of the direct revelation, which under various forms has been the ruin of those who could not remain content with *what is written*. M. de Mirville has, on this point, set up a claim that is really *naïve* : Catholicism, according to him, is exempt from this foolishness, which attacks only heretics, Jansenists, or Protestants ! I shall not endeavor to prove to him that the Shakers are not more Protestant than Catholic, that Protestantism, which is the religion of the Bible, has nothing in common with those who, after the example of the Shakers or Mormons, substitute their personal revelations for the Bible ; I shall proceed straight to the fact, and will show him convulsionaries in the bosom of Catholicism. I will answer his triumphant question, “ Why is the Roman Church so pure from those convulsive follies that are to be found at the head and the foundation of all the sects opposed to it ? ” (167).

We pass over the really extraordinary accusation contained in these words ; whoever has opened any book on history will do us justice and will know that in Protestantism, to speak only of it, convulsions have been an accident as rare as they have been circumscribed. I do not pretend that they have had any other character in the Roman Church ; but it is impossible for me to shut my eyes to the length of time they have endured in it, or to the approbation, if not avowed, at least implied, with which it has welcomed them.

Among its saints, some, and a large proportion, have been subject to nervous accidents and trances. Those of Ignatius de Loyola are well known ; François d'Assize played the fool ;

he was followed by the children of the towns through which he passed, and these things were certainly not much more edifying than the dances of the Shakers. Thérèse, agitated, suffering, fell into a state which it is impossible not to compare to that of the cataleptic convulsionaries. She herself thus describes it : "The soul, in its rapture, seems no longer to be in or animate the body—warmth is extinguished, respiration ceases, neither the least breath nor movement can be perceived ; all the limbs become cold and stiff, the countenance loses its color, and the whole body appears in a dead or dying condition."

M. Calmeil, from whom I extract the above quotation, mentions several other facts. "Blosius," he says, "relates that Saint Elizabeth de Spalberk was subject to frequent ecstatic fits ; that during these attacks, she remained without feeling or motion, even that of respiration ; that her body was so stiff that one part of it could not be moved without being followed by all the rest. Marguerite du Saint-Sacrement sometimes became as stiff as a corpse ; the extremity of her foot could not be moved without also moving her body. Cardinal de Vitri attests that in his time, several godly women, intoxicated by the abundance of the Spirit of God, lived in ecstatic raptures ; that they were without voice, without any feeling in relation to exterior things ; that the peace of the Lord with which they were filled, so absorbed their senses as to render it impossible for any noise to awaken them ; that they were not conscious either of the wounds or blows inflicted on their bodies. Marie de l'Incarnation, the foundress of the Carmelites in France, often appeared as though dead, while her soul, in an ecstatic rapture, received the impression of divine things. Madeleine de Pazzi sometimes fell into a trance which continued five or six hours ; in 1585, on the evening before Whitsunday, she was seized with a trance, in which she remained eight days and nights, without being accessible to impressions from the material world. Marguerite de Cordoue was sometimes so utterly deprived of her senses, as to seem really dead." (Vol. ii., 342.)

He adds, on another page (399) : "Have not convulsions similar to those of the cemetery Saint Médard, been repeatedly seen to take place on the tombs of the greatest saints? . . . might not the phenomenon manifested on the monument of Saint Augustin of Canterbury, in which a lame, deaf, and dumb woman was seized with convulsions and cured of her infirmities, also be effected on the monument of a saint like Paris? . . . Saint Marie d'Oignies, during her nervous crises, writhed her limbs in a frightful manner : she struck herself with stones. Saint Ursula, the foundress of the Order of Théatins, struggled so violently during her convulsive fits, that the spectators more than once believed that she was vexed by devils. Marguerite de Cordoue gnashed her teeth, rolled on the ground, writhed like a worm, in open church and before the populace. Saint Thérèse and Catherine de Sienne were so violently agitated during their ecstasies, that it seemed as if their limbs would separate from their bodies."

These fanatics (*flagellants*) who so abounded in Europe, from the 11th to the 15th centuries, were Catholics ; the clergy, in a body, went to meet them at the entrance of every city ; a Dominican monk, Reinier, commanded one of their principal bands. If the Roman Church finally disavowed them, this was not until it had for a long time sanctioned their savage frenzy ; its course in regard to these religious convulsions was the same as its course in regard to the trial by red hot iron, which it continued to direct until it became expedient to reject it.

There remains, indeed, at the present day, a place of resort for pilgrims, where the sacred dances are still executed. The chapel of Saint Vitus was long celebrated, and I am not aware that any anathema ever interdicted the nervous agitations of which it was the theatre. They were so great that the mania for the dance, known as the *chorea*, received the name of the dance of Saint Vitus. Women flocked to the festival of the saint from all parts of Swabia and of Germany ; they

danced there day and night, to such a degree as to produce ecstasies or delirium; and the following year, at the same period, they felt the necessity of returning to the consecrated place to renew their maniacal dance

No Church, then, has the right to pretend that it has escaped the humiliating malady of religious convulsions. Jansenism has passed through the same experience; indeed, its crisis having declared itself at Paris, in the middle of the 18th century, in the centre of an immense movement of ideas, the facts connected therewith, have obtained great celebrity.

Let me first mention a few details connected with this great fact, and which it is essential to state before making it the subject of our criticism. The Jansenists saw in it a brilliant miracle, although the wisest men among them seemed to admit, towards the end, that it was tinged with the diabolical supernatural, and felt the necessity of repudiating the ignoble parodies that followed in its train. Was it a possession, a miracle, or a nervous malady? These are the three possible explanations of the Cévénol prophecies; these are also the three possible explanations of the scenes in the cemetery of Saint Médard: we must choose between them.

M. Calmeil has collected the principal elements of the whole affair. In completing it on several points, and especially on the article relating to cures, by the aid of the great work of Montgeron, in also consulting other works, such as *la Religion constatée universellement*, I shall be sure to omit nothing essential in an analysis which can only be an abstract, although I shall endeavor to render it correct.

The death of Deacon Paris took place in 1727, in consequence of having practised incredible austerities, and in the midst of the opposition to the bull *Unigenitus*. His tomb continued to be visited with respect by the Jansenists, until at length, in 1731, a person afflicted with infirmities, having been placed on the venerated marble, experienced convulsive at-

tacks. The fame of the pretended miracle was immediately spread abroad, and invalids flocked to the cemetery of Saint Médard, where Pâris was interred. Scarcely had they touched his tomb than the greater number of them were seized with violent agitation, and uttered loud cries ; the paroxysms that commenced there sometimes lasted several hours. The grounds of the cemetery, and the streets leading to it, were continually filled with the infirm and the curious. It should be added, for that is the marvellous side of the event, that in certain instances, the violent crisis with which the invalids were seized, was accompanied sometimes by a relief, sometimes even by a real cure.

Such is the original and essential fact which attracted such quantities of people to the charnel-house of Saint Médard. Let us begin by well establishing its characteristics ; let us inquire if, in this first period preceding the famous phenomenon of the *secours*, the nervous epidemic which sometimes produced these cures, presented among the Jansenists the same symptoms we have seen it manifest among the Camisards. Shall we here find inspired discourses, interior dictation, and convulsions, properly so called ?

In regard to the discourses, they have the same spirit, the same compass, the same rapidity ; they are the perpetual reproduction of the Jansenist arguments and anathemas against the bull, and against the Papal power. The most ignorant, the moment they entered into the ecstasie state, found themselves in possession of a certain number of ideas and terms, of which they occasionally made eloquent use ; they announced the coming of Elias, the conversion of the Jews, the approaching reign of Christ, and quoted texts with a facility that might have excited the envy of more celebrated preachers. Let us listen to Carré de Montgeron :

“ They were seen to represent, by the most energetic expressions, the prince of darkness, making use of the *bull* as an instrument in causing Divine truths to be rejected. . . . They were sometimes seen with their eyes bathed in tears,

deploring in the most tender and touching manner, the abuse made of the sacraments. They placed, so to speak, before the eyes of the spectators, a vivid picture of the living body of Jesus abandoned into the hands of sacrilegious priests. . . . The convulsionaries, frightened by the terrible images presented to them, prostrated themselves on the ground, tearfully entreating all the spectators to hide their faces in the dust. . . . Their countenance and eyes animated with a seemingly divine fire, they announced that abundant shower of blessings which the God of mercy will pour upon the earth by the ministry of the Jews, who will reëstablish his worship throughout the world.

"It is a matter of public notoriety that the convulsionaries in general, have more mind, more penetration, and more intelligence when they are in convulsions, than in their ordinary state. Young girls externally timid, who are at heart, ignorant, stupid, and vulgar, become entirely changed when in convulsions, speaking quite correctly, with animation, elegance and grandeur, of the corruption of man by original sin." (ii. 18.)

Dom Lataste, in his work, (*Lettres Théologiques*) gives specimens of this eloquence. "The Church lies in filth and dust, the worms devour its flesh, its very bones are rotten, an insupportable odor continually exhales from the corruption that envelops it; come, then, to its assistance, apply the iron and the fire, spare nothing to effect its cure, use the knife and the sword; it calls for the most violent remedies." (ii. 926.)

Inspiration took, from time to time, the form of a dialogue: "My father, see the state of your child, it is a state of suffering." "No, my sister, do not fear, the Lord will not reject you. . . . Ah! Lord, how good you are to deal with this sister, in your mercy! Lord, how great are your purposes! Ah! dear sister, do not lose courage. God makes you drink the cup; ask him to increase your faith." (*Lettres Théologiques*, i. 121.)

This reminds us of : "My child, I tell thee," of the Cérénol prophets. But we are still more strongly reminded of them by the absolute passivity into which many of the convulsionaries fell. They believed themselves to obey a foreign impulse : they listened to their own words as proceeding from the Holy Spirit ; they felt that their ideas were in a measure furnished to them, that their words were dictated, that their tongue was put in motion without any will of their own.

"You are now about to see," observes M. Calmeil, "that certain convulsionaries, in the course of the same improvisation, sometimes spoke as though they had been abandoned to their own resources in the arrangement of the ideas, sometimes as though words had been put into their mouths, sometimes as though they had yielded to an irresistible foreign power ; and it appears that their eloquence suddenly grew dim the moment they perceived that the assistance of their pretended divine *breath* commenced to fail them ; but brightened up as soon as the breath returned, to droop again whenever it, perchance, diminished." (ii. 354.)

It is a matter of course that the strange tongues played their part at Saint Médard. We have no very clear accounts, either in relation to this or the similar phenomenon in the Cévennes ; it, nevertheless, appears incontestable that some extraordinary developments of reminiscence and faculties were produced, and in entire conformity with the manifestations of the same phenomenon in a large number of nervous crises. Montgeron speaks of a Miss Lordelot, who, from her birth had had great difficulty in expressing herself, and who yet pronounced discourses in an unknown tongue with all possible grace and facility. He speaks of another young lady, who, never having had any voice, sang canticles admirably in an unknown tongue. He also cites other analogous examples. These will suffice to convey an idea of the intellectual results of the Jansenist agitation ; let us now give a few authentic details respecting this agitation itself. The word *convulsionaries* that I have employed, and which is, indeed, used by the

authors who wrote in times most favorable to miracles, is it justified by the fact? I shall not dwell on the general description of the convulsive movements with which so many persons were seized, and which constantly gave to the neighborhood of the celebrated tomb an aspect so strange and hideous; I will briefly transcribe the details furnished us regarding a few individuals who were most carefully observed.

The famous Geoffroy expresses himself as follows: "The convulsive movements to which I submitted, without losing consciousness, obliged me to beat my feet against the ground, the pavement, or the marble of the tomb. I could not prevent these movements. Sometimes my head tottered and turned a long while; sometimes my arms grew stiff and rigid. At other times, I threw them about on all sides, and my body often turned round and round, as though on a pivot. . . . The pains I suffered were beyond anything I can express. . . . The same movements took place at the house, with this difference, that they were not so intense. . . . I have been assured, that during the fit in which I lost consciousness, my eyes rolled back, and all the movements I have already mentioned were much more violent. I invariably felt some relief after the convulsions, and this relief was greatest after the most powerful shocks." (*Montgeron*, iii. 57.)

The same author describes the prodigious bounds of Jeanne Thénard, who leaped so high and with so much strength that the persons who tried to prevent her from injuring herself against the marble, could scarcely hold her; she fatigued them all to such a degree that they were covered with perspiration, and obliged to be frequently relieved. He gives the following declaration of the girl Foureroy: "Having entered into the cemetery of Saint Médard, I was struck with terror by the cries of suffering, and the howls that reached my ears from the convulsionaries in the cemetery and under the charnel-house, whereupon I thought I would go away without approaching the tomb of the deacon; but being encouraged by the person who accompanied me, I sat down upon it." This modest girl ex-

perienced so great a repugnance at the idea of also having convulsions, that she was in haste to quit the cemetery as soon as she heard the persons around her say that the precursory motions were manifested, and that she was about to enter into a crisis. Nevertheless, three months later, feeling that her end was approaching, the fear of death was stronger than the fear of convulsions ; she sent for some earth from the tomb, which she put in wine and swallowed drop by drop. Scarcely had she drank it than she commenced her *neuvaine*. The emotion she betrayed in this prayer was caused by the remembrance of what she had seen, and the expectation of what was to happen. This was more than enough to bring on a nervous attack. "Almost at the same instant I was seized with a shudder and shortly after with great agitation in my limbs which made my whole body spring into the air, and gave me a strength I had never felt before. . . . In the course of these violent motions which were real convulsions, I lost consciousness. As soon as they had passed away, and my senses were restored to me, I felt a tranquillity and an internal peace hitherto unknown." (*Montgeron* ii., p. 1, and following, of the observation of the girl Fourcroy.)

Among the convulsions, one of the most singular is certainly that of Fontaine, private secretary of Louis XV., who strongly opposed to Jansenism, but who one day dining at a house where he met with the book of Quesnel, and where the guests doubtless, spoke with enthusiasm of the miracles which, at that time, occupied the attention of all Paris, was constrained to turn on one of his feet, and became an immediate convert to the Jansenist doctrines. There is, in the accident of Fontaine, a remarkable combination of physical derangement with moral emotion ; we there touch the nature of the phenomenon for which we attempt to account. I borrow some details from the first pages of the second volume of Montgeron.

"He suddenly felt himself forced by an invisible power to turn on one foot with prodigious velocity, without being able to stop ; this continued more than an hour with no intermission. . . . From the first moment of this singular convul-

sion, an instinct from on high prompted him to ask them to give him as quickly as possible a pious book. The first one at hand happened to be a volume of moral reflections by Father Quesnel, and although Fontaine did not cease to turn with dazzling rapidity, he read aloud from this book as long as the convulsion lasted. . . . These attacks of convulsions continued more than six months ; they occurred regularly twice a day, and did not leave Fontaine until the 6th of August, 1733, the day on which he finished reading, turning all the time with prodigious force, the eight volumes of the reflections of Father Quesnel on the New Testament, which Fontaine accompanied with frequent elevations of his heart to God. The turning convulsion of the morning seized him every day precisely at nine o'clock, and lasted an hour and a half or two hours. That of the afternoon commenced at three o'clock, and endured equally long with the morning paroxysm. Every day on rising, Fontaine found himself so weak in his legs that he could not possibly stand ; this continued until nine o'clock, when his turning convulsion seized him. . . . Then his body supported itself on one leg, which for an hour and a half or two hours did not quit the centre where it had been placed, while the other leg described a circle with inconceivable rapidity, keeping almost the whole time in the air, yet occasionally, lightly touching the ground."

They counted as many as sixty revolutions in a minute, and this exercise seemed to have a salutary effect, for Fontaine found himself almost able to stand on his legs after the convulsion of the morning, and he felt entirely strong after that of the evening. It is true, the thing was to be done over the next day.

Fontaine changed his views in consequence of the *call* ; he resigned his place, became very liberal to the poor, gave up all luxuries, lived in retirement, practised austerities, and finally had inspirations and ecstasies.

"On Monday, the 9th of March, 1739," writes Montgeron, "Fontaine, forced by his convulsion to leave the place of his abode, went, by the effect of the same impulse that had driven

him from his retreat, to the house of one of his friends, who received him as a messenger of God. . . . The next day, he was constrained to announce that during the remainder of Lent, he should take but one meal a day, and that, of bread and water."

The Spirit soon *constrained* him to fasts still more severe ! The impossibility he experienced of carrying anything to his mouth, proved to him that he ought to abstain from all nourishment. With that energy of resistance with which certain nervous conditions seems to endow our constitution, he supported this total abstinence for eighteen successive days. But if he did not die, it is all that can be said. Reduced to the state of a skeleton, forced to remain extended on his bed, he was in a fair way to expire, when some broth, timely administered, restored him to life. This, however, did not prevent the unhappy man from imposing on himself in virtue of new revelations, another fast more prolonged, although less vigorous ; on this occasion he deprived himself only of food, continuing to drink during the forty days' trial to which he had been interiorly ordered to submit.

I shall terminate the sketch of these convulsions, in describing, on the authority of Doctor Calmeil, by whom it has been carefully analyzed, the afflicting crisis undergone by the widow Thévenet. It presents this peculiarity, that the poor woman, at heart a Catholic, submitted, in spite of herself, to the invasion of the evil, and recovered her peace when she renounced the invocation of the Deacon Pâris, to go back to her ordinary confessor, and return to the saints of her parish.

The widow Thévenet, who was almost deaf, determined to drink water into which had been put a small bit of earth dug from the grave of Pâris ; she partook of it directly after the *neuvaine* in honor of the blessed deacon. But her conscience was ill at ease, and the sight of some Jansenist books brought by a convulsionary, threw her into great terror. Be that as it may, the convulsions were not long in declaring themselves ; she made such tremendous leaps that it seemed as though she would

touch the ceiling. The widow Thévenet was raving ; she struck the persons about her, her bounds were finally so great that she almost reached the ceiling, and they were accompanied by contortions of which the reader can form no idea.

A few days after, the poor woman was thought to be dying. She had ceased her frantic movements, but complained of an internal fire that devoured her ; she lay motionless, her teeth locked, her face and hands like ice. There was no apparent respiration.

A hideous scene then took place. Her ordinary confessor was called in. The widow Thévenet, having come out of her trance, exclaimed that she was a convulsionary—one of the blessed—one of the elect ; the confessor replied that she was possessed of the devil ; the poor creature then fell into an agitation more violent than ever, and the head, hands, legs, and whole body of another convulsionary present, began to shake as though they had belonged to a dancing Jack.

Nevertheless, the canon Mariette, brother of the widow Thévenet, was not discouraged. He regained her confidence ; little by little, he removed one after another, the pious manuals of the Jansenists, the portrait of the deacon Pâris, the earth from his tomb, the bit of wood from his bed ; he carried his sister to church. There again she manifested a maniacal resistance, which was triumphed over by sprinkling her with holy water. She succeeded in mounting the steps of a chapel, and in kneeling before a saint more orthodox than Pâris. Freed, then, from the delirious emotions which a belief in the great miracles had created, brought back to the familiar circle of her old ideas, she was entirely removed from the dominion of convulsions.

Let us now pass to another order of phenomena, which, although met with in the Cévénol prophecies, is presented in the Jansenist convulsions on a much larger scale. I speak of the phenomenon of insensibility, or the perversion of physical sensibility. I speak of the phenomenon still more strange, because it has been less studied, the induration and the power of resistance

which a certain nervous condition communicates to the organism. If Clary issued unharmed from the fire, the faithful disciples of the deacon Paris performed other prodigies ! The history of the *secours* is scarcely to be credited.

By this name were called the tortures, blows, and other severe treatment prayed for by some of the convulsionaries. They experienced the need of it ; it brought them great relief, a sensible pleasure ; the blows they received were never violent enough to satisfy their desires. And this was, in regard to them, not merely one of those intemperate aspirations after suffering which has been manifested in all ages. They sought, doubtless, to mortify the flesh in every possible way, sleeping on hard boards, the naked ground, on piles of wood, or on fire-dogs, eating only on Sunday and Thursday, making it their study to do without sleep, refusing to change their linen, to wash their clothes, or to keep their dwellings clean ; but independently of the desire to please God by torturing the body, they appear to have been impelled by a sort of morbid enthusiasm to inflict upon themselves, during the spasm, pains which caused a beneficial and agreeable reaction.

It was also agreeable to gain notoriety, and create a sensation. The reader will take into consideration the moral and physical attractions to which these convulsionaries yielded. It is always the case that the facts are attested by the books of the period, and cannot be wholly rejected, whatever allowance is to be made for complaisance and exaggeration.

It was natural that the convulsionaries should think, first of all, of reproducing the crucifixion of the Saviour. I here give some information on this point, from the pen of a member of the Academy of Science, Surgeon Morand, who was commissioned by the Lieutenant of Police to present a report on the subject :

“ I commence with the ceremony of crucifixion. . . . It is proper to observe that the four girls had on the parts of their hands and feet that were to receive the nails, numerous scars, the flesh of which had become very hard, in consequence

of multiplied operations in the same places ; the callousness of these scars explains the small degree of sensibility manifested by the girls during the operation. It is also proper to observe the address displayed by M. La Barre, who, holding the hand loosely on his knee, stealthily, yet attentively, studied the spot that was to be pierced. It was nearly in the centre of the hand, between the third and fourth fingers ; and that was where I saw him, with a single blow of the hammer, drive one of those nails called *demi-picaros*, very slender, with a sharp point, four sides, and a large head. The nail passed through the hand, and entered the cross, into which I suppose it did not penetrate far. The same thing was done to the two feet, at a short distance above the toes, between the third and fourth, which were so placed as to secure accuracy and quickness to the operation. *Félicité* showed no signs of pain at either of the operations. When she was on the cross, she was very cheerful, turning her head from one side to the other, and holding conversation with those of the assembly who were disposed to talk to her. She wore a garment made of the cloth used for bed-ticking. I remarked that the wounds were not all bloody, and that very little blood flowed from them when the nails were taken out." (*Morand, Opuscules de chirurgie*, part ii. chap. vi.)

The reporter afterwards relates that *Félicité* asked *papa* (this was the name she gave to La Barre) to pierce her tongue, which was done. Without pausing on all these details, we are, in these days, prepared to establish that this insensibility is supernatural only in appearance, and that there is no nervous effect more certain, or more frequent. Magnetizers continually produce it ; moreover, the wonders of ether and chloroform prove to us that it is easy to destroy the consciousness of pain. We are not, then, reduced to the necessity of accepting *Morand's* theory respecting the callousness of the places pierced by the nails. How many other insufficient theories would be thrown aside, if we possessed in regard to other nervous phenomena, the same light that Animal Magnet-

ism and etherization have furnished us in regard to insensibility! I am convinced that, in a few years, the natural explanation of the various *secours* will present no more difficulty than is, from this time, presented by the crucifixion. Unfortunately, we do not yet possess the light that will, ere long, dawn upon the world, and in relating the remainder of the facts, if we are not able to present the solution itself, we must be content to indicate the direction in which it is to be found.

I give below the account derived from Carré de Montgeron, which is on every point confirmed by the pamphlet entitled: "*Vains efforts des mélangistes.*" The two hostile parties unite in attesting the following facts, that are supported, moreover, by numerous certificates.

"It is a matter of daily experience" (I quote, now, from Montgeron), "that the convulsionaries are more or less relieved in proportion as the blows administered are more or less heavy. . . . It has been proved by innumerable witnesses that when they are violently struck in the pit of the stomach with an iron instrument (this is one of the *secours* they most ordinarily demand), the instrument buries itself in their body, sometimes appearing to penetrate as far as the spine; and the further it enters into the stomach, the more relief the convulsionary experiences."

"The author of *Vains efforts* says: 'Jeanne Mouler, a young woman of twenty-two or three years of age, having supported herself against the wall, one of the stoutest men seized a fire-dog, weighing, it was said, twenty-five or thirty pounds, and struck her powerful blows in the stomach. This operation was repeated on various occasions, and at one time more than a hundred blows were counted. Another day, having given her sixty, he tried the effect of similar blows on a wall, and it is stated that at the twenty-fifth blow, he made an opening in it.' . . . The fire-dog here in question weighs twenty-nine or thirty pounds. It was with this instrument that the convulsionary submitted to the most terrible blows in the very pit of the stomach. . . . I declare that I am the man of whom the

author speaks as the brother who tried on a wall the effect of blows similar to the ones he had just given to this convulsionary. . . . It was in vain that I employed, throughout, all the strength I could exert to redouble the weight of my blows ; the convulsionary complained that they procured her no relief. She compelled me to give the fire-dog into the hands of a very large, strong man, standing among the spectators. This person did not spare her. Instructed by my experience, that the blows could not be too violent, he struck her with so much force in the pit of the stomach, as to shake the wall against which she was leaning. The convulsionary made him give her in succession the hundred blows she had at first demanded, counting for nothing the sixty received from me." . . .

" 'The exercise of the plank succeeded,' continues the author of *Vains efforts*. 'They placed upon the convulsionary, lying on the ground, a plank which entirely covered her ; then, as many men mounted on this plank as it could hold. The convulsionary bore the weight of them all.' . . . More than twenty men have been seen gathered together on this plank, which was supported by the body of a young convulsionary. . . . The body of this girl resisted the weight of more than three thousand, sometimes more than four thousand pounds—more than sufficient to crush an ox." . . .

" 'The exercise of the stone (*caillou*) was not less perilous,' again remarks the author of *Vains efforts*. 'The convulsionary, lying on her back, a brother took a stone weighing twenty-two pounds, and with it inflicted repeated blows on her breast.' . . . It is to be observed that the person who struck her with this stone, placed himself on his knees at the side of the convulsionary, who was lying on the floor, that he raised the stone nearly as high as he could, that, after a few light trials, he precipitated it with all his strength upon the breast of the convulsionary, and gave her in succession a hundred similar blows. At each blow, the whole room shook." . . .

" 'The Salamander,' says the author of *Vains efforts*, 'cried : "Barley sugar !" This barley sugar was a stick thicker than

the arm, sharp and pointed at one end. The convulsionary, in the centre of the chamber, curved her body in the form of a bow, and, balancing herself by her hands, rested on the point of the barley sugar; in this position, she cried out, 'Biscuit ! Biscuit !' This was a stone weighing about fifty pounds. It was attached to a cord which passed through a pulley nailed to the ceiling of the room. Raised to the pulley, it was several times allowed to fall on the stomach of the sister, her loins bearing all the time on the barley sugar.' . . . Neither the skin nor the flesh received the least injury, or suffered the slightest pain."

"A certain convulsionary receives, three time a week, the most terrible *secours*. Seated on the ground, the back against the wall, she induces those who come to witness her convulsions, to kick her in the stomach two thousand times in succession. . . . Extended on the ground, she causes herself to be violently struck with billets of wood on every part of the body. . . . Standing erect, her back against the wall, she takes a spit used in roasting meat, the strongest she can find; she places its point against the pit of her stomach, in the region of the short ribs; she then makes four, five, and six persons push against it, with all their strength, so that the spit bends perfectly crooked. . . . She sometimes puts the point of the spit to her throat or her forehead. . . . In short, for the last two months, she has submitted every part of her body to sword thrusts. . . . Although her skin is indented by their points, and a slight red mark sometimes remains, yet the flesh is never cut."

"Gabrielle caused the point of a certain rod to be put to her throat, just below the chin, and the point of a similar rod to be placed in the cavity at the back of her neck. Two persons, at the same time pushed against these two rods, with all their strength, repeating the operation several times in succession. But in vain did they try to make the points of the two rods penetrate beneath the skin—not the slightest puncture could be perceived. . . . Gabrielle, lying on her back, placed the edge of a shovel

against her larynx, that is to say, exactly over the windpipe. She persuaded one of the spectators to exert himself to the utmost in pushing this shovel perpendicularly against her throat. . . . and she felt only an agreeable and salutary impression." . . . (Vol. ii. and iii. of Montgeron.)

I pause. I have not yet spoken of the iron pestle, the blows of hammers on the pit of the stomach, the billets of wood discharged at the head, the screw by means of which the head was squeezed between four boards, of the quartering (*écartèlement*); neither of the young girl to whom not less than thirty thousand blows of the fist were administered by six men, in turn relieving each other, nor of the one who demanded that she should be repeatedly dashed on the pavement, head foremost. The facts I have already presented must suffice for the edification of the reader. I will merely add that these extraordinary accidents continued nearly ten years. It was in 1731 that the first convulsions took place in the charnel-house of the Innocents; on the following year, a royal ordinance closed the cemetery of Saint Médard, but all the exertions of the police could not prevent the pretended miracles from continuing in various places and even rapidly spreading. It was then that the great *secours* made their appearance. Analogous phenomena were produced in other places besides Paris; there were convulsionaries at Troyes, Corbeil, and elsewhere. Then, in proportion as the moral agitation subsided, the nervous agitation disappeared, and with it all the prodigies to which it had given birth. But I must not anticipate. Let us inquire into the character of the facts before us: are they to be regarded as possessions, miracles, or maladies?

I should blush for myself were I to attempt a serious refutation of the opinion which sees in the Jansenist convulsionaries only so many *possédés*, through whose agency Satan effected prodigies. This opinion, sustained by the author of *la Religion constatée universellement*, and unhesitatingly adopted by M. de Mirville, will be for ever refuted by the public conscience. I confess that I am far from admiring the doings at Saint

Médard, and indeed the *appellants* themselves were in general ashamed of the exploits of certain convulsionaries ; but to blame these acts and disclaim the fundamental errors of Jansenism, is one thing ; to admit that God delivered the Jansenists over to the devil, in order to furnish arguments against them to the Probabilism of the Jesuits, to the absolute rejection of the Bible, to systematized religious materialism, is quite another ! These poor people who oppose the bull *Unigenitus*, who read the works of Duguet and Quesnel, still preserve, I grant, many superstitions and errors ; yet, who will not acknowledge their immense superiority to their adversaries and their persecutors ? They pray, they love the Lord, they have preserved a portion of the Gospel.

Nothing is more instructive than to see the hatred that is maintained against them ; the horror of Jansenism appears to exist as strong and as deep as ever. As for me, I do not believe that Fontaine was "condemned to a pirouette six months in duration, and to fasts forty days in length, merely for having read a single chapter of Quesnel." (*Pneumatology*, 173.) If this were true, I am inclined to think that Montgeron, for his large volumes, would have been condemned to pirouette all his life.

Let us talk reason. Who, then, will succeed in persuading himself that the most diabolical men of France, in 1731, were the partisans of the deacon Paris ? Apart, even, from this preliminary consideration, is it possible to attribute to a supernatural agency, phenomena, whose morbid nature is constantly betrayed by innumerable signs, phenomena epidemically propagated, and the accompaniments of a peculiar nervous condition ?

I might here repeat the demonstration I have already furnished with the Bible in hand, and from which it results that the prodigies attributed to Satan can be only a pure and simple fable ; but I prefer to leave to the partisans of possession, the satisfaction of representing to themselves the devil occupied in putting into the lips of the Jansenists the denunciation of

reigning vices, the announcement of the coming and kingdom of Christ. They must, at least, admit that the *possédés* of the Middle Ages held a different language !

If the hypothesis of possession is untenable, that of miracle is equally so. It is as absurd to suppose the divine supernatural associated with the gambols and degrading follies of the convulsionaries, as it is to suppose the Satanic supernatural associated with their often sincere piety, and their aspirations to the Saviour.

On this ground alone, it is absolutely impossible for us to see the finger of God in the phenomena of convulsions ; I shall not return to the proof of this contained in my remarks on the Cévénol prophets. But the Jansenist prophets show still more conclusively, by other signs, that they were not the organs of the Holy Spirit. They all predicted the coming of Elias, as near at hand : " The Almighty," says Carré de Montgeron, " raises up a multitude of persons, and makes them announce, in the most magnificent terms, that the time is arrived ; that the prophet Elias will appear in a few years ; that he will be despised and insulted by the Catholics ; that he will be put to death." And Montgeron adds, that the convulsionaries have often prophesied falsely.

His admissions do not stop there. He confesses that many disgraceful things have been mixed up with the pretended miracles ; he speaks of a brother who " authorized the greatest indecencies under the frivolous pretext that they were figures." He acknowledges that " some convulsionaries have appeared, in every sense, very little worthy of being the instruments of God." (See in his second volume, *l'Idée de l'œuvre des convulsions*.)

And how can any one help agreeing with him, provided they read the description of the scenes I have mentioned ? In virtue of what principle can women be justified in exposing themselves as public spectacles, and submitting to treatment, little compatible with a sense of decency ? When we hear the cries of the Salamander : " Biscuit ! barley sugar !" we feel that

we assist at an ignoble parade, and that the Spirit of God has nothing to do with such manifestations.

The spectacle of the transports, to which the convulsionaries abandon themselves, gives rise to an invincible sentiment of disgust. The Jansenist, Raymond (see his *Lettres*), acknowledges this. "The work of the *secours*," says he, "has been followed by shocking disorders: licentious conversation, criminal liberties. . . . It is clear that the unchastity of a great number of the *secouristes*, as well as their loss of faith, originated in the work of the *secours*. . . . I have known several convulsionaries who, having renounced the detestable work, confessed the most infamous things."

It could not be otherwise; for at the very moment of the greatest fervor, during the crisis, the convulsionaries abandoned themselves to shameful extravagances. One of them with her head on the ground and her feet in the air, devoutly recited the *De profundis*; the recitation terminated, she demanded assistance in throwing a somerset, afterwards declaring that what she had just done, was a serious mystery, which represented that everything was overturned in the church. Another performed her prayers, the tongue lolling out of her mouth. Others prayed to God, going through with all the motions of shaving themselves, pretending to eat soap, or hanging themselves to a hook. (*Avis aux fidèles, Lettres théologiques* of Dom Lataste.)

I should never finish if I were to relate all the pirouettes, all the strange attitudes that the convulsionaries mingled with their preaching and their acts of worship. "A certain brother," says M. Calmeil, "remained extended on the ground while he delivered his most sublime sermons; from time to time, he raised his feet, and placed them on the head of another convulsionary."

We might believe ourselves in a lunatic asylum, and, indeed, nothing more nearly resembles a lunatic than a leaping, biting convulsionary, who feels the necessity of combating, by external sufferings, the interior fire that devours him, who pretends to

prophesy, and taking the inspirations of his malady for those of God, solemnly transforms his particular convictions into oracles.

Many of the demoniacs aspired to the peculiar state called the *supernatural infancy*, and which has been admired in various saints, in Marie de l'Incarnation especially, who, on awaking from a rapture that had lasted three days, possessed the grace of spiritual infancy, and actually had the gestures of a little girl six years old. Even so, the convulsionaries of whom I speak, gave vent to childish sneers at the end of their paroxysms. They spoke and coughed like children, affectedly held their breath, tied their clothes up into bundles, and seemed to attach importance to passing for imbeciles. (*Calmeil*, ii. 389.)

Upon the whole, we cannot help considering the nervous epidemic that burst out in 1731, as an event in every respect calculated to humiliate human pride. I heartily join in the exclamation of Dom Lataste : "Is it possible that ecclesiastics, priests, in the midst of the numerous assemblies composed of persons of both sexes, of all ranks, can be induced to doff their cassocks, to stand in their shirts and drawers performing the office of the executioner, throwing women down and dragging them on the ground ! . . . Is it possible that men who pique themselves on their sentiments of religion and humanity, should take turns in administering thirty or forty thousand blows of heavy billets of wood on the arms, legs, and heads of women, and make other extreme efforts sufficient to break their skulls ! . . . History furnishes us no example of any excesses of this sort so scandalous or so multiplied." (ii. 878.)

It is, consequently, as impossible to see miracles in these manifestations, as to suppose them to be possessions. Why should we go so far out of our way to seek what is so near ? Why invent supernatural explanations, when the natural explanation is so obvious ? The nervous malady is not only probable, it is certain, evident ; it is betrayed in every symptom.

The partisans of possessions are not less embarrassed than those of miracles, when they see the pretended agent of the

importation, the earth from the tomb of Pâris, replaced with impunity by ordinary earth ; but the partisans of the third hypothesis have no trouble in showing that in a disease where the imagination determines the nervous derangement, ordinary earth may produce exactly the same effect as the earth of the tomb, on condition that the patient takes one for the other.

It must also be remarked, that among the celebrated convulsionaries, among those who played their part in the *secours*, we scarcely find any but women, and young women especially. Now, everybody knows that certain forms of nervous affections are met with neither in men nor in old women.

I have said that all the characteristics of a nervous epidemic are here to be observed. Convulsions, gradual communication, and certain physical effects are, in fact, constantly connected with this sort of infirmity.

As regards the epidemic nature of the agitations, I shall not pause to prove it. It is sufficient for the reader to recall to his mind the manner in which the convulsions displayed themselves on the tomb of Pâris, whence they were immediately propagated by sight and by emotion. Each convulsionary was a centre, from which radiated his malady. Moreover, "the reaction of the nervous effects," remarks M. Calmeil, "made itself especially felt on feeble and valetudinarian subjects, on children, and on very impressionable young women." (ii. 317.)

Nor is there anything very astonishing in the prodigious agility to which the nervous derangement may give rise : if certain convulsionaries leap almost to the ceiling, if Fontaine turns on one foot nearly two hours in succession, there is nothing wonderful in that. I have seen the dervishes of Cairo turn, and it would be as impossible for me to imitate them as to imitate Fontaine. So long as we will not admit the extraordinary development of powers that takes place under certain influences, we shall be obliged to seek a supernatural explanation of acts, which, far from being wonderful, are rather the consequences of a morbid condition.

The same morbid condition produced what has been erro-

neously called the gift of tongues. Aside from the woman who pronounced a mass she had often heard, and who accomplished this act with her body bent backward in the form of an arch, her head touching the ground ; aside from the one who really pronounced Latin words in virtue of a power of reminiscence, and of which we have seen examples much more remarkable, this gift among the convulsionaries was confined to an unintelligible jargon, or to the repetition here and there, perhaps, of a few Latin expressions that had been accidentally fixed on their memory. Their gift of tongues differed in no respect from that of the Irvingites, or from that occasionally observed among persons of deranged intellects. There is, then, nothing here, upon which we have any occasion to dwell.

The long fasts of Fontaine seem, at first sight, more extraordinary. Nevertheless, it appears certain that among persons whose minds have lost their balance, the fixed idea of abstaining from food, is quite frequently manifested, and it appears, besides, that after they have for a few days persisted in their resolution, it is sometimes almost impossible to overcome the constriction of their throat, so that the action of abstinence is more difficult to commence than to continue. It also appears that the effect of great over-excitement may be to maintain life in spite of excessive privations. We are aware, moreover, to what an attenuated condition Fontaine was reduced. He was scarcely able to breathe at the termination of his fasts.

Thus far, we cannot avoid being struck by the purely natural character of the accidents to which the convulsionaries were subjected. This impression will be strengthened if we compare these accidents with those produced by Animal Magnetism. Is it not evident that fluid action which is the cause of the second, may also be the cause of the first? Let me instance a few facts.

Boyer, a cotemporaneous author, wrote (and no one at that time suspected the existence of the Mesmeric phenomena): "There are convulsionaries who read with their eyes bandaged." Another cotemporary adds: "It is an indubita-

ble fact, and one certified to by a great number of persons, that one convulsionary reads things presented to him, although thick tow-pads are tightly fastened over his eyes, in a manner entirely to exclude the light." (*Coup d'œil sur les convulsions ; Lettres sur les convulsions.*)

The penetration of the thought has been established among numerous convulsionaries. This is affirmed, not only by Montgeron, but by declared adversaries, such as Lataste. "Convulsionaries have been known," he writes, "to divine thoughts or things impenetrable to all human cunning." Doctor Bertrand also speaks with positiveness of "the discovery of the secrets of hearts." Various proofs have been brought forward in support of this assertion, and especially the instance of a certain convulsionary, who comprehended whatever was said to him in Latin, Greek, Hebrew or Spanish. (*Lettres théologiques*, letter xiv.; *du Magnétisme animal en France ; Lettres sur l'œuvre des convulsions*, letter ii.)

Doctor Bertrand was authorized then to hold the following language : "We cannot help feeling the greatest astonishment at the perfect identity we are compelled to see between the convulsionary state and that of the magnetic somnambulists. There is here nothing wanting ; the smallest details, as well as the most important phenomena, offer unexceptionable proofs of the identity." (*Du Magnétisme animal*, 318.)

This conclusion, which is also that of M. Deluze, is adopted by M. Calmeil. He cites, in its support, the famous *state of death*, which was one of the forms of ecstasy among the convulsionaries. "Some convulsionaries," writes Montgeron, "have remained thus two or three days in succession, motionless, with their eyes open, the countenance very pale, the whole body insensible, as immovable and stiff as that of a corpse." (ii. 86.) He remarks with reason, that the same state was described by the saints in a trance, and particularly by Thérèse, who employs, so to speak, the same terms.

The convulsionaries occasionally discovered diseases, and indicated remedies. Still further : some of them appeared to

submit to a sort of morbid contagion ; they became deaf, dumb, crippled, epileptic, by the mere contact with persons affected by these different infirmities. We have here again one of the symptoms of that nervous state which also permitted them to suck poisoned wounds with impunity, just as certain charmers of serpents defy the bite of the most dangerous vipers.

Such is the general character of the phenomena we are now investigating. We have discovered in them nothing of the supernatural ; incontestable analogies have led us to rank them with the mass of facts resulting from nervous excitement and fluid action, and chiefly with the facts of magnetism. Let us now take one step more, and enter upon the two great incidents that have been especially qualified as miracles ; the cures and the *secours*.

We must first, take into consideration the arguments already offered on the value of testimony. The reader knows how little confidence I place in it ! Evidently there have here been immense exaggerations ; nor can we forget, in fact, that the adversaries of Jansenism, the archbishop of Sens, in particular, have pretended to demonstrate and unmask extensive deceptions and frauds connected therewith. Yet, I confess, that many of the facts appear to me demonstrated, at least in their principal circumstances. It is, therefore, just to admit them, at the same time making some reservations, based on the known effects of the current of enthusiasm and credulity which then existed, and by which the most suspicious minds could not help being, in a greater or less degree, affected.

We remark, besides, that in the certificates with which the volumes of Montgeron abound, there are many expressions "*it is said*," mingled with the declarations of ocular witnesses ; that there are documents signed by physicians, attesting the cure, not the manner in which it is effected. We remark that those who questioned or rejected the prodigies, made no formal declaration of their objections.

I would distinctly indicate these reservations, although I do not refuse to believe in the reality of some of the cures and

some of the *secours*. I protest, in particular, against the abuse that is made of the famous argument: "Shall we be more difficult in regard to proof, than the infidels of the 18th century?"

Yes. I do pretend to be much more difficult than they, and for two or three good reasons: first, because they were necessarily affected, in spite of themselves, by the general enthusiasm; secondly, because Jansenism agreed with them in opposition to the Jesuits and the stifling traditions of the grand reign; in short, because the complete incredulity of naturalism was an invention reserved to our age, while the 18th century could not refrain from looking elsewhere for the supernatural it rejected in the Bible. Natural allies of the Jansenists against the despotism of official religion, the infidels were not as unfavorably disposed towards the miracle of Saint Médard as is pretended; moreover, the age which was to terminate with Saint Germain, Cagliostro, and the masonic mysteries, could find no better commencement than with the tomb of the deacon Pâris. The era of the Voltaires and the Lalandes is thus very appropriately introduced.

With these remarks, I come to the cures that have had so much celebrity.

I do not oppose them with the special plea in bar, furnished by the Scriptures. I will not say: There is here no miraculous cure, for the convulsionaries have recourse to the intercession of the deacon Pâris, and the Bible nowhere authorizes such a practice. I shall content myself with establishing that the extraordinary cures are neither so numerous nor so complete as is pretended, and that the very few facts which seem to have a supernatural character, may be explained quite naturally.

Doctor Calmeil makes a very just remark, to which I here give place: "In perusing the observations and dissertations published by the Jansenists on the miracles effected by the omnipotence of the deacon Pâris, we at first feel inclined to place faith in a great number of quite exceptional cures, and to attribute to undue excitement of the nervous apparatus, to a

fevered condition of the imagination, or to the effects of convulsive shocks, cures previously considered as impossible. On turning our attention to the other side of the question, to the works that have emanated from the pen of the Anti-Jansenists, we become convinced that many of the convulsionaries who, in the heat of enthusiasm, believed themselves cured of a deafness, of a pain in the head, . . . were not slow to perceive, after this enthusiasm had passed away, that the cure was only illusory." (ii. 387.)

I will add, that when we compare the immense crowd of invalids who continually overflowed the charnel-house of Saint Médard, with the very restricted number of miraculous cases reported in the work of Montgeron, we are persuaded that the amount of convulsions without a result, far exceeds that of the convulsions followed by a relief, and that, consequently, the latter are confined within the limits of the natural effects, which so many nervous crises must have caused to be foreseen.

The natural effects, I have said, and nothing seems to me more clear.

Here is a person both deaf and dumb, who is taken to the tomb of Paris ; the sight of all the convulsionaries there and the fluid communication which perhaps takes place, soon throws her into a dreadful paroxysm ; she perspires profusely ; she intimates by her gestures, that she suffers principally in her head, throat, and ears. She remains as though dead. She is carried home. Brought back to the cemetery, she experiences convulsions of the most violent description, which continue until night. At length, on the fourth day, on recovering from a swoon, she finds herself in possession of the sense of hearing, and articulates words the sound of which reaches her ear.

Here is another person, a cripple, Philippe Sergent, in whom the convulsions bring about a tension and a sharp pain in his diseased leg. All at once, the muscles, in thus stretching themselves out, give way, making a noise similar to the crack of a

whip, and Sergent sings the *Te Deum* on the tomb, from a book which has been brought very apropos by one of the assistants.

The cure of the eye of Don Alphonse has had still more celebrity. Those who have read the first volume of Montgeron, know to what a variety of discussions it has given rise, on both sides of the Pyrenees. Yet when we come to look at it rather more closely, we are led to suspect that the diseased eye on which, in addition to a bit of the deacon's shirt, compresses of laudanum and marsh-mallow root were placed, may have been cured through the virtue of laudanum as well as through that of the shirt.

It must not be forgotten, moreover, that the cures foretold were not always effected, even though the convulsionaries undertook their performance by throwing their bodies into the form of the cross, or making prodigious somersets. The resurrection of the dead, that stumbling-block in the way of all the manufacturers of false miracles, has succeeded no better with the Jansenists than *with others*. The girl Lopin, surnamed the bark-ress (*aboyeuse*) because she, as well as several of her companions frequently barked during the paroxysms, fruitlessly tried to restore to life a young girl whom she had caused to be brought there. In vain did she rub her with the earth of the tomb, or wash her with water from the well belonging to Pâris, or stretch herself out upon her after the manner of Elijah, the dead body remained a dead body, and the flesh became corrupt.

In conclusion, I beg the reader to well weigh my last consideration. What are we to think of progressive, of incomplete miracles? Are we not authorized to consider these two characteristics, when they are habitual, as indicating a natural cure and not an act of divine power?

As for myself, I am of the opinion of the servant of Marguerite Thibault, who, when everybody was in raptures because of the marvellous deliverance of her mistress, shook her head, saying that miracles were never done by halves. In her strong good sense she could scarcely conceive that God, who had, as it was

said, removed the swelling from this poor woman's body, should not also have rendered her the use of her hands. I agree with the servant in suspecting two things ; first, that the physicians were mistaken in supposing in Marguerite Thibault the existence of a scirrhus, secondly, that the physical effect produced by a lively and sanguine emotion, the sudden warmth she experienced, the strain upon her nerves, procured her a relief by which the anchylosis of the hands did not profit.

The cures of Saint Médard almost always took place by marked gradations. Two different *neuvaines* (the first one of every third week) were required for the two eyes of Pierre Gautier. Marie Cartery did not entirely recover until several days subsequent to the miracle performed in her favor. Mlle. Coirin was delivered from her cancer, but the parts destroyed were only slowly and incompletely replaced. It took six days to accomplish the cure of Marguerite Duchêne ; these are compared by the convulsionaries to the six days of creation ! It was also necessary to repeat the process several times in the case of Louise Hardouin. La Duchesne, in short, whose cure converted the Protestant hair dresser Coutet, only arrived at perfect health by means of a series of transpirations, vomiting and violent pain.

I certainly do not maintain that medicine can explain, step by step, the results of these salutary crises ; but I do maintain that reason forbids us to suppose a few, small, complementary miracles, as coming to finish a work which natural causes have visibly commenced.

It remains for me to show the action of these causes in the phenomenon of the *secours*.

The reader will have the goodness to keep in view, not only my theory relative to the value of testimony in supernatural matters, but also the prejudiced enthusiasm of the principal witness, Montgeron, an old libertine, whom the sight of the pretended prodigies had transformed into an ardent Jansenist, as well as the legitimate suspicion attached to the *secours*, because of the fact that the cures were not miracles.

I commence with a consideration, the worth of which every one is at liberty to determine for himself. It has been truly said that we do not strike a woman as we would strike a stone. Notwithstanding the sincerity and earnestness of purpose of Montgeron, his blows with the fire-dogs on the wall, were very differently dealt from those he administered to the convulsionary. What is true of him, is no less true of the other persons upon whom the perpetration of these barbarities devolved.

Another consideration which I have already presented, seems so forcible to my mind as to constrain me to repeat it. As neither divine miracles nor diabolical prodigies have ever prevented the fire from devouring sorcerers, or the axe from laying low the head of martyrs, it is impossible not to abate something from these stories of the spits and swords which refuse to enter the body, the braziers which do not consume ; reason requires us to suppose that the ones were badly sharpened, and that the others were not very hot.

We have here something more serious still. Montgeron is obliged to admit that "small" ecchymoses were often remarked. We shall see that the supernatural intervention which was always refused in preventing the action of the axe or the sword, and which probably would not have prevented, even at Saint Médard, either that of a cannon-ball or of a simple gun-shot, was also refused in preventing bruises and contusions ! It was, however, a very simple matter to complete a prodigy that lacked so little of being perfect ! Was the power which preserved the essential organs of the convulsionary incapable of preserving a few fibres and a few tissues ? We do not see that Daniel's companions left the furnace with the marks of burns on their bodies, or that the Apostle Paul, after shaking off the viper, had any swelling on his finger !

This is a graver consideration than is imagined, for the ecchymoses acknowledged by Montgeron, of themselves, demonstrate that we are not on the domain of the supernatural. They put us on the track of the real explanation, of which I shall try to give an idea, although science is not yet prepared to shed

sufficient light on this subject. She is thus justly punished for her reluctance to investigate mixed phenomena, fluid action and Animal Magnetism.

Notwithstanding science is not here prepared to account for everything, she leaves no reasonable doubt of the true solution. What do we indeed find extraordinary in the *secours* of Saint Médard? Two things: the perversion of physical sensibility, which caused a demand for violent measures; the power of resistance, which prevented those measures from producing any real injury. Let us give our attention to these two points.

As regards the first, I can only refer to the unanimous opinion of physicians, who declare that the perversion of sensibility quite frequently accompanies mental alienation, and that it is also manifested in certain states of nervous excitement. Some lunatics procure for themselves a real enjoyment in tormenting their bodies by cuts and blows, and by tearing the skin; nor is there any doubt, that, apart from the advantage of making themselves public spectacles, and paying the ransom of their own sins, the fanatic flagellants of the Middle Ages often found a strange sort of pleasure in the self-inflicted blows. In the case of our convulsionaries, these various sentiments, the desire of producing an effect, a mistaken devotion, a physical necessity which called for violent external reactions, were all, probably, in play. Doctor Calmeil, while on this subject, relates an observation made by Hecqquet, and from which it results that the characteristic of certain pathological conditions, especially among women, is so to modify the nature of the impressions, that, in doing violence to the nerves of sensibility, a sensation of enjoyment is created in the brain. The convulsionaries, then, had reason for saying that the *instinct* of convulsion impelled them to call for *murderous secours*. (Calmeil, ii., 384.)

But that is not the point of the grand difficulty. Whether sensibility may or may not be perverted, does it not remain incomprehensible that feeble women should have been able to

receive, without being crushed to pieces, the terrible blows of which we have spoken? How are we to explain such a power of resistance?

A very slight change effected by the nervous fluid, would suffice to render the thing perfectly simple. Supposing that the skin and fibres of the convulsionaries took, in virtue of their particular state of excitement, a consistency analogous to that of gum-elastic, all the facts which now astonish us, would become as natural as possible. The convulsionaries being of gum-elastic, or rather, their bones being protected by muscles and tissues of gum-elastic, what would be the consequence?

A sharp, quick thrust of a sword or sabre, such as is generally given with these weapons, would certainly have penetrated. But we find that among the numerous *secours* related as having taken place at Saint Médard, there are no instances, and for a very good reason, of blows given after this fashion; our friends prudently restricted themselves to placing the point of the weapon on the body, and then giving the order to push. This is a very different matter, and the gum-elastic which would yield to a sudden impulsion, is impenetrable to simple pressure, even from a pointed object, provided the point is not very sharp. We have all performed the experiment a hundred times. Let us continue our hypothesis.

What would have been the result of the discharge of a pistol at the gum-elastic breast of a convulsionary? The ball would have pierced it through and through. Here is still another trial, which was carefully avoided, although pistols were invented a long time previous to 1732.

So also were razors, and it certainly would have been interesting to see the skin of the convulsionaries resist their persuasive edge. Unfortunately, gum-elastic cannot resist it, and, therefore, the amateurs of the *secours* avoided the razors with as much care, as they avoided fire-arms and the real sword thrusts. They preferred to invent complicated machines, to raise stones of twenty or forty pounds in weight, to experiment with the *barley sugar* and the *biscuit*

It is true that neither the *barley sugar* nor the *biscuit*, nor the fire-dogs, neither fire, nor sword, nor spits, as they were applied, would have injured the gum-elastic envelope. They would have produced no visible injury. They would, at most, have occasioned only an internal friction, more or less serious, according to the thickness of the elastic armor covering the bones and other organs.

This, I repeat, is only an hypothesis ; but it seems to me that it says much in relation to the pretended impossibility of supposing a modification of the human body, which may suffice to explain the impenetrability of the convulsionaries. A fluid action giving it the consistency of gum-elastic, would fully attain the object, as we have just seen. Is this change much more extraordinary than that produced within us, when, by the effect of chloroform, we entirely lose consciousness of pain ? I think not. I confess that to suppose a supernatural action, furnishing protection against wounds, without furnishing it against ecchymoses, parrying blows from fire-dogs, and not sabre thrusts, defying spits and swords, on condition of first placing them on the part required to resist them, availing itself of fire-dogs, stones, and funeral piles, to the exclusion of pistols and razors, would appear to me far more extraordinary.

Whether the tissues of the convulsionaries did or did not assume the consistency of gum-elastic, it is very evident that they received the two qualities which distinguish this substance, and which are strictly connected with each other : elasticity and impenetrability.

Elasticity works wonders. A cat will fall from the second story of a house without injury ; a marble statue cannot even fall from its pedestal without being broken to pieces. Why is it that children are so little hurt by their numerous falls ? Why is it that men in a state of intoxication fall with impunity, where sober men would break their necks ? It is because of the flexibility of the ones, and the inflexibility of the others.

Relative impenetrability is no less frequently observed. It

may be said that the epidermis, that our muscles are always equally penetrable ! This is not true. The least variation of the temperature, the slightest alteration of our health, exposes us to injuries we would have escaped under other circumstances. The veriest trifle suffices to break my skin when I am cold, when the blood does not flow freely in my veins, when my limbs are deprived of elasticity. Yet my skin is always the same. What is it, then, that is modified ?

The answer seems to be partially contained in the following words of M. Calmeil : "The energetic resistance which, in the convulsionaries of Saint Médard, was opposed by the skin, the cellular tissue, the surface of the body and of the limbs, to the shock of the blows, was certainly calculated to cause surprise. But these fanatics greatly deceived themselves when they fancied that they were invulnerable ; for it has been repeatedly proved that many of them, at the end of the cruel tests they solicited, exhibited large ecchymosis on the integuments, and innumerable contusions on the surfaces that had been subjected to the rudest assaults. Moreover, the blows were never administered except during the convulsive period. Then, the flatulency of the stomach, the spasmodic condition, . . . the state of contraction, of crethism, the turgescence of the fleshy envelopes, of the muscular fibres which protect and cover the abdomen, the thorax, the principal vascular trunks, the osseous surfaces, must singularly contribute to weaken, to deaden, to annul the violence of the blows." (ii., 386.)

Why is it that, after reading this passage, we are inclined to repeat the words of Gros, examining the drawings of his pupils : "It is that, and it is not that !" Why is it that while we are struck with the justice of the observation, we preserve a sort of intellectual uncomfortableness, a sort of suspicion of a disproportion between the phenomenon and the explanation ? Why is it that under the influence of such an impression many people are led to admit either the diabolical prodigy or the miracle ? It is because M. Calmeil is faithful to the instructions of the scientific institutions in France and England ; he

does not accept fluid action, and refuses to take a single step beyond ordinary nervous excitement. Now it is in vain to speak of shocks, of spasms, of turgescences ; there remains something more than these in the *secours* of Saint-Médard. They demand the intervention of a special force, a fluid which is disengaged sometimes by the effect of certain crises, and sometimes by the power of magnetization, properly so called. Those who systematically maintain this hiatus in the study of man, are the best allies of the superstitions they pretend to combat. Thus, every aspect of the question brings us back to our fundamental remark : we shall never put an end to the supernatural apocrypha, as long as we obstinately reject the study of any portion of the natural laws.

Supposing that this study had been seriously undertaken, with what clearness might we resolve the problem, the solution of which we can as yet only anticipate ! Accustomed to the wonders of the nervous fluid, knowing that it elevates inert objects at a distance, that it biologizes, that it communicates flexibility and rigidity, the extreme development of the senses and absolute insensibility, we should not be greatly surprised to discover that it also, in some cases, communicates the relative elasticity and impenetrability which characterize gum-elastic.

Montgeron himself describes that elasticity of body in the convulsionaries, by which they yielded under the pressure of blows from the fire-dogs to such an extent that the pit of the stomach almost touched the vertebral column ; the relief thus afforded being most complete after the deepest impressions. He tells us of a convulsionary who persuaded him to lay her in a coffin, where she allowed herself to be covered with sand ; this reminds us of the Hindoo sorcerers, who, having reached a particular state of cataleptic insensibility, are buried in a ditch, whence they are several days afterwards, it is said, withdrawn alive. The fakirs do many similar things ! When will Science condescend to fulfill the noblest part of her mission, and bursting the leading-strings of childhood, advance with a manly step into the domain of mixed phenomena, where so many disco-

veries, by which our darkness shall be dispelled without pampering our pride, await us? I can imagine what it will cost her to quit the sure, the immutable, the regular, in which she so much delights, to abandon, even for a moment, the holy heights of mathematical certainty, in order to seek her physical agents in those mysterious depths where they are closely united with the moral and voluntary action of man; but her repugnance does not change the facts, and she pays rather dear for her exclusive love of positive notions, when she remains embarrassed before the Jansenist convulsionaries, and thus directly encourages the grossest superstitions.

I have dwelt at considerable length on the prodigies that seemed to me worthy of my attention; I shall merely touch on those in which I do not find the same plausible appearances. All the miracles of the mystics pertain to this category. Living in a world apart, attentive to their interior revelation, they assist, with the most perfect sincerity, at scenes whose reality exists only in their imagination.

Of the mystics, I shall mention only Jeane d'Arc, to whom I have already alluded. A poor and noble girl, she distinctly heard *her voices*; they sounded in her ears, under the *beech of the fairies*; they there dictated to her everything she uttered from the time that the love of enslaved France had taken possession of her heart.

Of what use to discuss the visions of Jeanne d'Arc? She is sincere when she speaks of them, when she deplores their cessation. A hallucinated mystic, and as such, enjoying the privilege which appertained to mysticism in the Dark Ages, she is superior to the belief of her cotemporaries, because the errors of interior revelation, however gross they may be, cannot fail to elevate her above the materialism of the *opus operatum*. "Men will not absolve me! God absolves me!" The faith that dictated that beautiful language, casts a touching light upon her character. A *possédée*, according to some, miracu-

lously directed, according to others, she is, in our eyes, only a most brilliant example of what strong excitement may produce in a pious soul, in an age without intelligence, and in a Church without Christianity.

I have no further remarks to make in relation to the miracles of Mysticism. Those of Catholicism demand a rather more particular notice. Yet I shall avoid dwelling upon them at any length, being desirous to say only what is absolutely necessary to complete this essay on the miracles not contained in the Bible. Having studied the Protestant and the Jansenist miracles, with a passing reference to those of the Mystics, it is proper that the Catholic miracles should have their turn. They are by no means the least numerous.

Leaving all the legends, and devoting my attention to what seems most worthy of an examination, to what has taken place within the last hundred years, and with as much *éclat* as though it had been seriously verified, I commence with the celebrated episode of Gassner.

This was in the second part of the last century. The Jesuits felt the necessity of a great miracle to enable them to resist the reforms of Joseph II. Now, miracles always come when they are wanted, and the Ultramontane miracle was as inevitable, in 1760, as the Jansenist miracle thirty years previous. There appeared, at that time, a perfectly sincere and respectable man, a priest of Coire, who, having cured himself of his convulsions by invoking the name of the Lord, naturally conceived the idea of curing others. He repaired to Germany, where the Jesuit party took him under its protection, and where the question of the reality of his cures gave rise to a long and spirited polemical controversy.

I shall not take sides either with the bishops who celebrated his miracles, or with those who attacked them; but shall content myself with the remark, that the action of Gassner applied only to convulsions, and, in general, to nervous diseases, which

he termed possessions. It is, therefore, easy to conceive that a shock given to the imagination, may have sufficed to bring about, as at Saint Médard, a beneficial crisis, and that Gassner may have exercised, in addition, the power that pertains to an energetic magnetizer. If the celebrated doctor of Haen had not written his famous report at a period when Mesmerism was still almost unknown, he would certainly have been struck by an analogy which seems quite evident to us of the present day. "Gassner," says he, "produces stupefying effects on people without touching them. . . . He changes the state of the pulse, diminishes and accelerates it (without touching it), two or three times an hour." I see there, nothing whatever that is not obtained by the action of the magnetic fluid; and, upon the whole, deducting from the miracles of Gassner the exaggerations of his partisans, the incompleteness or utter failure of his cures, those produced by moral emotion alone, as well as those explained by magnetism, I am convinced that nothing remains to be imputed to the supernatural.

The same considerations apply to the miracles of the Prince of Hohenlohe. It is, indeed, our opinion that they are still less astonishing than those of Gassner. The memory of his successes has, in fact, alone been preserved, and the very numerous cases in which a cure did not follow his intercession, have been left out of the reports. In what way were these miracles performed? The prince was written to, in behalf of different invalids, of Mrs. Mattingly, who lived in Washington; of the sister, Marie Recchioui, who lived in Fermo; of M. Isidore Vial, who lived in Romans. (I mention the persons whose miraculous cure has been most celebrated.) The prince appointed a *neuvaine*; he indicated the hour at which it should finish, and at which he himself would engage in prayer for the cure. The patient was required to pray at the same moment, and in order to assure perfect coincidence, the longitude of the place was taken into consideration. Thus, we see that Mrs. Mattingly commenced her prayer at three o'clock in

the morning, because the prince announced his for nine o'clock of the evening.

Now, is there any reason for being astonished that several remarkable results were obtained? Among the numerous persons invited to this solemn appointment, was it not probable that there might be found some, in whom the emotion caused by such a moment, and the waiting for a marvellous event, would have the very effect to provoke a crisis? May not even the most extraordinary fact, the recovery of speech by M. Vial, have been produced by a very great shock, and does not history furnish us, among other examples, that of the son of Cræsus?

I add, moreover, that I believe in the efficacy of prayers. If Gassner and the Prince of Hohenlohe prayed with faith in the name of Christ, if the sick persons and their families also looked to the promises of the only Mediator, I am persuaded, that notwithstanding their errors, they obtained one of those miracles which God has not ceased to accord to His children, and which differ from the signs that accompanied the Apostolic preaching only in the respect that the divine action does not here show itself in a way to exclude the natural explanation of the facts. What Christian does not daily and silently effect as many miracles as the Prince of Hohenlohe? He knows that life and death are in the hands of the Lord; he knows that the Lord cures the sick, that he hears and grants the prayers of his redeemed. Therefore, he does not cease to implore, and to receive great deliverances; but he respects the Sovereign will which has not conferred upon all times, and upon all men, the miraculous gift, properly so called, the word uttered in the name of Christ, operating of itself, the inexplicable cure, or the impossible resurrection. He humbly confines his petitions within the circle of favors, which, without being less real, are less brilliant, and he does not fail to add at the end of each prayer: "My will, not thine, be done!"

After the miracles of Gassner and the Prince of Hohenlohe, I know of no Catholic miracles better attested than the Cross of Migné, and the stigmatics of the Tyrol. I must, then, say a few words in relation to these two facts. Let us commence with Migné.

This prodigy took place at the period of the missions and the plantings of the cross. On Sunday, the 17th of December, just as the exercises of the jubilee were about to close, at the very moment of the solemn planting of the cross of the mission, and as the preacher, addressing the crowd assembled before the church of Migné, spoke to them of the cross that showed itself to Constantine, a large, luminous cross, elevated more than a hundred feet above the level of the ground, was distinctly to be perceived in the sky. It remained visible, so it was stated, nearly half an hour. The report, forthwith addressed to the bishop, thus concludes: "No one, my lord, can form an idea of the religious impression which the sight of this cross produced on the spectators. Almost all of them instantly fell on their knees, rapturously repeating: *"Vive Jesus! Vive la croix!"*" The report of the Counsellor of the Prefecture, written some days afterwards, attests, in its turn, the effect produced by the miracle: "In a parish which was far from being religious, everybody, with the exception of a few individuals, drew near to the altar."

Such are the facts. I shall not object that the Apostles, and the churches of the Apostles, had neither the cross nor the worship of the cross; that the cry, *"Vive la croix!"* would really have astonished the men who adored Jesus Christ, who confided in his sacrifice, but who detested its abominable instrument. I shall not appeal to the dogmatic argument. I shall not even remark to what degree a miracle of this sort must have seemed desirable to the men who established the mission of 1826. Their open adversary, I declare, that after the examination of the documents, it is impossible for me to believe in the fraud, in the suspended crosses, in the kites

which have occupied so important a place in the polemics of the opposition.

A general hallucination would not be inadmissible, especially as no inhabitant of the farms or neighboring hamlets seems to have seen the luminous cross which ought to have been observed throughout the country, since it remained in the sky nearly half an hour. Yet it was perceived only by the persons who, gathered round the preacher, their minds full of the cross in honor of which they were assembled, and listening to the story of the vision of Constantine, were perhaps in the necessary conditions for obeying a common impulse, and for seeing everything that any one of their number might fancy he saw in the sky.

I think, however, that the explanation is still more simple : a real image probably appeared, the reflection of the cross just planted. The report of the Counsellor of Prefecture confirms us in this opinion : the cross having been brought in procession from the house of the individual by whom it was presented, it could not be placed upon the Calvary prepared for it before sunset."

It was planted, then, *at sunset* ; the Abbé Marsault commences his discourse at the same moment ; he speaks of Constantine, and behold, the luminous cross appears ! "*The sun was then set,*" adds the Counsellor of Prefecture. . . . "*This luminous cross remained constantly in the same place nearly half an hour, that is to say, until it was dark.*"

I beg the reader to remark these expressions, because they establish, not only the almost immediate connexion that exists between the planting of a cross and the appearance of an image which would have been impossible without it, but also the real moment of the appearance. The sun was set ; but it did not become dark until half an hour afterwards, that is to say, at the precise instant when the reflection was obliterated. No luminous cross until there is an object to reflect ; no more luminous cross after the light fails.

This is the capital point. Its partisans have felt it. There-

fore have they vied with each other in entangling the matter ; in place of half-past four o'clock, the hour of five, sunset, night-fall have been substituted ; stars have been mentioned as shining in the sky. It was necessary, absolutely to get rid of this unfortunate phenomenon of reflection. This they have thought to do, by opposing to it, first, the lateness of the hour ; secondly, the absence of vapors ; and lastly, the difference in form. Let us see if they have succeeded.

In regard to the lateness of the hour, we must not forget a fact that escaped M. Desplaces-Dessessarts, the Counsellor of Prefecture : the sun had then set, but it was not dark until half-an-hour afterwards. The sun set on the 17th of December at four o'clock and six minutes. I think, then, we may fix the very latest hour of the phenomenon "at about half-past four o'clock,"* which is the same with that mentioned by the greatest champion of the miracle, the author of *la Religion constatée universellement* (ii. 293). It is melancholy to see the efforts that have been continually made to prove that it was later, and that the solar light, having disappeared, could not produce any result. Similar phrases to this have here and there been insinuated : "the sun that had been set for at least half an hour !" It has been affirmed that the people re-entered the church before the close of the miracle (this would not have been very respectful, it must be admitted) ! Descriptions have been given of the stars shining at the moment of their re-entrance into the church, and of the gradual disappearance of the image ; then, we have been given to understand that the stars shone all the time that the vision lasted ! It is true that on another occasion, being desirous to refute those who pretended that the darkness had favored the fraud, they stated that "there was sufficient light to read by !" (*Lettre de M. de Curzon.*)

* This is really the latest possible hour. It is probable that the fact was produced previous to this moment ; at all events, everybody knows how strong, in certain circumstances, is the reflected light from the sun for a long time after its setting. Those who have been on Mont Blanc at sunset, will understand my meaning ; the mountain, after gradually losing its color, and becoming quite pale, as it were, is suddenly tinted with a brilliant rosy hue, which lasts for several minutes.

To those who spoke of reflection, they answered : "It was dark." To those who spoke of fraud, they said : "It was light."

This last assertion is evidently true. "But what does that signify?" exclaim the champions of the miracle ; "the phenomenon of the reflection demands not only light—it demands vapors whereby to reflect the image !" Doubtless, and it only remains to know if these vapors did not exist. Now, I am well aware that they speak of a sky "almost without cloud." I am well aware that the commission appointed by the Bishop of Poitiers, reports "that the day was very beautiful ;" but I am also aware that it adds, there had previously been "a succession of rainy days." "The sky," it says, "was clear in the region of the cross, a few clouds only were to be seen here and there, at two or three remote points near the horizon." What man of science would venture to declare that, under these circumstances, with that light and with those vapors, reflection was impossible ?

True, we have yet to account for the differences between the celestial image and the cross planted on the Calvary. Who will believe that the observations made by the enthusiastic populace of Migné could have been sufficiently exact to decide (what no one even thought of at the moment) whether the accessories of the cross on the Calvary, the brass heart, the sword, the reed and the sponge, were or were not reproduced in the miraculous vision ?

M. Brierre de Boismont has furnished, in relation to the giant of Brocken, the following details, which it is interesting to compare with the cross of Migné : "At certain periods, the giant shows himself on the summit of the Brocken (a division of the Hartz Mountains), to the great astonishment of the inhabitants and travellers. This prodigy, for a long period of years, gave rise to the strangest stories, until, at last, M. Haue had the curiosity and the good luck to see it. While he was contemplating the giant, a violent gust of wind nearly deprived him of his hat, whereupon he hastily carried his hand to his head, a move-

ment which the giant imitated ; he then performed the action of bowing, and his bow was instantly returned. M. Hauc made known his discovery to the proprietor of the inn of the Brocken, and the two together, repeated the experiment with the same result. The wonder was thenceforth explained." (109.)

Yes, the wonder is explained. It is nothing more than the effect of light thrown upon a shining surface, and which, at a certain distance, reflects the object in magnified proportions, according to an optical phenomenon of frequent occurrence. Father Lebrun relates the following, on the authority of Carden : " He says, that being in Milan, it was reported about the city, that there was an angel visible in the air, and he himself saw it as well as more than two thousand other persons. Some of the most scientific men having displayed great admiration for this prodigy, a clever juriconsult, who happened to be on the spot, examined it attentively, and showed them that what they saw was not an angel, but the figure of an angel, carved in stone on the top of the steeple of Saint Gothard." (*Histoire des pratiques superstitieuses*, iv. 374.)

If this effect of reflection had not been remarked, we should have had another great miracle, and the people of Milan, not less sincere than those of Migné, would have affirmed the appearance of an angel, flying over their city in broad daylight.

I have said that I should also speak of the stigmatics of the Tyrol. The facts are well known. Those who have visited Tschermers or Kaltern, who have seen the ecstasies of the devotees, their wounds bleeding at the predicted moment, the strange objects issuing from their mouths, are counted by hundreds of thousands. Men of science, physicians, philosophers, have made this pilgrimage, and their reports have astonished the academies on the other side of the Rhine.

Shall we utterly deny the truth of these reports? By no means. We shall simply remark that inquiries undertaken in these holy places, are never, either so easy or so complete as is imagined. The doubter who feels that he stands alone, the

only one of his kind in the midst of a crowd of pious worshippers, experiences great embarrassment. The very politeness and consideration with which he is welcomed, the facilities offered him, add to his embarrassment, to his prudence, to his reserve. Filled with respect for the women whose devotion is perhaps real, he would believe himself a monster, were he to manifest certain doubts which he now feels to be inadmissible.

Thus much for the sincere inquirer ; in regard to the stigmatics themselves, they should not be judged according to the terms of the famous dilemma : They are either saints or wicked sinners. Experience proves, alas ! that a certain degree of sincerity may be combined with falsehood ; that pious frauds do not exclude all uprightness and all real devotion. Many persons go so far as to believe that the end sanctifies the means, and, although the theory is horrible, yet we cannot regard every one who puts it in practice as a villain. To counterfeit miracles in order to gain friends, to unite in the same act a persevering deceit with an intention almost Christian, is not, unfortunately, an inconceivable moral phenomenon.

In what, then, consists this miracle which, for twenty years, attracted so much attention ? The stigmatics of the Tyrol eject from their stomachs, nails, glass, horseshair, bits of combs, and other objects they have never swallowed ! Is it possible that any one can believe that God, the God of the Bible, stoops to such prodigies as these ? To admit it, is to admit what is morally and religiously impossible. Who will succeed in persuading himself that the vomiting of nails and fragments of crockery, that usual attribute of possessions, could, all at once, become in Tyrol, the mark of a divine inspiration ?

This single feature, independently of the seemingly marvelous character of other acts of the stigmatics, should suffice to fix the opinion of an impartial man. Not one of these acts, moreover, has any positive value. The stigmata which so many Catholics refuse to recognize, even on the body of François d'Assize, have existed among acknowledged imposters,

who, up to the very period of the discovery of their fraud, have had their bleeding wounds ready for exhibition at the appointed moment. The illuminated magnetizers of Avignon pretended to check, at will, the flow of blood, when they opened a vein ; Doctor Billot affirms that the sanguineous emission obeyed the commands : " Stop ! Flow ! "

The trances, the inspired discourses, the employment of phrases borrowed from foreign tongues, the penetration of the thought, there is nothing in any of these that exceeds the natural limits of Animal Magnetism. Indeed, the ingurgitation of bits of combs, of horsehair, pins, and similar objects, may take place without producing death ; that is shown by very numerous facts, among others, one of a quite recent date, which is related of a young girl who attempted to kill herself in this way, but did not succeed. The devotion of the stigmatics was of a character to make them reckless of any danger resulting from this sort of alimentation.

I here stop short, and I trust the reader will appreciate my moderation. Having given a rapid glance at the miracles most worthy of our attention, I refrain from mentioning such as are entirely beneath any serious notice. We are all aware that their name is legion.

If I were to open one or two volumes of the Lives of the Saints ; if I were to visit the miraculous fountains which, having formerly cured in the name of Paganism, still obligingly continue to cure ; if I were to take up, one by one, the impossible relics which do not fail to accomplish their prodigies and distribute their indulgences with a remarkable fidelity, my work would not be so quickly finished. At Rome alone, do they not preserve in their churches the stone (of Carrara marble) upon which Abraham bound his son, the portraits of the Virgin painted by Luke (who was a physician), phials filled with the milk of the Virgin, with the blood of Jesus Christ, with the water that gushed from his side ? Do they not hold in reve-

rence the altar upon which John the Baptist offered up his sacrifices in the desert, the napkin with which our Lord wiped his hands after having washed the feet of the Apostles, the column to which he was bound by the order of Pilate, the finger of Thomas which touched our Saviour's wounds, the rock upon which the angel placed himself at the time of the Annunciation, a piece of the stone on which Jesus was seated when he pardoned the sins of the Magdalen, a portion of the tables of the law, of the manna, a fragment of Moses' rod, one of the stones with which Stephen was crushed, as well as numerous portraits of Jesus Christ, locks of his hair, bits of his garments, those of his mother, and even the inscription on his cross !

And I speak only of the most famous relics, whose supernatural virtue is undisputed ; I say nothing of those to which the least doubt is attached, such as the portrait of our Saviour painted by himself and sent to King Abgarus, Judah's lantern, the cross of the good thief, the crucifixes that have spoken. The prodigies connected with the most sacred relics, are quite sufficient to convince the reader that it is utterly out of the question for me to do more than allude to a subject which has no limits.

As respects the miracles performed by the saints during their lives, they are not less numerous than those performed by their bones. Whoever may be inclined to doubt this, is referred to the history of François d'Assize, or the work entitled : *Conformités de saint François avec Jésus-Christ*. The life of Liguori may also afford them satisfaction ; this man, "who never commits even a venial sin, of deliberate design," must have performed a prodigious quantity of miracles, since the simple process of beatification specifies more than a hundred. Another, and no less wonderful prodigy (I quote the modern and official facts), is connected with the body of Saint Philomène, the miracle-worker, which, being found in Rome, in 1802, was recognized by the brilliancy of its eyes, and signalized itself during its transportation to Mugnano, by dimin-

ishing the size of the vehicle when the streets were too narrow to admit of its passage. The box in which these relics are kept, also constantly contracts ; vain are all attempts to stretch it out, it persists in being too short for its saint. It is by thousands that miracles are each year performed there ; the pilgrims witness the marvellous multiplications with admiring eyes, particularly that of the little book in which so many prodiges are related.

I do not maintain, however, that this is more extraordinary than the flying Cochin-Chinaman, or the house of the virgin carried through the air from Nazareth to Loretto. Now, *la santa Casa* is there, in the splendid church of Loretto ; and notwithstanding the remarks of the skeptics, who assert that the stones of which it is composed were never known at Nazareth, it confirms its origin by its miracles, and to that there is nothing to say. Let us leave, then, the devotees to kneel in crowds in front of the square window through which the angel, after having spoken to Mary, disappeared !

I have no wish to press the matter further. My end is attained, and I am not disposed to go beyond it. The reader knows what to think of the miracles that are said to have been accomplished since the Apostolic period. The Protestant miracles of the Cévennes, the Jansenist miracles of Saint Médard, the Ultramontaine miracles of Gassner and the Prince of Hohenlohe, the Catholic miracles in general, those that have an appearance of plausibility, as for instance, the stigmata of the Tyrol, or the cross of Migné, and those it is impossible to consider in a serious light although supported by the same authority ; I have passed them all in review. The conclusions of this chapter are obvious, and I may now proceed to another portion of the supernatural apocrypha.

CHAPTER II.

SUPERNATURAL APOCRYPHA.

SPURIOUS SORCERY.

I INTEND, without losing time in preambles, to point out at once, the extent and duration of the general belief to which we now turn our attention. It might seem, perhaps, judging from the astonishment sometimes expressed, that faith in sorcery is an exceptional fact, an eccentricity, that books such as those of Messrs. de Mirville and Des Mousseaux are a strange accident, that theories such as those promulgated by *l'Univers*, are an offense to the dignity of the human mind, that the success of the knocking spirits is an unlooked for humiliation ! Men who hold this language, forget only one thing, that the superstitions of our times have been those of all times. Before Christianity and after Christianity, among enlightened nations, and among savage nations, in the midst of philosophies and in the midst of religions, we everywhere find this distinctive and indestructible element. With the exception of the book of divine revelation (a truly admirable exception !) there is no portion of the annals of humanity, which is not polluted by the pretended intervention of evil spirits and other fables connected with this doctrine.

From this universality of the belief in sorcery, we may, indeed, conclude with Schlegel, that superstitions which thus maintain their ground, necessarily result from certain tendencies in our nature. Yes, I am fully persuaded that our fallen nature con-

tinually returns to diabolical prodigies as it returns to all errors and to all sins; and this is only a still stronger reason for combating an evil so persistent, and for seeking refuge in Biblical truth, the only means of escape from the fatal option presented us by modern wisdom, that of admitting the supernatural apocrypha or rejecting everything supernatural !

Faithful to the course I have adopted, and resolved to leave out of the discussion everything that appears insignificant, I shall pass rapidly over the mass of facts simply absurd, and devote my attention to three or four principal manifestations of the tendency I am about to examine. The great facts of the divining wand obtained immense notoriety in the reign of Louis XIV. ; many persons, at the present day, still consider them as inexplicable without the action of the demon ; a few words in relation to this important episode, will, therefore, not be out of place. Apparitions may be ranked in the same class of phenomena as the divining wand in the history of the pretended marvellous ; there is, indeed, no belief more extensive or supported by more respectable testimony ; in presence of so many excellent persons who have looked upon apparitions with their own eyes, we are not allowed to keep silence. But the principal subject upon which our attention should be fixed is that of sorcery, and everything resulting from it. After dwelling upon this somewhat at length, we shall close the chapter with an inquiry into an affair for which our adversaries have conceived an affection ; I refer to the Ursulines of London and the execution of Urbain Grandier. It will be interesting to descend upon the ground to which they are constantly calling us, to consider this horrible tragedy from a nearer point of view, and to see, by one illustrious example, in what light we are to regard the sorceries, the possessions, the institutions, and the doctrines of the Middle Ages.

Thus, we have four questions to resolve : the divining wand, apparitions, sorcery, the Loudun possessions. Before entering upon special problems, let us give a general glance at the subject.

All people of antiquity cultivated the occult sciences. To cite here, only the most enlightened period, and the most practical nation, the nation which alone possessed no national oracle, we have no evidence that the Romans of the Augustan era rejected magic or any of its branches. Cæsar had his amulet; Augustus wore on his person a bit of seal skin, in order to preserve him from lightning; A colossal phantom appeared to Brutus in his tent, saying to him: "I am thy evil genius; we shall meet again at Philippi;" Cassius himself, whose nature was by no means credulous, perceived in the height of the battle, the shade of Julius Cæsar fighting at the head of his enemies; Cicero, in short, wrote on the subject of divination, and fully admitted its reality. I do not speak of Virgil and Ovid, who, in their writings, seem to recognize it as a fact; I am perfectly aware that the license accorded to poets, renders it impossible for us to derive any argument from them. Setting aside, then, the eclogues and elegies, we shall content ourselves with establishing that the Latin civilization, when at the height of its development, did not repudiate magic. In seeking, then, among the thinkers, the writers, the politicians, the skeptics, the debauchees of this period, we scarcely find more than two men who have distinctly expressed an opinion unfavorable to enchanters and augurs; Cato and Horace, so unlike in everything else, agree in this. The first was astonished that two augurs could look each other in the face without laughing; he asked why a fool should be more inspired than a wise man, and why Cassandra should know more than Priam. The second diverted Leuconoe from the vain efforts to foresee her destiny by consulting the Babylonian numbers: "Whatever it may be," he said, "let us endure it; that is of far more consequence."

. . . . Ut melius, quidquid erit, pati!

The age of Pericles was in this respect equal to the age of Augustus; Pericles himself wore a talisman which had been given him by the Athenian ladies. And if from these summits

of classic antiquity we descend to its dark valleys, if we consult other periods and other countries, we shall see the belief in sorcery becoming still more gross, and its authority less contested. Without speaking of the mysteries of Ceres, of Isis, of Bacchus, of Mithras, and of the magical secrets then in constant circulation, without dwelling on the power which certain philosophers attributed to numbers, without visiting the great centres of occult doctrines and practices, India, Chaldea, and Egypt, we everywhere come in contact with spells, the evil eye, and amulets, we discover the legitimate ancestors of our sorcerers in the wonders performed by Apollonius of Thyana, in the traditions of a secret affiliation often in opposition to the laws, in the prodigies affected by the Alexandrians, and which were followed up by Julian, the last champion of Paganism.

Paganism ended in magic, to be introduced and continued in this form, in the bosom of conquering Christianity. This was not the only point on which the latter was so unfortunate as to purchase its victory by a compromise; it combated sorceries as diabolical, but admitted them as real.

And now, why should not the enormous error with which Christianity compounded, be preserved in all other religions? All savage nations have their sorcerers, or their rain-makers. But it is especially among the Jews and Mussulmans, that it is interesting to follow the traces of this universal belief. The Talmud of the Jews is filled with exorcisms and magical formulas. I have elsewhere alluded to the remains of their talismans discovered by M. Layard at Babylon, in which may be observed the theories already developed upon the subject of the demons, their classification, their sex, their works, their places of abode, the combinations of syllables which summon them to appear, and those which put them to flight.

The Mussulmans carry on an extensive trade in amulets against the evil eye, against fever, and against fleas! They have schools of alchemists and necromancers, they have philters, apparitions, fortunate and unfortunate days, adventures

with animals which announce happiness, and others which announce death ; they cover themselves with talismans, and attach them to the necks of their dogs and horses. In one word, they are far from proving an exception to the rule, and destroying the not very glorious unanimity of the human race. I recommend this unanimity to the study of the theologians who pretend to demonstrate truth by the argument of universal consent !

Universal consent, which, in supernatural matters, is the ordinary attribute of error, has not been wanting to the sorceries that have sprung up on the soil of our self-styled Christian Europe. A long trail of blood, a long succession of executions is there to testify to its presence, which is equally indicated in the intellectual debasement and the moral blight brought upon us by the prevalence of so many vile creeds. We must frankly own that the Protestants of the 16th and 17th centuries were not much less credulous than the Catholics in point of sorcery ; or, more properly speaking, they remained Catholic in that, and were not yet prepared entirely to shake off the yoke of tradition, and return to the Scriptures. Luther often spoke of the devil like a true monk, and the Puritans of the United States, burned their sorcerers, according to the customs of the Ancient World.

At the present day, thank God, the nations who possess the Bible, have, in general, broken with the superstitions therein condemned, and it is not one of the least remarkable facts of our times, that a revival of sorcery practices should be energetically prosecuted by the adversaries of the Reformation, while its defenders seem to agree in the no less energetic negation of the diabolical prodigies.

There lies the question. The two great doctrines stand face to face ; one rests on Scripture ; the other on tradition. They must, indeed, be opposed on this ground, as upon all others. Between them, the contest is always serious. As for those men, much the most numerous, doubtless, who belong neither to the party of Scripture, nor to the party of tradi-

tion, they must permit me to tell them, that, in spite of their incontestable lights, they will exercise no great influence on the solution of the problem. An experience, the growth of ages, already proves that incredulity ends in becoming credulous, and that error is never effectually resisted, except in the name of truth. Our deists have repugnances, this is not enough ; they must have a hatred of false doctrines. Otherwise they run the risk of outwardly sneering at sorcery, while at the same time, they have their visions and ghost-stories. To-day, they deny everything supernatural, they believe neither in the miracles of Jesus Christ, nor the personal existence of Satan ; to-morrow, they will amuse themselves with the speaking-tables, and consult the spirits, as they not long since amused themselves with Free-masonry, and, as two hundred years ago, they sought for mystical emotions, and the twelve reflections of the interior light in the Society of the Rosicrucians.

The occult sciences have, then, everywhere prevailed without interruption, as long as men have existed on the earth ; they have met with only one absolute condemnation, that furnished by the Bible ; they are attacked by only one decided adversary—the party of the disciples of the Bible ; men who reject the false supernatural in rejecting also the truth, do the work of superstition, and urge in that direction, all souls not disposed completely to banish the notion of God from their minds. Such is the state of things, and if, in addition, grave social commotions arise to increase the terrors caused by atheistic theories, it is natural that the reaction towards traditional beliefs should receive a still stronger impulse. This has already happened, and in it we find the explanation of the audacity with which traditional beliefs are revived, in the midst of the astonishment of a world whose murmurs are disregarded, in the knowledge that it must eventually submit, or that, at the worst, its consent can be dispensed with.

"But," it will be said, "you speak in general terms of magic, sorcery, the occult sciences, and the supernatural apocrypha; would you maintain that all the theories—all the practises of this sort which have passed current in Pagan antiquity, have been collected in our Middle Ages, and are resuscitated under our own eyes? Do they all, according to your judgment, come within the limits of the present debate?" I have not said this, although I think that the fundamental principles and many of the details, are the same. It, therefore, becomes necessary to give a technical definition of terms. This I shall endeavor to do as briefly as possible; moreover, my want of science will prevent my making any very deep researches, nor do I pretend to have carried my studies in demonology as far as my adversaries. I am quickly disgusted with such subjects. I trust, therefore, that if I should fall into any heresy, the believers will kindly pardon me. I abandon Raymond Lulle, Cardan, Postel, and their fellow laborers, to the attention of the really initiated.

The oldest classification of the branches of Magic is to be found in the books of Moses. He discriminates (*Deuteronomy*, xviii. 10, 11,) between the diviners, enchanter, necromancers, and witches, properly so called.

We meet with nearly the same distinctions among the Greeks and Romans, with the exception, that divination is with them subdivided into numerous branches: they divine the future by the entrails of victims, by the flight of birds, by the noise of thunder, by dice, by omens, by the position of the stars; indeed, the importance of this last method became so great as to give rise to a particular class of diviners, the astrologers. As respects the subdivisions, they form an appalling list, an idea of which may be obtained from the following names: axinomaney made use of axes; gastromancy employed a vase with a large bowl, into which a child was made to look; chiromancy inspected the lines of the hand; aeromancy, botanomaney, cleromancy, geomancy, pyromancy, capnomancy, umbilicomancy, lecanomaney, hippomaney. There was also lettro-

mancy, or divination by means of the combination of letters, which was connected with the deepest-rooted superstitions. In all ages, there have been people, who, attributing a virtue to numbers, and to syllables, made use of them to read the future and explain divine mysteries.

This leads me to mention the Cabala, not the grand Cabala connected with the Jewish traditions, the ancient theurgies and Gnosticism, imputing a mysterious value to certain expressions of the sacred books, and describing, in virtue of its mystical interpretations, the hierarchy of the angels, or the attributes of God ; but the vulgar Cabala which discovers spirits or genii in *the four elements* (old style). It designates by the name of sylphs, the inhabitants of the air, gnomes, the dwellers in the interior of the earth, nuidines, the tenants of the water, and salamanders, those of fire. The distinguishing feature of the vulgar Cabala, consists in the fact that it attacks all demonology, and absolutely denies the action of the devil in this world. It admits only its genii. Of this, it is enough to say, that it has never maintained its position, that it was rejected by the Middle Ages, and that there is no question of restoring it at the present day. With a few brief words, we shall consign it to oblivion. The genii or elementary people are of the order of the initiated. Nothing equals the power of the *sages* of the Cabala ; they dispose of all the forces of nature, and are themselves, moreover, begotten by sylphs or salamanders. No great man has any other origin ; this is a rule without exception. The holy Cabala had its horoscopes, and its forms of evocation. It had its magical numbers ; it had, in short, its philosophy, a strange philosophy, which cursed Eve, women, and marriage ! Laugh as we may, sylphs and gnomes figure in the Capitularies of Charlemagne, and of Louis le Débonnaire : the pretended tyrants of the earth and the air, are there made to submit to the gravest punishments. How is it possible to doubt their existence ?

And yet, I have said, we shall give to the Cabala only a passing notice. Opposed to received superstitions, it has

never lived among us except as a stranger. We have too many serious errors to combat, to waste our time in fighting windmills.

I would say the same of enchanter, who must not be confounded with sorcerers, and of whom, Merlin is the most illustrious representative. Although his predictions have been transformed into oracles, and were solemnly consulted during the Middle Ages, it cannot be said that there has been any living belief in enchanter. Sorcery has overrun everything else ; by the side of the sorcerer who gives himself to the devil and who works only evil, the popular imagination has reserved no place for the enchanter who is connected rather with Celtic superstitions, is less in relation with devils than with the forces of nature, and works, indifferently, good or evil.

We are thus brought back to sorcery and possessions ; there lies the heart of the debate. This chapter will not close, the reader may be assured, without our bestowing upon these topics the attention they deserve ; in the meantime, reserving to them their place, that is to say, the principle place, I must complete my preliminary outlines by pointing out three secondary branches of the occult sciences : alchemy, necromancy, and astrology.

If alchemy had been only an imperfect and inexperienced science, the infancy of chemistry, it would have been wrong to place it in this list. But by the side of the alchemy of Albert the Grand, we have that of Nicholas Flamel ; by the side of studies and experiments on the various combinations of matter, we have cabalistic formulas, the *emerald table*, the *great work*, and the invocation of Satan.

Necromancy looks still more suspicious ; thus, we see that in all ages, laws have been made against it. In place of evoking genii, according to the Cabala, or the devil, according to sorcery, it evokes the souls of the dead. It makes them appear and interrogates them. This should cause us no surprise, for our "Spiritualists" do nothing else, and M. Cabagnet, in anti-

cipation of the speaking tables, has given us, at Paris, magical sittings, in which figure departed spirits. There are errors as old as man himself, and which will die, alas ! only with man.

Astrology is of the number. The idea of consulting the stars, and of reading destinies in the sky, is inscribed on the most ancient monuments of Egypt. Transmitted from age to age, the horoscopes of the kings of France, including Louis XIV., were drawn by astrologers, so also, were those of the Roman emperors. Convinced that the world was governed by the seven planets (at that time there were only seven !) and by the twelve constellations of the zodiac, men naturally attached great importance to the conjunction of these sovereign stars.

The theory of talismans is also naturally connected with that of the stellar influences. The Sabeans, Egyptians, and Chaldeans, imagined that metals cast under the influence of certain favorable constellations, absorbed and retained these influences. The virtue of talismans is nothing else, and I frankly own that I prefer the superstitious explanation to the scientific explanation of corpuscles, which, for a time, took its place. Its authors indignantly rejected the magical virtue of the stars, but accepted the small bodies emitted by them ! If their house tumbled down without crushing its occupant, they denied that this resulted from the protection of the star under which he was born ; it was because of the small bodies sent by the same star, which so arranged the timbers and stones as to prevent their fall from injuring him ! In their eyes, talismans had a real effect, provided the metal composing them had been cast in calm weather, which, according to their theory, offered to the subtle matter emanating from the constellations, the greatest facilities for reaching the future talisman, for penetrating it, and remaining congealed therein !

Thus much for the superstitions which take a secondary place in our discussion. Let us now pass to the facts that have played a more important part, and the Satanic reality of which, is at the present day, officially maintained.

The first is divination by means of a wand, as it was extensively practised two centuries ago, and as it is, perhaps, still practised in our own times.

It is of little consequence to know what was its precise origin. Yet I cannot doubt that the remembrance of Moses' rod, combined with that of the *caduceus* or staff of Mercury, and the wand of Circe, has contributed to engender this superstition.* Minerva also employs a wand, with which she transforms Ulysses, and so extensive was its mysterious use among the ancients, that the Romans proverbially said of people who acquired wealth easily: "They have the secret of the wand." The Augurs, moreover, always made use of the *lituus* † in their solemn divinations.

But whatever may be its genealogy, the divining wand has none the less effected innumerable prodigies, and when M. de Mirville attributes them to the devil, he only reproduces the opinion of various ecclesiastics whose discretion has not been disputed—that of Father Lebrun, for example, and of Father Ménéstrier.

How is it possible, indeed, not to experience some embarrassment at first? Doubtless, the wands, less sincere or less courageous than the speaking tables, do not, when interrogated, confess that they know the future, and that they are dependant on Satan; but they discover the sources of water, concealed deposits of gold or silver, the boundaries of land, and even the traces of assassins! They perceive the diseases of the body, and the sentiments of the heart! They recognize true relics! They serve to ferret out the Camisards in the Cévennes, and deliver them into the power of the armies of the king! How are we to explain so many wonders, accom-

* Not to speak of the wand of the fairies:

"Ah! good fairy, teach us
Where you conceal your wand."

† The Augur's crooked staff wherewith he used in his office to quarter the heaven.—*Ainsworth's Latin Dictionary.*

plished, let it be remarked, by millions of hands at the same time, for the wand moves, not only in the hands of its professional turners, it likewise moves in the hands of capuchins, curés, and those benevolent individuals who frequently see therein a means of terminating lawsuits, by fixing the limits of inherited estates.

Among the numerous experiments to which I might refer, I shall select but one, that which is most celebrated, the most inexplicable, and which has most contributed to bring the wand into favor. I speak of the discovery of the Lyons assassins by the famous Aymer.

Aymer was renowned for his skill in finding springs of water, concealed metals, and in defining boundaries. A murder having been committed at Lyons, the criminal lieutenant bethought himself to send for Aymer. The latter was introduced into the cellar that had been the theatre of the crime. There he became agitated, his pulse beat with accelerated rapidity (let us observe the circumstances, for they will furnish us with a natural explanation), and his wand which he held, according to custom, by the two extremities of the forked part, began to turn with great velocity over the two places where the dead bodies of the husband and wife had been found. After which, guided by his ring or an interior sense, Aymer set to work to follow on the track of the murderers, taking every street through which they had passed ; he left the city by the bridge over the Rhone, and wended his way up the left bank of the river. Arrived at the house of a gardener, he obstinately insisted that the assassins had there refreshed themselves ; his wand turned chiefly over an empty bottle lying there. The children of the family soon recollected that three men had entered their cottage, and had obtained a drink. Aymer then directed his steps towards the Rhone, discovered their tracks on the sand, and embarked. He touched at all the villages where the assassins had landed, and visited the hotels where they had lodged, invariably recognizing, by means of his wand, the beds on which they had slept, and the tables at which they had eaten.

I should be carried too far, were I to relate the whole of this strange pursuit, interrupted, it is true, by a return to Lyons, but finally ending in a dungeon of Beaneaire, where, from among fifteen prisoners arrested for larceny, the wand designated the hunchback, whose confessions speedily confirmed the indications furnished by Aymar.

This is the grand exploit of the divining wands. It is not my wish to deprive it of any of its really extraordinary features, although I reserve to myself the privilege of inquiring if it does not comport with any natural explanation. It is but fair to add, however, that the success of Aymar, was not limited to this. His wand turned when held over hats which contained money, and the violence of its rotations was proportioned to the number of the crowns. Requested by the lieutenant-general of Lyons to discover the place in which a sum of money that had been stolen from him was concealed, he applied his wand to every nook and corner of the cabinet, but it turned only when in the vicinity of the desk and money-drawer. The wife of the lieutenant-general, wishing, on another occasion, to put him to the test, took the money herself; but the wand absolutely refused to turn, and Aymar replied to those who maintained the reality of the theft, that doubtless it had been committed only by way of a joke.

I shall now present the reverse of the medal; it would not be just to leave the reader any longer under the impression of wonders such as these, which, if they were the only examples, would seem to constitute a sort of infallibility of wands. Far from that, they commit the grossest blunders, speaking true and false by turns, according as the turner of the wand is or is not deceived in his sometimes unconscious suppositions.

"M. le Curé d'Eybens, in the neighborhood of Grenoble," says father Lebrun, "states that a man from whom some grain had been stolen, resorted to the wand: it turned at the doors of seven or eight houses; consequently the man who had been robbed, felt convinced that the grain was there; he was loud in his complaints, and was disposed to institute a legal search

on these premises. The result was, that suspicion, mistrust, calumny, quarrels, and insults were rife throughout the parish, setting the greater portion of the inhabitants by the ears ; all so much clear gain to the demon. The Curé, however, learned to a certainty, that neither the thieves nor the stolen grain had been in any of these houses." (*Histoire des pratiques superstitieuses*, iii. 341.)

The same author relates the numerous discomfitures experienced by the famous Aymer in person.

He had repaired to Paris at the order of the Prince de Condé ; requested to discover some money hidden in the cabinet of the Prince, he made a complete failure, for which he accounted by the pretence that the gilding on the furniture attracted the wand in every direction. He was then taken to a place in the garden where there were no gildings. Several holes had been dug there ; one was filled with gold, another with silver, a third with copper, a fourth with stones, the fifth contained nothing. Now the wand was so clumsy as to turn, first, with great animation over the stones, and then over the empty hole. As regards the *caches* stocked with gold and silver, not only did it refuse to turn when held over them, but it was with great difficulty that the persons by whom they had been made could find them again.

Summoned to the Hotel de Guise, Aymer succeeded no better : his wand turned when in the vicinity of the buffet, because of the plate it contained ; but it did not turn in the vicinity of another piece of furniture, which was full of plate ; it turned when held over couches on which the gilding could be perceived, but it did not turn when near those that were covered.

At Chantilly, the mystification was complete. The question related to the theft of trout : the wand turned several times as it was held over the pond, thus indicating that there had been several thieves ; when he was required to designate them more clearly, some of the party were mischievous enough to mysteriously introduce a lad who could by no possibility have been guilty, since he had only lived a year at Chantilly, while the

theft had been going on for seven years. They pretended to whisper together, as though talking about the lad. Aymar fell into the snare, and his wand began to turn violently, making very obvious that it obeyed no other law than the personal impulses of its holder ! But let us not anticipate the explanation, to which we shall come in due time ; our present object is to state the facts.

After the experiment of the trout, another was tried in relation to water courses. The wand seemed as though it were about to recover its position, and take a glorious revenge ; but this was not the case ; it turned on several different points of the park ; then, on passing over the river Chantilly, which is hidden by an arch, covered with earth and trees, it made not the slightest movement ; Aymar was taken to the river three times ; he was detained there and asked if he were sure that there was no water in the vicinity : the wand remained in a state of absolute immobility, simply because Aymar saw no indication of water, and because he was confirmed in his error by the very questions addressed to him, in which he suspected a snare. It was afterwards proposed that he should allow his eyes to be bandaged, in order to see if the wand would again turn at places over which it had already turned, but he could not be induced to consent.

In short, this man, who had so marvellously followed the trace of the Lyons assassins, was, at Paris, only the laughing stock of everybody who asked the assistance of his art. His wand turned most seriously for imaginary thefts ; it followed the directions that those who would test it chose to indicate, either by opening a window, breaking a square of glass, or some other sign.

It is said that the unfortunate Aymar, who, at the beginning perhaps, was perfectly honest and transmitted to his wand without willing it, the effect of the successive impressions derived from his natural sagacity, finally became a regular dealer in all sorts of information, and taking advantage of his celebrity, sold to applicants the favorable testimony he consented to render. He was, nevertheless, a clever man, and always knew how

to throw suspicion upon those who were looked upon as the most worthless rascals of the place. It was thus, that called upon by some nuns to discover the evil spell which caused so many of their cattle to die, he carefully established the existence of the witchcraft, demanded exorcisms which were solemnly performed, and then pointed out the hut of a man of very bad reputation, who thereupon, immediately took flight, and was never afterwards heard of.

But enough of the errors of Aymar. I might enlarge the list and quote the testimony of Mabillon, who declares that his wand did not turn in the sacristy of the Abbey of Saint Germain, in which were quantities of the precious metals, and that it remained immovable in his hands, when in the hands of other persons it twisted so that it broke. Of what use to multiply examples? Wells dug on the erroneous indications furnished by the turners of wands, have long remained a monument of their empire. One is still to be seen near Salons, in Provence. The Marshal de Boufflers caused another one to be undertaken near his château; the workmen persevered a long time because of the confidence inspired by a certain monk whose wand turned with great force whenever held over the spot.

Thus, three things have been clearly demonstrated: first, that the wands always turned when the aspect of the places seemed to announce a water-course; secondly, that they never turned when the exterior indications were wanting, although a river might be flowing beneath the feet of the person holding them; thirdly, that no discoverer of water-courses has ever consented to debar himself of this ocular evidence in allowing his eyes to be bandaged, and abandoning the wand to itself.

This leads us to the explanation* which is briefly as follows:

In the first place we must take into consideration the whole of the facts, not alone the experiments that have succeeded. Has this been done? According to custom, the errors of the wands have been forgotten, their triumphs only have been regis-

* I am happy to acknowledge, in reading the articles published by M. Chevreul, in the *Journal des Savants*, that my explanation on the essential points is confirmed by his.

tered. In general, the world is familiar with but one thing, the grand discovery of the assassins by Aymar. That is everywhere, it is known in all its details ; any one will conduct you to the gardener's cottage, and "under that arch of the bridge of Vienna, where boats were not in the habit of passing." It results from this incomplete exposition, that the divinations of the wand assume an appearance of the marvellous, in place of presenting the more common aspect, I grant, of nervous phenomena reflecting the thoughts of the person who holds the wand. If this person has sagacity and experience, it is probable that the number of lucky coincidences will considerably exceed that of the failures. The proportion will be precisely what it was with Aymar and his associates.

We must remark, in the second place, that this rotation is not so extraordinary as might be supposed. The form of the wand is such that the necessary effect of nervous agitation is to make it turn. Its shape is that of the letter *y* ; the two branches are held in the hands and the point is thrown forwards. Now, I challenge any person whomsoever he may be, thus to hold a similar wand, to engage in a search, and to perceive the signs which seem to announce the vicinity of the object sought for, without immediate motion of the point, falling or rising by the effect of muscular contraction. Here is not the slightest trace of jugglery ; I am even disposed to think that the intervention of a fluid is not necessary ; if it has any agency in the matter, which is very possible, it evidently cannot, by itself, account for the phenomenon, and the comparison between the tables and the wand is, in this respect, unjust, since the former are put in motion without contact. It is not thus with the latter, for the nervous agitation communicates to it, abrupt motions. Every involuntary action of the muscles of my hands makes itself felt in this forked stick, the two branches of which I hold firmly grasped. The point will ascend or descend with a rapidity proportioned to my emotion, and it will, in certain cases, end by establishing a real rotation.

That granted, let us take one step further. What gives rise

to this emotion ? the sight of the signs which seem to indicate the presence of the object sought. Here again, the sincerity of the turners of the wand is sheltered from all suspicion ; they may mistake their unconscious perceptions for a supernatural influence.

Add now, that their perceptions, however unconscious they may be, are none the less intelligent and acute ; that the habit of fixing their attention upon certain objects has necessarily developed within them the instinct and the scent, as it were, exacted by the pursuit in which they are absorbed, and you have the complete series of principles, the concatenation of which furnishes the explanation demanded :—a mind prompt to discern the signs, muscles contracted by the sight of them, a wand which from it form quickly feels the violent rebound of these contractions, a large allowance made for the errors which this mode of discovery allows, an absolute powerlessness when the eyes are bandaged and the wand is left to itself.

Such are the principles ; behold the application.

First, in respect to water-courses, there are a multitude of exterior circumstances of which an experienced man may avail himself as guides. Without speaking of the information he may sometimes gather, even when he does not seek it, the configuration and nature of the ground, the plants growing there, the general aspect of the soil, all furnish him valuable indications. The moment he becomes acquainted with them, independent of all premeditation on his part, muscular contraction takes place, and the wand moves.

Secondly, in respect to boundaries, the process is very much the same. The elements of the contention, the claims and the arguments of the respective parties, are known to the turner of the wand ; whether his opinion is formed in advance, or whether it is formed by the appearance of the places, it will happen that when he reaches the point which is, in his mind, the limit of the estate, no power in the world can prevent the wand from turning in his hands. The very expectation of such an event will powerfully contribute to bring it about.

Next come the drawers, the hats filled with money. This is still more simple, for the turner of the wand need only be a physiognomist to make success generally certain. It is less easy to distinguish the proximity of water under ground, than to detect the locality of the hiding-place in the eyes of the wife of the lieutenant-general. It is very clear that the turner of the wand gathers essential indications from the faces of the assistants, and this is confirmed by the fact that when he is in the presence of persons who habitually control their countenances, or throw into them a false expression for the purpose of misleading him, he invariably commits grave errors. The muscular contraction then takes place at an unsuitable moment, and in presence of an empty drawer, the unfortunate wand abandons itself to the most compromising contortions.

It is thus to be seen that I have no occasion to suppose the agency of actual fraud in this matter; indeed, I do not hesitate to acknowledge that many honest men have, in the integrity of their hearts, turned the wand, that they have even rendered real services to their neighbors by peaceably settling angry law-suits, and by giving to their fellow-citizens the benefit of the knowledge they have acquired on the subject of the sources of water.

It is true, there still remains the detection of thieves and assassins. It is here that the amateurs of the marvellous assume the triumphant tone; their favorite argument against us is the hunchback delivered up to justice by Aymar. Let us, then, examine this, by way of conclusion.

I would first take some exceptions to the story, such as it has been transmitted to us. It has, doubtless, been embellished, according to custom. There is an esthetic sentiment, an artist instinct, a love of the beautiful, called into action on such occasions, which leaves out the little discordances, and suppresses the hesitations or errors of detail.

But granting that things actually occurred as is here related, an insurmountable objection then springs up in my mind. Why should such an exploit have been the only one of the

kind? Why did not the police avail itself of this method of discovering the guilty? Is it because there were no more robberies or murders at Lyons? Against a wand which could follow their traces on a river, designate the tables at which they had sat, the beds on which they had slept, the malefactors would have had but little chance. It is strange that the officers of justice did not resort to its assistance. Indeed, I am mistaken, they did resort to it, but without success. Aymar, summoned to Paris, was one evening taken to la Rue Saint Denis, where a watchman had just been killed. The blood flowed in torrents from fifteen or sixteen wounds; yet the wand remained motionless. The fact occurred in the presence of the Prince of Condé, the Prince of Conti, and several magistrates. I conclude, therefore, not that the wand or the spirits were less alert, but that Aymar was less posted up in the necessary information, nor do I see anything in all these facts, to change my opinion: it is in man, not elsewhere, that the phenomenon of which the agitation of the wand is the visible manifestation, takes place.

Now, what took place *in the man* when appealed to respecting the Lyons murder? I shall take the liberty of offering an hypothesis; I do not state it as true, but as possible, which is sufficient.

It is possible that the *cabaret*, the proprietors of which were killed, had been principally frequented by the inhabitants of Provence, and that the idea of descending the Rhone to seek the assassins, was thus suggested to the mind of Aymar; this was, if I may be allowed the expression, the stroke of genius. This first step taken, the search instituted in the direction of Provence, the rest was comparatively easy.

I say nothing of what occurred in the cellar. Aymar was too well acquainted with the facts, even without any efforts of his own, not to be able, immediately to point out the spot where the murder had been committed. In default of the indications furnished by the looks and gestures of the assistants, we must

not lose sight of the communication of thought which, in certain instances, is produced by the action of the nervous fluid.

Leaving the cellar, and guided by the idea that the assassins were from the southern part of France, Aymar departed from Lyons, and followed the banks of the Rhone until he arrived at the house of a gardener, who might, perhaps, have been in the habit of harboring criminals and facilitating their escape by water. My supposition seems to be confirmed by the positive manner in which the family at first denied the visit of the three bandits.

The wand which indicated this because Aymar suspected it, afterwards indicated their still visible traces on the banks of the river. They conducted to the place of embarkation. Aymar embarked in his turn. He knew the necessary extent of every day's journey made by the Rhone boatmen. There were, in those days, no two ways of travelling on that river. The halting places of each evening were marked, and in the villages where the traveller stopped, there were never two inns; these inns never contained many tables or a great variety of beds; consequently, the agitation of the wand in presence of the beds and tables is not at all miraculous.

Let us not forget, besides, that conversation was going on around Ayinar, that he had ears, experience, and even a discernment, which seized upon the slightest hint. Let us not forget that the assassins, in proportion as they left Lyons behind them, might have become communicative and spoken of their projects, of the route they intended to take.

It is thus, doubtless, that Ayinar's attention was directed to that arch of the Bridge of Vienna, under which it is not customary to pass, but where traces of the assassins were found. It is remarkable, moreover, that arrived in the vicinity of Beaucaire, he experienced either fear or embarrassment, which prompted him to discontinue his pursuit. He returned to Lyons, and allowed some time to pass, during which, he gathered other information that finally led to his success.

Among the hints gleaned by him in the inns on the banks of the Rhone, was one fact that must necessarily have struck his attention ; in all the descriptions of the three fugitives, he could meet with nothing definite, further than that one was a hunchback. Now, here was a hunchback arrested at Beaucaire ; Aymar obtained access to the prison ; the sight of the hunchback produced its effect, the wand turned, and the murderer brought back to Lyons, perished on the wheel after having confessed his crime.

It is proper, however, to observe, that according to these confessions, Aymar was mistaken in designating the hunchback as the chief criminal, for he seems only to have guarded the door while his accomplices did the deed. Such a circumstance is not to be neglected, especially as the two assassins, who were neither hunchbacks nor in other respects conspicuously deformed, escaped Aymar's pursuit, the wand giving no evidence of being influenced by their vicinity, although it must have been repeatedly on their traces.

I do not know that the explanatory hypothesis I have just presented, will appear as plausible to the eyes of the reader as it does to mine. Perhaps he may prefer to believe that Aymar was the agent of Satanic prodigies, and that, sorcerer without knowing it, but a poor sorcerer at best, he predicted accurately once, and afterwards allowed himself to be duped by appearances where the means of information were wanting. It seems to me more simple to suppose in the affair of the assassination, a sort of divinatory instinct, such as is often found among the detective police, and which when once on the right track, is kept alive by the increasing light of information gained as they advance. Let us not forget that the course of the murderers was, according to all appearances, much less singular than we imagine, that the programme of the travels of a man fleeing towards the south must have been made out in advance, that embarkation on the Rhone was necessarily often resorted to in such cases, that the directions and halting-places could vary but little. We are not to endow the 17th century

with the means of transportation possessed in the 19th. At that time, the modes of communication between Lyons and the South were not so numerous as now : roads on the left bank, roads on the right bank, *diligences* leaving at all hours of the day and night, railroads and half a dozen steamboat lines, without counting the sailing vessels.

It will, at least, be granted that my explanation is a little less extraordinary than that current among the Cartesians in the time of Aymar. Their corpuscles accounted for the prodigies of the wand, as well as for all others ! Their argument is as follows :

“There is no body in the world from which there is not continually detached an infinite number of small particles that distribute themselves through the air, and exercise an action around them. But it is in the nature of some of the corpuscles to attract, of others to repel. Why should not those which issued from the bodies of the assassins, and which took a particular form after the commission of the crime, have disagreeably affected the corpuscles contained in the body of Aymar ? Why should not the corpuscles emitted by gold, silver, or by water-courses, have exercised an analogous influence upon the fibre of the wand, or upon the person who held it ?”

During the period in which this theory continued to be seriously discussed, the *whys* of the Cartesians were answered by two or three *whys* on the other side. “Why,” said they, “do not the corpuscles of water make themselves felt when the wand is in pursuit of gold ? Why did Aymar’s wand turn when on the trace of assassins, and remain insensible to the corpuscles of a great river like the Rhone ? Why did the corpuscles of the murderers remain more than a month in a valley celebrated for its strong north winds ? Why do the turners of the wand make mistakes, and submit to the influence of corpuscles of gold, where there are none ? Why do they refuse to allow their eyes to be bandaged, when such a proceeding can in no way injure the action of the corpuscles ?

I shall not quit the subject of the divining wand without saying a few words in relation to the more modern prodigies that are explained in virtue of the same principle, that is to say, by muscular contraction, and by the involuntary impulsion given in conformity with a dominant thought.

All school-boys have sounded the hours in a glass, by means of a suspended button or ring. The thread which holds the object is attached to the thumb; the experimenter strongly concentrates his attention and determines in his mind the number of blows the ring is to strike; then, without apparent motion of the thumb, the vibration is transmitted, and the motion willed—accomplished. This toy has recently taken a grave, scientific name; it is the odometer of Doctor Herbert Mayo. But the phenomenon has not changed its nature, nor have we any need to resort to the odic force, in order to conceive of the obedience of the ring, which is agitated a certain number of times, approaches or retreats from certain persons. The thought of the operator is reflected in the movements of the odometer, and as his finger may perform a mechanical act without his being conscious of it, we have no occasion to speak here of the nervous fluid, although its intervention may be probable.

After the odometer of Mayo, comes the magnetometer of Rutter. This is a ball suspended to a metallic rod, and which, after being some time in contact with a person, commences to vibrate; these vibrations change in direction and intensity, according to the persons or objects with which the operator enters into relation. Rutter and his numerous disciples attributed the fact to human electricity, but it has since been proved, that there, again, is only involuntary muscular action exercised in the direction of the dominant thought, or, perhaps, a fluid action exercised in the same direction; in one word, it has been demonstrated, that, whether through the agency of the muscles, or through the agency of the nervous fluid, the thought alone is realized in the vibrations of the magnetometer. It obeys the human will, and not an electrical attrac-

tion or repulsion. The experiments of a homœopathic physician, Doctor Madden, seem to leave no doubt in this respect. He made some magnetic experiments with his globules. Placed in the vicinity of a certain globule, the magnetometer vibrated longitudinally ; in the vicinity of certain other globules, it took an opposite direction. Unfortunately, Doctor Madden *knew* the difference between the globules thus presented to the instrument. When he attempted to present them without knowing this difference, the science of the magnetometer, which was only a reflection of that of the Doctor, was found to be completely at fault ; the same homœopathic globule provoked, successively, two contrary vibrations.

Thus, we are invariably brought back to this fundamental principle, which we have found at the basis of all the pretended prodigies—that which passes within man, is precisely that which we see reproduced external to him, now, by means of the muscles, now, by means of the nervous fluid, now, by means of the imagination. The wand furnishes the example of muscular reproduction ; the Turning Tables furnish that of fluid reproduction ; the history of apparitions and sorcerers will furnish that of imaginative reproduction ; but, in all cases, there is reproduction. Let us pass on to apparitions and sorcerers, commencing with apparitions.

Nothing in this world has been more frequently *seen*. Graveyard phantoms, if less numerous at the present day than in the good old times, nevertheless, allow themselves to be still perceived. Men of science, it is true, no longer, with their own eyes, contemplate the formation of a spectre, by means of the “seminal ideas” contained in blood freshly spilled ; but for all that, the spectres have not entirely disappeared, and numerous witnesses are ready to swear to it.

The world, in former times, had something better than witnesses ; it had decrees. Parliaments often cancelled the lease of a house, because of the apparitions that tormented its

tenants! After that, how was it possible to doubt? Was there not reason for such a decision? No one, moreover, dreamed of contesting it. The greatest and the most scientific men of the 16th century had apparitions; Luther, Melancthon, Pic de la Mirandola, Ambrose Paré, did not escape the common weakness. I mention these few names, passing over in silence men less eminent, such as Bodin, and the obscure epoch of the Middle Ages, when visions were universal.

"But," I shall be told, "the people you speak of were not fools, and it seems rather strange that you should refer to the universality of a fact, as an argument against it!" The conclusion is more legitimate than our opponents are willing to think, for facts that are universal in times of ignorance, becoming more and more rare as the world is enlightened, and retreating, as it were, before the sun, cannot fail to be regarded with suspicion. Moreover, we shall see, when we come to examine the confessions of sorcerers, that very general hallucinations have sprung up and prevailed under the influence of certain dominant ideas. Visions are only hallucinations.

Do we find one single instance of a vision which cannot be accounted for in that way, provided due allowances are made for errors of testimony? M. de Mirville invites us to distinguish between the vision which may, in fact, be entirely subjective, and the accomplishment of the predictions that accompany it. Do not the latter seem to have an indisputable objectivity? Yes, if we admit the accuracy of the story. But to present, for our serious consideration, all the idle tales found in the works of both ancient and modern authors, to summon us to hold them as certain, is to trifle with us. Why do not the men who publish such prophecies as these, have courage also to publish other new prophecies concerning our future, the realization of which we ourselves may be able to establish? That, however, they are very careful not to do, while they take pains to remind us that the phantom of Brutus warned him of Philippi, that the genius of Socrates announced to him the overthrow of Sicily! What authority have we for believing

it? Do the books that relate these wonders contain no fable, no exaggeration, no error?

The most embarrassing apparition in this relation, seems to be that of the Marquis of Londonderry. Paying a visit to one of his friends in Ireland, he was lodged in a chamber, hung round with family portraits. Shortly after getting into bed and extinguishing his light, he was visited by the apparition of a luminous child. The next day he acquainted his host with the occurrences of the past night, when the latter informed him that the luminous child appeared to those who were destined to a career of eminence. The same child afterwards reappeared to Lord Londonderry during a sitting of the House of Commons. It is known that he became Prime Minister and put an end to his days by cutting his throat with a razor. What gives a value to this anecdote, is its veracity and the powerful effect it had on the Marquis of Londonderry. It would be very strange, in fact, that the child should have appeared to him in a house haunted by this sort of phantom, if he had been entirely ignorant of the tradition. But if he knew it, or even if he had known and forgotten it, it is easy to conceive that by a phenomenon of reminiscence and moral excitement, the image might be presented to him. It is thus that I explain the first adventure; as for the second, the reappearance of the child when he was at his seat in the House of Commons, that is nothing more than an ordinary hallucination.

Among the prophecies which sometime accompany our visions, a good number of them relate to our approaching death. These explain themselves so naturally as to render it unnecessary to dwell on them. Sometimes, I might say almost always, they are contradicted by the event, and forgotten; sometimes, they are confirmed by the event; nor is it very strange that the approaching disorganization of invalids, or even of persons apparently in health, should be accompanied by forebodings; sometimes, in short, they themselves produce the event, by bringing on a fatal crisis.

But here is something that seems more extraordinary. We

are gravely told that certain crimes, previously unknown, certain atrocious murders have been denounced by apparitions ! I ask, first, where is the complete proof of these assertions, where is the official verification of the revelations of ghosts, a verification which is of no value unless it *precede* the discovery of the facts. I ask, secondly, what has become of the thousands of false denunciations that have had the same origin ; they have disappeared, leaving only a few coincidences more or less exact. I ask, if it is very certain that the persons who have been the subjects of these visions, had no knowledge, no suspicion of the crime thus related to them. And as it is impossible that I should receive a satisfactory answer to all these questions, I shall venture to insinuate that the indications, somewhat crude, perhaps, in the beginning, were amplified, embellished, and completed afterwards ; that it was conscientiously done, and with perfect sincerity ; in short, that in the midst of an excitement caused by unexpected success, every one is disposed to speak of the revelations he has received, even though their details directly contradict each other. Not only does the person who has seen the ghost, yield to this temptation, but there are as many involuntary accomplices as believers ; everybody labors to establish harmony between things as they are, and things as they have been predicted. On such occasions, all are disposed to play the rôle of Pourceaugnac * recognizing Eraste.

" Ah ! what is this ! what do I see ? What a fortunate meeting. Monsieur de Pourceaugnac, I am delighted to see you ! How ! do you not recognize me ?"

" Sir, I am your obedient servant."

" Is it possible that a separation of five or six years should have caused you to forget me, and that you do not recognize me as the best friend of the whole family of the Pourceaugnacs ?"

... " What is the name of that restaurant keeper at Limoges, who gives such good fare ?"

* Molière's Comedy of Monsieur de Pourceaugnac.—TRANS.

"Petit Jean?"

"That is the man. We used to go very often to his place to regale ourselves. What is the name of the promenade at Limoges?"

"The cemetery des Arènes."

"Exactly."

"How is your the , who is such a gentleman?"

"My brother, the consul?"

"Yes."

"He is very well."

"I am delighted. And he who is so good-natured? the your"

"My cousin, the assessor?"

"Exactly."

"As cheerful and as merry as ever."

"Indeed, I am very glad. And your uncle, the"

"I have no uncle."

"You had, however, at that time"

"No, only an aunt."

"That was what I meant"

. . . . "There is also my nephew, the canon, who came near dying with the small pox."

"What a misfortune that would have been!"

"You know him also."

"Indeed, do I know him! a tall, well-made fellow."

"Not very tall."

"No, but of the ordinary height."

"Hey, yes!"

"Who is your nephew?"

"Yes."

"The son of your brother or sister?"

"Exactly."

"The Canon of the church of what is its name?"

"Saint-Étienne."

"The same; I am not acquainted with any other."

"He knows all my relations!"

He knows all my relations. This is a correct model of the revelations made by ghosts. I seem to hear the Pourceaugnaes of the vision exclaim at every new circumstance discovered : "It is that ! It is exactly what the phantom told me !"

We have often heard stories of friends, who agreed that the first one to die should immediately return to visit the other. That would be glorious, if it were true ; but, unfortunately, between a very ordinary hallucination and a very miraculous prodigy, there is here the thickness of a small, insignificant detail.

Take, for example, the famous rendezvous of the Marquis de Preci with M. de Rambouillet. Preci had remained at Paris, detained there by a violent fever (let this be remarked), while Rambouillet went to Flanders. Intimate friends, they had mutually promised that the first one who died should come back to visit the other. Six weeks afterwards, Preci heard his bed-curtains drawn aside, and turning to see who was there, perceived the Marquis de Rambouillet, in uniform and boots ; he sprang out of bed, and was about to fall upon the neck of his friend ; but Rambouillet, shrinking from his advances, told him that embraces were no longer in season, that he had been killed the evening previous, and that he was come to fulfill his word. He added, that the descriptions of the other world were correct ; that Preci must resolve to lead a better life, and that he had no time to lose, for he would be killed in his next battle. Now, it turned out that Rambouillet had been really killed the night before in Flanders, and it happened that Preci was really killed at the battle of Saint Antoine, the first in which he took part after his restoration to health.

What is there of the marvellous in this adventure ? That Preci, during his fever, believed he saw the phantom of his friend ? that his imagination, impressed with the promise made to him, and expecting, with all the rest of Paris, unfavorable news from Flanders, his vision should have nearly coincided with a battle that was generally anticipated ? that the idea of death should have led him to place a serious warning in the

mouth of Rambouillet? that the constant recurrence of this thought should have caused him to believe he heard the announcement of his own approaching end? No, the marvellous is not there; it is in the correctness of certain circumstances, probably embellished afterwards: "I was killed with a musket-ball *in the back*; thou wilt be killed *on the first occasion*." It may also be, that the partisans of ghosts have forgotten to mention more than one apparition anterior to that of Rambouillet, thrown aside to give place to the only one confirmed by the event.

This is the principal observation, and it proves how very absurd it would be to attach much importance to anecdotes in which the marvellous fact is always carefully disengaged from the accessory facts that might aid in making it understood. Baronius relates the famous apparition of Ficinus, who appeared to his friend Mercatus the very hour of his death; but he does not tell us whether Ficinus was not in feeble health, whether Mercatus was not concerned about him, whether he had not previously dwelt on the illusion of his visit from beyond the tomb. These are details which it is important to know, for if they are correct, we find nothing very astonishing in the following account, given in the book of M. Brierre de Boismont:

"The illustrious friends, after a long discourse upon the nature of the soul, agreed that whichever of the two died first, should, if possible, appear to the survivor, and inform him of our condition in the other life. Some time afterwards, it happened that while Michael Mercatus, the elder, was studying philosophy at an early hour in the morning, he all at once heard a horse gallop up to the door, and recognized the voice of his friend Ficinus, exclaiming: '*Oh! Michael, Michael, all those things are true!*' Surprised at these words, Mercatus rose from his seat, and ran to the window. He perceived his friend turning from him, clothed in white, and mounted on a horse of the same color. Mercatus called to him, and followed him with his eyes until he disappeared. He shortly received news that Ficinus had died at Florence at the hour in which he saw the

apparition. The distance that separated them was considerable." (*Des Hallucinations*, 335.)

The same author relates other analogous stories. Who has not heard of them? and who has not observed, that in spite of the astonishing assertions they contain, there is always something ambiguous in these statements, something we would like to know, but cannot make clear? Now, this something is precisely what metamorphoses simple coincidences or natural prevision into prodigies.

I shall not dwell on adventures in which we do not even find the piquancy of a death announced before it can be otherwise known. These, of much more frequent occurrence, come under the head of ordinary hallucinations. I know a lady, who, having lost a tenderly-loved daughter, has seen her reappear, has passed half-an-hour at her side, and has not the slightest doubt of the reality of this apparition. But it is the character of hallucinations to leave an impression in no respect distinguished from that which would have been produced if the fact had actually taken place.

Houses haunted by apparitions, present no very difficult problem. When we remember that haunted houses have abounded neither in all ages nor in all countries, and that their mysterious inhabitants do not venture to disturb everybody, we shall have no trouble in understanding that the expectation of phantoms creates them, and that certain imaginations, impressed by such stories, will not fail to hear nocturnal noises, the sound of footsteps, or the rattling of chains, to say nothing of the spectres which show themselves in person, and which come to perform their traditional office. Whenever it shall be proved to me that any one witness of these terrible scenes has had, neither directly nor indirectly, at any period of his life, any knowledge or suspicion of the bad reputation of the house in which it occurs; whenever this shall be satisfactorily proved, I will take his ghosts into serious consideration, asking, at the same time, whether they have been exactly faithful to their special rôle, or whether they have had only the common-place character of the

apparitions which figure in all the books, which people every memory, and which the aspect of ruins, of old halls, of portraits or tapestries, is calculated to call up.

The phenomena of second sight, and particularly that which consists in seeing a second-self close to us, belongs to the category of hallucinations the most easy to be conceived. Certain countries have consequently had a monopoly of them. It is especially among the mountains of Scotland that we hear of the famous prognostication of death, and we may believe that those by whom it is perceived, have their reasons for regarding it in that light ; without being able to account for it, they are doubtless directed by the secret instinct of their diseased condition, or by the prevision of a danger announced by precursory signs. Besides, we are not told, either of the persons who have seen themselves, and yet remain in wondrously good health, or of those whose health would have remained good, if they had not seen themselves. In the case of persons who see at a distance the death of their neighbors, independently of the explanation that may be furnished by Animal Magnetism, in which the identical phenomenon is produced, the proportions of the prodigy would, doubtless, be greatly reduced if we would consent, first, to take into account the erroneous visions, and then those which innocently depend on well-founded conjectures.

In regard, then, to all these anecdotes of phantoms and second sight, we must come back to the opinion indicated by Augustine, in his reply to the Bishop Evode : " Respecting visions, even those from which we learn something of the future, it is not possible to explain how they are produced, unless we know how everything is produced that takes place within us when we think ; for we clearly see that it summons up in our soul an infinite number of images representing objects which have made an impression on our sight or other senses. . . . At the very moment in which I dictate this letter, I see you with the eyes of my mind, without your being present, or without your knowing anything about it."

That which Augustine partially divined, modern science has completely demonstrated. The hallucinations of mystics and sorcerers of former times, those of second sight in Scotland, those of persons of vivid imaginations who are visited by ghosts, may be ranked among the number of least contestable facts. Armed with this fundamental observation, we proceed, without astonishment, to the innumerable visions related in history. The explanation of those possessing a religious character, is especially easy. An apparition of the Virgin created the great Aragonese devotion ; *Neustra señora del Pilar* ; the apparitions of François d'Assise, in 1221 and 1223, led to the great concession of indulgences to the church of Notre Dame des Anges ; Elizabeth, abbess of Schonaw, is favored by the apparition of the eleven thousand virgins, all of whose names she remembers, as well as the incidental details connected therewith ; the amateurs of visions will have no difficulty in making a long catalogue of them, even without having recourse to those of Madame Guyon, of Antoinette Bourignon, and of Swedenborg.

But these are all decidedly beneath criticism. Leaving them aside, therefore, I pass to a more important branch of the same subject. I would speak of sorcery and whatever is connected with it.

Sorcery, have I said. The question here no longer concerns the Cabala, necromancy, alchemy, astrology, and those various branches of the diabolical supernatural to each of which I have given a passing notice. Sorcery, the religion of evil, the central manifestation of the power of Satan, demands a more thorough examination. It occupies the whole period of the Middle Ages, and extends beyond it in every direction ; it is established and combated by the Catholic Church ; it fills and pollutes the imagination of many successive generations. Let us take it up, such as it presents itself to us, with its troops of magicians, sorcerers, *loups-garous* and *possédés*, with its *cortége* of demons and of *sabbats*, with its paraphernalia of compacts, con-

jurations, and spells, with its maladies, its sudden deaths, its exorcisms, its prosecutions, its confessions, and its horrid punishments.

It must be admitted that few historical facts have had the extensive circulation, the gravity, and the duration of the one we are now about to analyze ; few have been better attested. During many centuries, the whole world, learned and unlearned, saw and touched with their hands the prodigies of sorcery. De Lancre was an intelligent man, his discoveries in modern geology were two hundred years in advance of his age ; yet, this upright and distinguished magistrate passed his life in exterminating sorcerers. Bodin was, on many questions, in advance of his cotemporaries ; yet he wrote a demonology. Matthew Hale in England, Mather in the United States, seriously expressed the same convictions, thus manifesting the persistency with which certain Catholic traditions have clung to Protestants themselves. When the Dominican, Bartholomew de Lépine, wrote his dissertation on vampires, his book became the manual of the laical and ecclesiastical judges, and all the cotemporaries of the author, beginning with the sorcerers whom he caused to be burnt, were as firmly convinced as he of the *sabbat*, the transformations into cats or wolves, and all the atrocious things committed by the demons and those whom they possessed.

I go too far, however, in saying that all the cotemporaries of Lépine or De Lancre agreed with them in opinion. There were a few exceptions, and these are so honorable that I am eager to mention them. Ponzinubius, Aleiat, Lévinus, Pigray, Porta, Montaigne, are the only dissenters on this subject to be found among the learned writers ; two illustrious and three or four distinguished men ; this is certainly not too much in presence of the enormous mass of several unanimous generations ! Perhaps I should have added to this glorious company, the unfortunate Édeline, a doctor in Sorbonne, who in the middle of the 15th century, ventured to attack in front, the belief in diabolical prodigies ; but the men whom he attacked were stronger than

he ; they succeeded in morally dishonoring and ruining him ; their testimony (the only testimony that, according to custom, remains to us), represents him as having confessed before his judges the compact he had concluded with Satan. Was he calumniated ? Had he become mad ? No one can say. The time had not yet come, when an objection against the universal conviction could be hazarded with impunity.

This conviction was confirmed both by the laws of the Catholic church and the laws of the state. After the example of the legislation of Constantine, Constance, and Valentinian, the barbaric codes punished magical operations with terrible penalties. The Salic law declares that sorcerers who devour men shall be condemned to a fine of eight thousand *deniers* ;* now, this fine must have been inflicted more than once, for the sorcerers often got over their fancy for eating their neighbors. Nothing is better established.

The miracles of the devil were, in those days, mixed up with all the details of the national life. If a bridge or a cathedral was to be built, the devil always had a hand in the matter ; if any superior man made his appearance, if he acquired extensive power, large property, or great reputation, it was in virtue of a compact made with Satan. Indeed, remnants of these convictions still exist, and even at the present day, we find it hard to believe that Albert the Grand or Raymond Lulle were not sorcerers ! Certain popes were also regarded in that light by their cotemporaries, and I experience no little satisfaction in remarking that some adversaries of the Reformation passed among their brethren for real instruments of Satan, because of the skill they displayed in their contests with Protestantism. Palma Cayet, author of the *Chronologie novenaire*, sold his soul, on condition that the evil spirit should make him conqueror in his disputes with the Protestant ministers. How was it possible to doubt it ? After his death, the contract was found, signed with his blood, and the devil having carried away his body, large stones were put in his coffin as a substitute !

* An old French coin.

These beliefs continue until the end of the 17th century ; I might say until the 18th, or even the 19th. In 1750, a nun was burned at Wurtzbourg, who pretended to be a sorceress, and who confessed that she had caused the death of several very healthy persons. In 1823, the court of High Commission at Martinique, condemned the negro Raymond to the galleys for life, because he had used sorcery and witchcraft. It may, nevertheless, be affirmed that the ordinance issued by Louis XIV., in 1682, marked the real termination of the sorcery period. From this time the judicial executions ceased, and superstition, already greatly weakened, lost the power it had hitherto derived from the sanction of legal prosecutions and the publicity of testimony. Since then, the usages which manifested its empire, have successively disappeared ; the trade corporations, for example, have renounced the strange ceremonies, the infernal mummeries which many of them formerly associated with the admission of new members. The Modern Spirit, in short, has made known its advent. Will it be conquered, and shall we be carried back to the Middle Ages ? I think not ; but I fear that we may continue the impious negations of our age with the not less impious credulities of past ages. Compromises of this sort are not difficult to make ; nothing but a restoration of the Biblical doctrines can triumph at once over the skeptics who deny the devil, and the superstitions that misrepresent him.

The Biblical doctrines have already given evidence of their power in this respect. Overborne for a moment by the traditions so profoundly impressed on the soul, they have finished by everywhere completely destroying faith in sorcery. If Protestant nations had, in the beginning, trials for sorcery, as they also in the beginning had intolerant laws, they, nevertheless, could not rid themselves of the influence of the Scriptures, which, gradually triumphing over ideas servilely received, have annihilated the theories of persecution and possession contrary to them. The work is now accomplished, and with the exception of one country, Sweden, incompletely reformed, whose people

are still behind the age, with the exception also of a few whimsical individuals, such as there always have been and always will be, Protestantism rises in one mass, in opposition to the theories, the restoration of which is at the present day attempted under the cloak of religion. In the eyes of Protestantism, they are not Christians, but Deists, who, rejecting the absolute authority of the Bible, and thus repudiating the Protestant symbol, labor to carry humanity backward rather than forward, by propagating under various forms, a faith in wonders and in the revelations of the Spirits.

It was not such a state of things as this, as my book will, perhaps, demonstrate, which led to the terrible persecution directed by the judges of New England, in the 17th century, against the pretended sorcerers of Salem. Doubt in regard to the diabolical supernatural then existed only in a few of the the most intelligent minds ; almost all the religious emigrants who sought the Western Continent, and became the founders of the future United States, carried with them the traditions of the Old World. Thus in Salem, was witnessed the spectacle of honorable, enlightened, conscientious men, transforming nervous or fluid phenomena into incontestable proofs of possession, and declaring (in the land which was to give birth to Franklin !) that lightning itself was directed by demons.

But this was the last effort of an expiring prejudice. The scenes of Salem left an impression which nothing has since obliterated, and which extends even to our own times. It led men to reflect ; they read the Bible, and were astonished to find there, neither sorcery nor possession by means of material contagion, nor spells, nor demons, masters of our lives and of our destinies. The opinions of Christians were then gradually formed, and nothing henceforth will be able to give them a retrograde tendency. The imagination becomes disturbed at the thought of the terrible condition to which we should have descended, had it not been for the Reformation, in other words, had it not been for the appeal to the Scriptures. Far from

being an advance upon the previous period, the 16th century was signalized by increased faith in magic and sorcery. The world was no longer content to burn sorcerers, it burned also poor animals accused of the same crime ; a dog-sorcerer was condemned in Scotland, a cock-sorcerer was condemned at Basle, and with him on the pile was placed his *cock's egg* ! Some years later, the authorities of Lyons sat in solemn judgment on a peasant who was accused of having, by his spells, caused the melting of the ice in the river, so that it might carry away the stone bridge. How far would this thing have gone, if the Bible had not reappeared ?

The influence of the Holy Book was felt, not alone, in Protestant countries. The whole of Europe submitted to a salutary revolution, salutary even for those who cursed it. From that time, progress was everywhere perceptible, it carried the world in a direction more and more remote from the Middle Ages, until, in 1682, we see Louis XIV., immediately after the scandalous affair of Labaye-Dupuis, reforming all the laws relative to sorcery. In this matter, more than five hundred persons had been compromised by the blind zeal of the Parliament of Rouen, in which the traditional doctrines still prevailed ; a miserable epileptic had been metamorphosed into a *possédé*, and even into a magician. Finally, after more than twenty capital condemnations had been pronounced, the affair attracted public attention, the course of proceeding was inquired into, and discussed, light was thrown upon the pretended supernatural facts, and the royal declaration, in spite of the parliament, which, to the last moment, continued to protest, put an end to the abominable system, which its partisans at the present time, would attempt to resuscitate.

But it is not my intention to relate in what way this system disappeared ; I shall confine myself to a statement of what took place during its existence, and resolutely confront sorcery, as it was manifested in its palmy days.

The two most brilliant signs by which it showed itself, and

to which I shall principally devote my attention, are the confessions of sorcerers, and the possessions. It was by thousands that the most precise—the most circumstantial declarations were every day produced; one had repeatedly been to the *sabbat*, had slaughtered, or crucified children, had offered up mass with Satan, had participated in the most infamous acts; another had been transformed into a wolf, he had had claws—hair—he had torn to pieces and devoured a great number of persons. As for the possessions, their existence was no less clearly demonstrated; extraordinary and nearly uniform phenomena were manifested in convents of women; the nuns related, in detail, their visions, their temptations, their crimes; they abandoned themselves to unheard-of convulsions, they executed feats of strength, they felt within them the material presence of the demons.

Such were the two great proofs of sorcery. Nothing, however, was more diversified than its proceedings, or more shocking than its results. I cannot write a technical treatise on the subject; a short sketch is all that can here, legitimately, find a place.

We will leave out of the question the distinction between white magic, which passed for innocent, and black magic, which was not; it is exclusively with the latter that we are concerned; it traces back to Solomon the invention of its clavicula, and the magical ring of this great magician was the most celebrated of talismans! Unfortunately, those who pretended to possess it, labored under a delusion; the incomparable ring reposes in Solomon's tomb, in the midst of the isles of the Indian Ocean! It is more easy to procure the skin of the hyena, which renders its possessor invulnerable; the blood of the black dog, which keeps away importunate demons; or even emeralds and dried toads, which also perform trifling services. Nor are the words *agla*, *abracadabra* to be disdained. The magical square possesses an acknowledged virtue; how is it possible to resist figures arranged in such a manner, that

the sum is always the same, in whatever direction the addition is made ! I here give a model, at the risk of divulging some fatal secrets :

5	10	3
4	6	8
9	2	7

Magical wands, magical mirrors, magical cups, figured in their turn, in the arsenal of the sorcerers, nor must we forget the enchanted arms, the starry rings, the heads of brass, which gave their advice on important occasions, or the rings of invisibility ; but these were only arms of courtesy, the small trade of the profession. Whoever pretends to investigate sorcery to its very depths, must make acquaintance with compacts, with evocations, with the ointments used for the *sabbat*.

The compacts (I mean the explicit and regular compacts), were executed with horrid ceremonies ; the individual commenced by denying his baptism, by committing all sorts of profanations ; he then signed a contract, drawn up according to form, to which the devil, if we may believe the sorcerers, affixed the impression of his claw. In virtue of this reciprocal promise, the sorcerer gave his body and soul, and the devil, on his side, pledged himself to obedience, sometimes for a certain number of years, sometimes during the entire life of the other contracting party, sometimes, for an indefinite period, whoever might be the future holders of the contract.

The evocations were terrible formulas, very different from the innocent *hax, pax, max*, which cures the bite of mad dogs, or the *pater du sang*, which closes wounds. They were used for calling up the demons. I borrow from M. Louandre, who has condensed into a few words (*La Sorcellerie*, 36 to 54 and following), the most important details on this subject.

In imitation of the *efficacious* names employed by the

people of India, the *Ephesian letters* used among the Greeks, the sorcerers of the Middle Ages coined cabalistic phrases in which, Latin, Greek, and Hebrew words, more or less marred, were thrown pell-mell, together. To these, they joined expressions taken from the Liturgy, and thus they invented an unintelligible language, an infernal gibberish. In this way did they compose their books of conjurations (*grimoires*). One of the most celebrated of these was attributed to Pope Honorius; the names *mystère des mystères* (*arcanum arcanorum*), and *grammarium*, from which, doubtless, comes the term *grimoire*, were indifferently applied to it.

After naming the spirit they wished to make appear, and invoking the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, they added: "I conjure thee in the name of the great, living God, Adonai, Tétragrammaton, Jehovah, Tétragrammaton, Jehovah, Tétragrammaton, Adonai, Jehovah, O Theos, Athanatos, Adonai, Jehovah, O Theos, Athanatos, Ischyros, Athanatos, Adonai, Jehovah, O Theos, Sadaï, Sadaï, Sadaï, Jehovah, O Theos, Athanatos, Tétragrammaton, ut luceat, Adonai, Ischyros, Athanatos, Athanatos, Ischyros, Athanatos, Sadaï, Sadaï, Sadaï, Adonai, Sadaï, Tétragrammaton, Sadaï, Jehovah, Adonai, Eli, Agla, Eli, Agla, Agla, Agla, Adonai, Adonai, Adonai." They concluded with the name of the demon evoked, proclaiming the torments with which the Angel Michael would punish his disobedience. They associated with the pronounciation of the conjuration, certain particular practices. They sacrificed cats, dogs, black hens. They carried a piece of the dead man's halter on their persons; they took especial pains to procure cock's eggs laid in the lands of the infidel; they spread a cloth, and served up on it a little repast, by way of an offering to Satan; they protected themselves from his vivacious tricks, by tracing around them the pentacle, or magic circle.

This example will suffice. Everybody is aware, however, that they had recourse, secondarily, to the magical power of certain hours of the night, certain rays of the moon or stars,

certain plants and animals ; the cypress and poisonous herbs, serpents, owls, and toads, the bones of the dead, and particularly those of criminals, figured in the first rank of efficacious ingredients ; neither was there any harm in joining therewith, newly born infants, or inserting into one's skin the teeth of adders and toads.

I try to smile ; but in truth, my prevailing sentiment is one of disgust ; in this abominable materialism, this action of formulas, this awful abuse of the name of God, this mingling of the most holy with the most impure things, there is something so hideous, as to fill me with horror and dismay. I feel that I am, indeed, in the very heart of the Middle Ages ; I recognize the foul atmosphere which so many generations have been condemned to inhale.

The spells had the same character as the evocations and compacts. I do not speak of simple philters, intended to produce friendship or love, of the sympathetic alphabet, of the small wax figures tied with a ribbon, of the liquids into whose composition entered ambergris, the *golden apple*, and the root of the *emila campana*, gathered the night before the festival of Saint Jean. Sorcery, which occupied itself with philters only in its idle moments, had for its special end, to do harm ; we must, therefore, give our attention to this, its principal work, to its spells and its *envoûtements*.

The *shepherds* (with whom, as we all know, the character of sorcerer usually descended from father to son) dried up pasture, changed lambs into wolves, propagated at will distempers among cattle, and possessed, besides, the only formula capable of repairing the evil they had caused ; the formula in honor of salt was as follows : "Salt, which is made and formed in the château of Belle, holy Belle Elizabeth, in the name of Désolet Soffé, bearing salt, salt of salt, I conjure thee . . . Salt, I throw thee with the hand that God has given me ; grappling I take thee, for thee I await."

But it was a small matter to dispose of the life of animals ; the sorcerers had charms against men, and understood how to

suspend their action or assure their success. The *envoûtement* was practised, sometimes by means of fruits, sometimes by means of poor beasts, to which they gave the name of the enemy whose sufferings or death they wished to produce ; the blows administered to them were felt by the person whom they represented. But the most ordinary method consisted in making a small image of wax ; they baptized it ; then, they pricked it in the neck and head with a needle, at the same time placing it near the fire. At the moment of the first prick of the needle, the *envoûté* became ill. When the image was quite melted, he died. They sometimes maltreated the image in various ways before putting it to the fire ; it was thrown into the water, hung, suffocated, buried ; all so many tortures added to the disease and the death ! Cases of *envoûtement* were very numerous in the Middle Ages. Kings and Popes were particularly exposed to these attacks, which often seemed to them very formidable.

The ointments will conclude the list of the magical ceremonies, which are, in my opinion, worthy of mention. These ointments were concocted at the *sabbat*, in a great caldron, into which Satan had put toads, adders, the sweepings of altars, the filings of bells, and children cut in pieces. He made ointment for his fellow-laborers, and distributed among them little pots of it, which served to bring them to the next meetings. It was sufficient, in fact, to rub it on the arms, the wrists, and the soles of the feet, to produce an immediate flight to the chimney-top, where a demon was found ready to transport the sorcerer through the air to the place of assemblage.

What was there seen and done, I shall not describe, for there are things regarding which our modern pens should be silent, although all the books and heads of the Middle Ages are filled with them. I refer the reader to Saint André (*Lettres sur la magie*, 320 and following), who has himself taken the trouble to look into the grand affair of Lahaye Dupuis, and who there gives authentic and official details concerning this hideous mystery. I dare quote only a fragment :

"There are four general *sabbats*, held in the four seasons of the year. The most solemn of all is that of the night previous to the day of Saint John the Baptist ; the grease and magical powder are then distributed. The particular *sabbat* takes place twice a week : on Monday and Friday. All the sorcerers must appear at the general assemblies. These are the grand assemblies of the devil. He is seated on his throne ; he receives the faith and homage of his subjects ; he makes them give an account of their actions, and the spells they have cast. . . . Each sorcerer carries his herb to the *sabbat* ; one takes fern, another mistletoe. . . . I forgot to tell you, that besides the particular dance, usually performed back to back, and with which the *sabbat* commences, there is a general dance of all the sorcerers in a circle, after the manner of our peasantry at fêtes and festivals, in the middle of which the devil is to be found, now, under the form of a large black man with horns on his head, now under that of a buck or a dog. The dance finished, the devil leans his elbows on a table, and receives the homage of the dancers, as they, one after the other, approach him, each bearing in their hands blazing torches of pitch. . . . He does not answer the applications of those who desire to enter into an engagement with him, until after their third or fourth appearance at the *sabbat*. . . . He then makes them deny chrism and baptism, makes them renounce Jesus Christ and his church ; and, to confirm them in their new belief, he stamps upon some part of their body the mark of the nail of one of his little fingers, a mark which he renders invisible. . . . He marks them three times, on three different occasions, in three different places. The third time, the sorcerer, who must be at least twenty-five years old, binds himself and takes his last vow, from which he cannot be released." . . .

I have now given the principal facts ; how are we to account for them ?

Fontenelle says, in his report on magic, "that they cannot be ascribed to physics." I am entirely of his opinion, if we accept for our starting point, the objective reality of all these

things, but if we do not accept such a starting point, if we demand of subjective impressions the explanation of so many strange confessions, it will be perceived that nothing can be more incorrect and dangerous than the language of Fontenelle, since then, too often repeated by other academicians; the supernatural apocrypha has no better support. In our study of sorcery, we shall perceive that it does not go beyond the domain of physiology and physics, of nervous and fluid effects.

Let us first get rid of the frauds and nonsensical tales that are enough to send us to sleep.

In respect to the frauds, they are much more numerous than has been represented, and of these, I shall give an illustrious example in my analysis of the Loudun affair at the close of the chapter. But as the documents to which we have access in relation to this matter, are not to be obtained by the generality of readers, as it is certain, moreover, that the confessions of sorcerers remove the suspicion of falsehood in the majority of cases, I am content to make my reservations and pass on.

Neither do the absurd tales merit a long refutation, for they clearly refute themselves. I am more and more astonished at the facility with which the champions of the Middle Ages accept these stories. Everything is good in their eyes: the traditions of the fathers, the credulities of ignorant ages, the superstitions of savage nations, the supernatural of the Pagans, Jews, and Mussulmans, the exaggerations of travellers and newspaper anecdotes. When we open their books, we feel as though we had stumbled on the collections of Anas, or on the tales of ogres and Bluebeards, invented for the amusement of children.

Si *Peau d'Ane* m'étoit conté,
J'y prendrais un plaisir extrême.

But although the *Peau d'Ane* may please, it need not be transformed into an article of faith; the theological argument, mixed up with the story, deprives it of the charm of naïveté. I might find considerable amusement in the idea of a polar sorcery and a mountain sorcery, the one favored by the oblong

form of the terrestrial globe, which furnishes more facility to the flow of the fluidico-satanic revelations it contains, the other, favored by the vicinity of these elevated regions where similar influences circulate ; but when this is told me seriously, and I am required to believe in its truth, I ask on what authority it rests, and how far it will be necessary to discuss the question, by comparing the relative abundance of sorcerers on the Alpine heights of Switzerland and the plains of France or Italy. The account of the lamas who open the stomach, and afterwards miraculously close it, appeared to me quite amusing in the book of Father Hue ; but it loses all its charm to my eyes, when it figures among the proofs of M. de Mirville, by the side of the contest of the barks drawn by genii, the invisible men and other wonders, "very common in China," if we may believe the Catholic missionaries. I might tolerate the credulity of those missionaries, who suspect neither the false stomachs, the ropes stretched under water, nor the absurdity of the thousand reports to which they lend a too complaisant ear ; I am disposed to be more rebellious towards the doctors, whose treatises *ad hoc* rake up all this nonsense, range it in order of battle against reason and against the Gospel, and make use of it to revive among us the beliefs, the institutions, the persecutions of a most odious age.

Setting aside, then, these deplorable collections of puerile fables, to the level of which this discussion cannot descend, I turn to the only facts that have any consistency or importance : the confessions and the possessions.

A method of explaining them physically, has been proposed, to which I here merely allude by way of refreshing the memory. Corpuscles, as has been shown, were, at one time, the universal explanation. Atoms or spirits detached from certain objects, were supposed to solve all the difficulties. A magician causes cattle to perish ; it is corpuscles ! A bouquet communicates a sort of possession ; corpuscles !

What I have to say is less marvellous. I shall show that the confessions of sorcery and the marks of possession have their

principal source in diurnal and nocturnal hallucination, especially in dreams. I shall likewise show that torture, pride, the influences of drugs employed, and lastly, fluid action, sufficiently account for everything of this character that took place in the Middle Ages.

It is evident, first, that in the majority of confessions, the thing confessed had no objective reality. In vain, then, are the confessions sincere, spontaneous, persevering; the crime of which the accused acknowledges himself guilty, and for which he dies while complacently repeating its most minute details, this crime has not been committed.

Some sorcerers confess that they have carried off a great number of children, and that they have slaughtered them at the *sabbat*; yet we find that no child has disappeared. A person affected with lycanthropy, relates his transformation into a wolf by means of the magical pomatums with which he rubbed himself; here, he killed a young lad, there, he devoured a woman, elsewhere, he sucked the blood of a little girl; yet, no little girl, woman, or young lad has perished in the vicinity. A sorceress describes her journey to the *sabbat*; nevertheless, during that same period, she was carefully tied in her bed, and watched every moment.

"Mr. Joanissena," writes De Lancre, "one night that his servant was expecting to go to the *sabbat*, fastened a cord firmly round her leg as she was sitting by the fire, and holding one end of it in his hand, gave her a rough jerk whenever she seemed to be asleep. Nevertheless, the devil deceived the master, for she was at the *sabbat*, confessed to having been there, and told him all the particulars, which were confirmed by a multitude of others who went there at the same time." (*Tableau de l'incestence des mauvais anges*, 67.) Historians relate many analogous facts, but none so striking as this, for here the sorceress was kept awake, which did not prevent hallucination. It is far more astonishing to me than the instance mentioned by Doctor Calmeil (i. 229): "She engaged to go to the *sabbat* in broad day-light, and in presence of numerous wit-

nesses, on condition that she should be permitted to rub her body with a certain pomatum, the use of which was familiar to her. It is added, that as soon as the operation was finished, she fell down as though dead, and that, after lying several hours stiff and motionless on the ground, she none the less maintained, on coming to herself, that she had just returned from the *sabbat*."

How is it possible not to doubt that the entire phenomenon takes place in the imagination of the pretended sorcerers? Gassendi, at one time, undertook the direct demonstration of this fact. He himself anointed some peasants with a pomatum, to which he, in their presence, attributed the property of transporting men to the *sabbat*. In fact, they went to sleep (there was opium in the pomatum), and when they awoke, they did not fail to relate, with the fullest conviction, the scenes in which they had just participated.

This was very well for the times of Gassendi. At the present day, we might employ all the ointments in the world to rub all the peasants in the land, probably without causing any of them to make the voyage, for the human mind is no longer exposed to the almost irresistible action of a general belief and excitement. The belief alone would not suffice if it were separated from the excitement, and nothing proves this better than the effect produced by the great sorcery trials; as soon as they commenced, and a sensation was produced, magicians and sorcerers visibly multiplied; as soon as they were brought to a close, and the moral disorder had subsided, the voyages to the *sabbat* were no longer heard of.

But when the excitement and the belief coincided, then came the misfortune! How was it possible for the firmest heads to resist these contagious hallucinations. Represent to yourself imaginations corrupted from infancy by the *Golden Legend* and analogous books in circulation to the exclusion of the Bible, a state of things in which the prevailing conversation is of *loup-garous*, of magicians, spells, children carried off to the *sabbat*, convents invaded by possessions, terrible exorcisms practised

for years to the great peril of the priests engaged in them ; in which the church sanctions all these beliefs, and not a theologian holds them in doubt ; what is to become of men accustomed to live in such an atmosphere, if, all at once, there bursts among them one of those dark tragedies which attest the real action of sorcery ? All think, all dream of it ; each man suspects other men, he suspects himself, dreams and hallucinations make their appearance, and the *habitués* of the *sabbat* soon multiply to such an extent that the stake does not suffice ; the world is filled with these armies of sorcerers, whom Judge Boguet, under Henry IV., compared to that of Xerxes ; not a community which has not its demoniacs, not a church in which is not heard howls and barks, not a village that is not the theatre of diabolical wonders, not a shepherd who does not become a magician.

The following remark of Saint André (*Lettres*, 319), is here most appropriate : " Not one of the accused, I refer to those who believe themselves real sorcerers, who does not speak of the *sabbat* as he has heard it spoken of, who does not repeat the stories he has been told, or that he has read in books." A Curé, to whom he had communicated the testimony relative to the affair of Lahaye-Dupuis, replies by this observation : " Their *sabbat* is like that of all books, all times, and all countries ; they all grease themselves, and a large black man, with horns, transports them out at the chimney ; their dance, their delight in the black art, the children cut in pieces and boiled with serpents in the caldron, the enchantment powder, their compacts written by the grand master with blood, the great buck, the torches of pitch, we everywhere see the same thing." (343.)

The difference in the versions, all of them as well known as the text, consisted in this, that certain sorcerers went to the *sabbat* on a broom stick, and that in each country they employed local terms. Those of Savoy were named *Eryges*, and they called the devil the *pute-bête* ; but this in no respect changed the thing itself, and every one's dreams exactly coincided with what he had learned by tradition.

As regards persons affected with lycanthropy, their lesson

was not less well learned. They all wandered through the woods, changed into wolves; they attacked and devoured children, and they continued to preserve a great taste for human flesh. Some clothed themselves in the skins of wolves, others did not require to adopt this costume; but the difference is small, and if it really sometimes happened that children were slaughtered and partially devoured by these wretched beings, the same things occur at the present day. There are idiots on whom paroxysms of anger produce similar effects.

I have pronounced the word idiots; in fact, the nervous disturbance of *loups-garous* and sorcerers, had the character of a real malady. If any of my readers still doubt the purely subjective nature of the phenomenon, if they are not convinced by having seen persons affected with lycanthropy devour imaginary victims, or by having witnessed experiments on sorcerers, who are beaten and pinched during their slumber in order to make them join to the description of their nocturnal wanderings, the statement of the bad treatment thus inflicted on them, I would refer these doubters to the account of the morbid signs that have often accompanied possession, and which proclaim its origin.

M. Calmeil clearly proves that the hermit of Saint Bonnet, burned as a *loup-garou* in virtue of a decree of the parliament of Dôle, that Pernette Gandillon, his brother and his nephew, condemned some years later, were actually raging madmen, absolutely similar to those whom we at the present day, shut up in our lunatic asylums (i. 279 and fol.; 314, and fol.) He shows in the history of the famous *possédée* of Vervins, that a poor woman, subject to hysteria and catalepsy, was exorcised with great ceremony at Laon, on an immense scaffold, surrounded by crowds of Catholics and Protestants, ready to attack each other, the ones crying out miracle, the others imposture. Interrogated by the Prince of Condé and Charles IX., Nicole Aubry related several circumstances which indicated an unhealthy condition; she was seized with the falling sickness, and lost consciousness for entire hours; when the paroxysm was

ended, she remained deaf, dumb, paralyzed, an inanimate mass. After her return to Vervins, Nicole gradually got better.

Convulsions, cries, all the symptoms the morbid nature of which we have established in relation to the Jansenists and Camisards, are found among sorcerers and in cases of possession. We there also find the significant fact of epidemics which manifest the communication of the nervous disturbance. It is even complicated with another fact not less remarkable, that a tendency to diabolical hallucination is often hereditary.

In the great prosecutions of Upper Languedoc, during the sixteenth century, figures a woman named Jeanne, whose mother was burned as a sorceress, and who, still a child, was condemned to witness the punishment. Remy, speaking of the persecutions which were about the same period directed against the sorcerers of Lorraine, declares that both he and his colleagues often expressed their opinion that all young children should be whipped in presence of the fire that consumed their relatives. "But Satan," he says, "continued to retain them in his snares." He instances, in fact, Nicole Morele, Dominique Petrone, Matthias and many others who, sons and daughters of sorcerers, visited the *sabbat* in their earliest youth, and were in the habit of frequently going there afterwards. And Boguet, also, enumerating the legal presumptions in favor of sorcery, is careful to place among these, the circumstance that there had been sorcerers in the family of the accused.

Thus it is proved that the confessions of sorcerers have no other foundation than ideas strongly impressed on their minds, and particularly such as are imbibed in their infancy!

The contagion of sorceries and possession finishes the demonstration of our thesis. M. De Mirville, I am well aware, sees in it an irrefutable proof of the action of the devil; he has no hesitation in speaking of Satanic contagion and centres of infection; but, as we have no evidence that the real demoniacs, those of the New Testament, infected the countries through which they passed, producing among the inhabitants posses-

sions by the hundreds or thousands, we shall be permitted, I trust, to remain faithful to the plain common sense united in these two ideas : epidemics, morbid affections.

If it be objected that epidemics of this sort have ceased, I answer that they even now, everywhere manifest themselves in connection with the reappearance of beliefs of the sort so prevalent in bygone ages. The things now taking place in America, already have the character of epidemics ; the same may be said of the manifestations common among the Mussulman ascetics. Their physical and moral condition becomes such, that the same visions happen to all ; their reality is acknowledged, their occurrence predicted—they are, consequently, inevitable.

This was the case with the convents of nuns formerly subjected to contagious that spread with fearful rapidity ; this was the case with whole populations suddenly invaded by sorcery ; it is still the case in the regions where the horrible hallucinations of vampirism prevail. During the demonological epidemic which desolated Labourd, the very children were attacked by the malady, and began to have hallucinations of the *sabbat*. It was especially, while they were asleep that the poor little creatures felt themselves transported through the air by women metamorphosed into cats. "Two thousand children of Labourd," writes De Lancre, "presented to the devil at the *sabbat*, by certain women whose names they gave in full, and of whom the majority have been put to death as sorcerers, while the remainder are on the eve of the same fate, these two thousand children maintained the reality of this transportation without ever varying." (*Preface*, 4.)

M. Calmeil, who has collected all the details relative to these children, relates that large numbers of them were gathered together in the churches, where pains were taken to keep them awake as long as possible, and not to lose sight of them from one end of the night to the other, through fear that they would be carried off to the diabolical assemblies. If, unfortunately, they were for an instant overcome with sleep, they were almost immediately filled with the most inconceivable sensations.

(*Calmeil* i, 435.) It was thus, according to De Lancre, that Catherine De Nagnelle, twelve years of age, asserted that, having fallen into a doze, the devil availed himself of the occasion and carried her off. Jeanne Abadie affirmed that, having watched several nights in the church with the other children, she one night fell asleep at her own house, and was taken to the *sabbat*. The description she gave of her voyage, and the incidents that transpired at the *sabbat*, strike the imagination with horror, and furnish an opportunity for measuring the depth of the corruption which then prevailed. What sort of an age is it in which young children are haunted by such images?

I prefer to signalize this particular trait, rather than to impose on the reader the tiresome and disgusting review of the epidemic hallucinations which made the tour of the provinces and religious communities. Promoted by the groveling ideas then in circulation, and sometimes even by infamous debauchery, the nervous disturbance was everywhere manifested under an almost invariable form.

One fact worthy of remark is, that the simple account of the phenomenon often sufficed to produce the contagion. Those who incline to the idea of a material infection, would do well to ask themselves if a mere narration can transport Satanic miasmata, and if it is not exclusively addressed to the moral man. That epidemics often resulted from reports of them, I am very certain; but in the generality of cases, we are not prepared to affirm the physical contact to have been absolutely impossible. Thus, when the possession of Loudun brought in its train those of Nîmes and of Louriers, it could not be pretended that there had been no communication between the places. It is a little less easy to conceive of a communication between Aix and Lille, and everything indicates, moreover, that the report alone passed from the first to the second of these cities. Scarcely was the history of the Ursulines of Aix known at Sainte-Brigitte in Lille, than analogous symptoms manifested themselves with violence. (*Calmeil* i., 512.)

Nothing is so epidemic as hallucinations connected with the

infernal supernatural. We are familiar with the history of a battalion of the regiment of the Tour d'Auvergne, which lodged in an old abbey at Tropea, during the occupation of the kingdom of Naples by the French, was invaded by a collective vision. The soldiers had been warned by the inhabitants that they could not remain all night in the abbey, because of the spirits by which it was haunted ; and, indeed, a black dog ran through the house and passed over their breasts ; whereupon they rushed out of the building, uttering cries of terror. Nothing more simple, it will be said ; a dog had been turned loose into the abbey, in order to frighten them ! Listen to the end. The following night, the officers undertook to restore confidence to the soldiers by staying with them in the abbey ; now, at the same hour, the same noises were heard, and the same dog was perceived by all the soldiers, whom it suddenly awakened out of their sleep ; but the officers, who were not asleep, saw absolutely nothing.

The battalion of Tropea saw the black dog just as the sorcerers saw the scenes at the *sabbat*. In their minds, disturbed by a common idea, the vision was transmitted with the rapidity of fire communicated to a train of powder. We have all the less reason to doubt this, when we consider that the physical symptoms were equally communicated : convulsions created convulsions, barkings excited a disposition to bark. With the establishment of this last fact, I close my remarks on the contagious hallucinations of sorcery.

M. Calmeil (i., 503-511) mentions the barkings of the women of Amou, near Dax, in 1613. I quote from the *Tableau* of De Lancre, the following passage : " We have been informed that they (the sorceresses of the parish of Amou) imparted two sorts of disease, epilepsy, or the falling sickness, and the disease which they call *mal voyant ou mal de layra*. . . . As for the *mal de layra*, it is perfectly monstrous to see sometimes in the church, in this little parish of Amou, more than forty persons, who, all at a time, bark like dogs. . . . This music is renewed at the entrance of every sorceress who

has at some time imparted the disease to them; so that, at her entrance into the church, many of them are seized with *layra*, that is to say, a fit of barking." . . .

De Lancre states that this involuntary denunciation enabled them to lay their hands on sorceresses in great numbers. The relation that existed between the barkings and the presence of the sorceress who communicated the evil, was so well known, that the friends of the barking women hastened into the street the instant the yelping commenced; if they found any woman in front of their house, they arrested her and delivered her over as guilty, to the zeal of the magistrates.

The barkings of the women of Amou remind us of the mewings, bleatings, and warblings which occurred at Amsterdam, in the monastery of Sainte-Brigitte, among the women of Kintorp, and in twenty other places. The evil was everywhere transmitted, it was everywhere manifested in all its force, as soon as the person by whom it was communicated approached, and even before he could be seen. De Lancre gives some remarkable proofs of this. The sorceresses, moreover, openly confessed that the *mal de layra* had been imparted by them. The woman Broquéron, who underwent capital punishment, was one of those who made a formal acknowledgment of her guilt. She stated that they advised and settled with each other at the *sabbat*, as to what persons should be inoculated with the barkings.

I have dwelt with considerable emphasis on hallucination, as being the essential explanation of the phenomena of sorcery and possession; I shall say only a few words regarding the secondary explanations.

Torture is one of these. If many of the confessions were voluntarily made and maintained, some of them were also extorted by fear. The very inquisitors, who sometimes wrung from the Christians separated from the Romish Church, confessions that were afterwards revoked on the scaffold, applied their mode of treatment to those accused of sorcery, and the laical judges often walked in their steps. The art of recog-

nizing and of torturing sorcerers became the speciality of certain men. The torments of the question were gradually substituted for other inquisitorial methods, and certainly, many of the accused, in a manner consented to the false confessions that afterwards honorably figured in the official reports stained with blood, in which a large part of the world still seek their historical proofs.

Who will not distrust such sources, when he reads in Boguet, the rules to follow relative to sorcerers, rules which seem taken, word for word, from the inquisition? According to Boguet (*Discours sur les sorciers*), the accused is to be thrown into a dark and narrow dungeon, subjected to the most painful privations, and made to undergo the torture. He requires this to be repeated three times, if necessary. He admits the testimony of the father against the son, and that of the son against the father. He considers the deposition of children as especially important. He also requires infant sorcerers to be destroyed, for the disease of the parents is communicated to their descendants; his mercy, however, leads him to direct that these little sorcerers shall be strangled instead of being burned alive.

When we read over these rules, so calculated to make us regret the mild and blessed *régime* of the Middle Ages, we remain convinced that hallucination does not explain every thing in matters of sorcery, and that some allowance must be made for the wooden horse. There are certain proceedings which leave no doubt on this point. To mention one instance among many, the persecution directed in 1598 against Aupetit, curé of Payas in Limousin, is a case in point. He had denied everything up to the moment of the torture; but when the question was applied, he confessed whatever was required of him: he had worshipped the devil; he had received a black powder to assist him in the commission of a thousand crimes; he had caused the death of both men and beasts in great numbers; he had brought a blight on the chestnuts; he had evoked the devil by saying: "Tyrant! tyrant! Beelzebub!"

If the torture explains only too many similar confessions, pride (a strange pride !) gives the key to others. Some persons were seized with a fancy to play the part of sorceresses and *possédées*, they often had reason to hope that justice would not interpose ; but when it did, vanity prevented the miserable creatures from contradicting themselves. They had the satisfaction of producing an effect to the end. Father Lebrun relates the history of the woman Avenel, who, in his time, was burned alive at Ronen. Jealous of certain devotees, who were highly esteemed by the curé, she thought it would be a good thing for her also to have long audiences, and, therefore, gave herself out as an expert in sorcery. "I can assure you," said father Lebrun, "that the curé had taught her everything she knew about it." Be that as it may, she persuaded him that she had given herself to Satan, finally persuading herself of the same thing, perhaps, and carrying the matter so far as to perish at the stake.

It would be easy to multiply examples, but this suffices. I will, in addition, only indicate a new accessory cause, which, with vanity and the torture, assisted hallucination in bringing about the confessions that so much astonish us. The drugs employed by the sorcerers added to their natural excitement. *Stramonium*, *solanum somniferum*, *opium*, and *henbane** (*jusquiame*), entered into the composition of these drugs. Such substances are calculated to produce feverish sleep, dreams, delirium, and night-mare: Everybody knows that the magicians of India and Egypt never fail to accompany their operations by the burning of incense and of certain powders, the smoke of which affects the brain. The anointings which preceded the journey to the *sabbat* were not then of as little

* The effects of black henbane are extraordinary. The journals of the month of April last, contain an account of an accident which happened to a family of Lillers (*Pas-de-Calais*), who were so imprudent as to eat the roots of this plant. Those who had tasted it, fell into paroxysms of frantic laughter, were seized with a passion for dancing and making contortions; some seemed idiots, others were disposed to sleep, one of the members of the family became stiff, and his body assumed a deathlike appearance.

importance as is generally supposed ; they influenced not only the imagination, they produced a physical effect. It is related by M. Louandre (*La Sorcellerie*, 98), that the physicians of Pope Julius III. tested upon a woman attacked by a nervous disease, a pomatum found about the person of a sorcerer ; she slept thirty-six hours in succession, and when she awoke, related a mass of strange hallucinations. Analogous facts have frequently occurred.

In fine, everything in sorcery which cannot be accounted for by hallucination, torture, vanity, or drugs, must be imputed to fluid action. The reader knows what I mean by this phrase, and that I thus designate the physical force, whatever it may be, which is manifested in the experiments of Animal Magnetism, biology, and the Turning Tables. Now, we frequently meet, in cases of possessions and sorcery, phenomena, every feature of which recalls to our mind the effects of the nervous fluid. Take, for example, the possession which broke out in the 17th century among the nuns of Auxonne.

"They entered," says M. Calmeil, into a trance or somnambule state, sometimes at the command of the exorcists, sometimes at the hour previously indicated by their companions in misfortune. The Bishop of Chalons, having commanded the demon who possessed the nun Denise, to suspend the sensibility of this young woman and render her inaccessible to suffering, a pin might be plunged under the root of her nails without obtaining the least sign of pain." (ii. 134.)

Other nuns also fell into states of torpor and insensibility. While in the somnambule state, they distinguished themselves by incredible feats of strength and dexterity. When the sister Catherine was exorcised, she appeared with the head turned round, the eyes open, the ball absolutely drawn up under the eyelid. In this condition, these women possessed a certain acquaintance with Latin. They showed a knowledge of secret thoughts, and they obeyed commands that had not been expressed. They attained the famous *state of death*, suspending the motions of the heart and arterial pulsations

Who does not here recognize the principal effects of Animal Magnetism? Now, this magnetism is to be met with in all sorcery, both ancient and modern; a long time, certainly, for it to wear the supernatural disguise, purely physical agent that it is. If we go back to the practices of the ancient Indian or Egyptian sorcerers, we shall there find passes, unnatural sleep, clairvoyance, all the effects of this force which, for the sake of brevity, we name nervous fluid. And they are to be found in Modern as well as in Ancient Egypt; we have already remarked to what point the essential features of magnetism and biology are met with in the sorcery experiments of M. Leon de Laborde, at Cairo.

Nevertheless, our opponents still insist, they maintain that many prodigies related concerning magicians and persons affected by possessions, cannot be embraced in any of the natural explanations which we derive first, from hallucination, and secondly, from errors of testimony, fraud, the fear of torture, the action of certain drugs, and that of the nervous fluid. "Prodigies," they say, "are prodigies, and remain such in spite of all explanations.

Of what prodigies would they speak? Doubtless not of the extraordinary developments of strength and dexterity that constantly accompanied the epidemic of the nuns. We have already seen that these contortions, tricks of legerdemain, howls, mewings, maniacal dances and prolonged rotations, are symptoms of certain nervous conditions. In regard to those nuns who throw their bodies into the form of the cross, who scale walls, descending with the head downwards and the feet in the air, who bend their bodies into the form of an arch, who run over roofs, who leap to a great height, as though shot from a gun, I do not think they cause us any great astonishment after what we have seen at Saint Médard. The physical insensibility which they occasionally manifest, will no longer surprise us, neither the penetration of the thought, nor the knowledge of a few Greek or Latin phrases; we know, indeed, what are the wonders of reminiscence sometimes developed by

disease. Martha Brossier, the pretended *possédée* whom Henry IV. succeeded in silencing, and whose possession was dispelled because he had the wisdom to interdict its public exhibition, Martha Brossier had paroxysms, during which she made appropriate answers to questions in Greek and in English ; this was certified to by a commission of physicians.

Does any one fall back on the famous double personality, and offer it as the unanswerable proof of the supernatural intervention of demons ? But one of the habitual characteristics of hallucination is the illusion by which we hear an interior voice, and divide ourselves into two beings, one of which listens to the other and sees him act. The reader has not forgotten the Camisards and their constant form of speech : " My child, I tell you." He has, moreover, present to his mind, those terrible stories of monomaniacs, who commit atrocious crimes, who cut the throats of their children, and who afterwards declare, with perfect sincerity, that *something* impelled them to do it. This *something* was the fixed idea, the monomania ; there is scarcely a madman who is not more or less conscious of two existences within the same body, and there is scarcely a person affected by hallucination, who, in making such a distinction, is not in a fair way to become insane.

I seek, then, for prodigies, and find none, unless, indeed, we must designate as such the nails vomited up by one, the stones running after another, the apparitions proved by the terror of animals, the power of vision at a distance possessed by magicians—by Torralba, for example.

To commence with him, I would remark, that this celebrated man, so much admired in Spain and Italy, and to whom Cervantes, in his *Don Quixote*, gives a rather malicious immortality, has done nothing really inexplicable. The presence at his side of the genius whom so many men were desirous to see, and whom a great lord wished to buy of him, enters into the category of known hallucinations, and this supposition gains strength from the fact, that the vision seems to have augmented with the moon. The journeys of Torralba on a stick

are no better authenticated than those of the sorcerers ; they have no other witnesses than himself ; he said : " I went last night to Venice ;" that is to say, he dreamed that he went to Venice. As regards his famous vision of the sack of Rome, I do not comprehend the admiration it inspires. Without having recourse to the sight at a distance, which certain somnambulists claim to possess, I maintain that the march of the Constable of Bourbon was known, that it struck dismay into all hearts at Rome, that it would naturally cause intense anxiety to the earnest friends of the Eternal City, and that, under such circumstances, it is not difficult to conceive that its capture and pillage should be present to the imagination of the self-styled magician. His presentiment was, on this occasion, confirmed by the event, and his cotemporaries have, according to custom, remembered the lucky coincidence, forgetting, doubtless, everything of a contrary nature.

All the great facts of sight at a distance comport with the explanation which, as we have just seen, applies to the most important of them. Do the terrors animals are said to have felt at the aspect of pretended spectres, constitute a more substantial proof of the diabolical supernatural ? I think not. " In Scotland and the Hebrides," says M. de Mirville, " spirited horses, coursing at full speed, have been seen to come to a dead stop when their riders experienced a vision of this nature " (226), and he relates the adventure of a lady, whose horse suddenly refused to proceed ; she put her head out of the carriage door, and asked the coachman what was the matter. " What is the matter, madam ! Do you not see the knight who obstructs the way, threatening my poor beasts with his lance, and thus prevents them from passing ? " I cannot but think, that in both of these cases, the hallucination of the coachman, or of the horseman, might have caused them involuntarily to tighten the bridle or the reins, and force the horses to struggle between the blows of the whip instigating them to advance, and the action of the bit holding them back. They would, at least, prance and *snort* ! I am far from deny-

ing, moreover, that the moral impression of the man may not also be transmitted to the beasts by a fluid communication ; they participate, perhaps, in some measure, in the shock we experience from the sinister apparitions we fancy before us. In the same manner might be explained, if necessary, the convulsive agitations which, according to Doctor Kerner, affected the animals in the vicinity of the seeress of Prevost ; but it is much more probable that the doctor was self-deceived.

As for the mysterious stones with which some persons have been assailed, the mystery is not so insoluble as it seems to be ; it is a fact of hallucination analogous to many others. When, at the time of the great Salem witchcraft in the United States, certain individuals were wounded by enormous pebbles, it was proved that the pretended pebbles could not be found, and that the pretended blows had left no marks. (See *Mather*.) Some have fancied they saw stones flying through the air ; the Surgeon Manoury, for instance, the ferocious persecutor of Urbain Grandier, saw them in every direction one evening as he was returning from visiting a patient ; the vision never afterwards left him, and he died contemplating it. In what respect does the first phenomenon differ from the second ?

Objects vomited up by *passé-dés* and saints (let us not forget our stigmatics of the Tyrol), are all simply objects swallowed by them, either with fraudulent intentions, or from the effect of an habitual mania of which they are unconscious. M. Calmeil (i. 190, 251, 278 ; ii. 173), relates some observations made by Wier, which prove that in the 16th century, the ingurgitation of the fragments of bones, feathers, bits of iron, was of frequent occurrence. The foundlings of Amsterdam, who were attacked with convulsions in 1566, vomited nails, needles, flocks of wool, rags, pieces of skin, and other foreign substances which they had swallowed unknown to any one. The young girls, whose frenzied and contagious dancing spread terror throughout the neighborhood

of Toulouse, endeavored, in the interval of their crises, to swallow bits of ribbon and crooked pins. M. Calmeil mentions his own observations, and those of Doctor Pouzin, the result of which is to demonstrate that this strange faculty is nothing less than miraculous.

Thus, then, apart from some strange acts which are explained by fluid action, or the simple excitement of the nervous system; apart from the phenomena incidental to a state of convulsion or the magnetic condition, the great facts of sorcery, such as they are established by innumerable confessions, have a character essentially subjective; it is within man that they are accomplished, and not out of him; they are the living reflection in the imagination, of powerfully prevailing ideas.

I am of Montaigne's opinion, when, towards the close of the 16th century, he says, in his *Essays* (iii. 281), "The witches of my neighborhood run a hazard of their lives, upon the intelligence of every new author, that gives a real substance to their dreams. . . . I am plain and blunt, and am inclined to that which is solid and most likely. . . . I see very well that men are angry, and that I am forbidden to doubt, on pain of execrable injuries. A new way of persuading! God forgive them; I am not to be cuffed into belief. . . . To convince men, a clear and shining light is required. Our life is too real and essential a thing, to warrant those supernatural and fantastical accidents."*

Yes, to convince men, a clear, and shining light is always required; but many men have been convinced, when neither they nor their guide could see clearly. The whole world has believed in the diabolical supernatural; I have just shown to what it is diminished! That is not to say, however, and I close with this reflection, that the devil has played no part in the sorceries of the Middle Ages. He was at work then, but otherwise than has been said, he was at work propagating

* Translation of Montaigne's *Essays*, 1776.

impious superstitions ; he was at work creating a belief in his prodigies, in his witchcraft, in his material and miasmatic infections ; he was at work assisting in that immense development of impurity, the necessary accompaniment of possessions ; he was at work stirring up the dregs of the heart, and leading men further and further from the pure light of the Gospel.

I have stated that I shall not conclude this chapter without entering upon a serious and careful analysis of the Loudun possessions. It is time to fulfill my promise.

I enter upon it under some advantages ; first, the affair of Loudun, being a ground chosen by our adversaries, their defeat will have a significance particularly grave ; secondly, the persecutions against Grandier embrace the question of sorcery as well as that of possession, so that we are here afforded an admirable opportunity for a thorough study of both, with reliable documents, and opposed to skillful antagonists. Here, then, we have the most curious, the best authenticated, the best known fact, an investigation of which will most assist us to decide on the reality or falsity of the two essential portions of the Satanic supernatural. Let us examine it in detail, and, although the general question of possessions may be already resolved, let us confine ourselves to this special possession which is opposed to us as a decisive argument.

I maintain that fraud was the predominant feature of this odious affair, which, however, does not exclude that enthusiasm, that relative sincerity, that nervous excitement caused by the *mise en scène* ; I maintain that the gloomy history of which I am about to present an analysis, is a worthy specimen of the rule our opponents would now attempt to restore ; that there is instruction to be drawn from it, and that it is not a matter of indifference to discover that the same spectacle which makes us shudder with horror and indignation, produces in other men (honorable men, and composing an important party), emotions of admiration and sympathy.

It is true that, although perfectly sincere, they have their own way of telling the story. In their eyes, the official reports are complete evidence ; the official reports of Laubardemont ! Of the works published on the opposite side, remarkable as some of them are for the coherency of their narrative and the correctness of their facts which have not been contested, they take not the slightest notice. They admit everything : the divinations, the suspensions in the air, the Latin of the superior, the wonderful extension of her legs, "so that it was seven feet from one foot to the other." (M. de Mirville, 119.) They speak of the visit of the Duke d'Orleans, and the attestation signed by him ; they are silent regarding the visit of the Duchess d'Aiguillon, and the discoveries she made. It is thus they succeed at one stroke, in rehabilitating sorcery, the Middle Ages, the commissioners of Richelieu, and the mass of judicial butcheries intended to protect traditional belief. They exult over the language, "that Laubardemont had chosen his twelve judges from among the most distinguished good men." They remark, that these judges, the very best of magistrates, "are prepared for the great and painful duty they are called upon to fulfill, not, as at the present day, by a low mass to the Holy Spirit, but by a public reception of the sacraments, general processions, the visitation of the churches, and prayers of forty hours in length." After that, how is it possible to doubt ! How can we fail to arrive at enthusiastic conclusions ! Behold those of M. de Mirville :

"What signify, then, all these declamations on the pretended animosity of Richelieu in regard to a certain small libel ? Nothing ; absolutely nothing. That Laubardemont and Richelieu should have used more or less severity in the accomplishment of functions which it became impossible for them longer to decline, is a matter of little concern to us ; that is not the question, the form might be blamable without the process being iniquitous. But if you wish for our candid opinion, when we see him take the superior of the convent in his own carriage from Loudun to Paris, simply to prove by the

Court, and by the whole capital, the bloody stigmata stamped upon the hands of this woman, whom you yourselves regard as above all suspicion ; * when we see him, in short, conferring on all these wonders with these men of God, whose sincerity you also acknowledge, and when we hear them affirm that this same Laubardemont participated in all their views—nothing but their godly views—we confess that we are more than tempted to believe, we are certain that Laubardemont, culpable or not in the forms, culpable or not in other proceedings, is completely innocent in this matter, and that he should figure in the first rank among the numerous victims of the calumnies which you, with so much reason, declare absurd.” (126 to 129.)

“My God !” adds M. de Mirville, “what a manner of writing history, and how much reason had the Count de Maistre to affirm that ‘for the last three hundred years’ ours has been ‘only a long series of lies !’”

If our history for the last three hundred years is to be reconstructed, it is my opinion, that other things will also be reconstructed. It is, then, of some importance to resist these first attempts at rehabilitation, and to inquire who is here the victim, Urbain Grandier, or Laubardemont. Lanbardemont a victim ! We might smile, if we were not accustomed to this transposition of parts, this violence done to the ordinary meaning of words. Read history reconstructed after the system of the Count de Maistre, and you will see that the Catholic Church is “oppressed” when she cannot persecute, and that her “liberty” consists in disposing of secular power for the violent suppression of all schism, and all contradiction. I suspect that we shall find Laubardemont to have been a victim of this sort ; the Church has even allowed a discussion of the question !

Indeed, I shall venture to discuss it anew, and, in order to do that, I shall complete the account of the executions, con-

* M. Bertrand has held this language, and M. de Mirville avails himself of it.

necting therewith, not the arguments, but the authentic facts contained in a book referred to with confidence by all those who have debated the subject, even those whose conclusions are invoked by M. de Mirville as favorable to his proposition. I allude to the *Histoire des diables de Loudun*. The edition before me appeared at Amsterdam, in 1693.*

It is, then, the old *Protestant calumny* I am about to reproduce. I contend that the Ursulines of Loudun, during a period of six or seven years, practised fraud of the grossest kind, that they played an infamous and bloody comedy. I contend that the public conscience, which has long since adopted the opinion of the Protestants regarding this affair, is not deceived, as our opponents would now persuade us. The public conscience is seldom mistaken on this point; the impression of an abominable crime seldom prevails when the atmosphere is perfectly pure and holy. Moreover, M. de Mirville and his friends cannot disguise it; the purity of Richelieu, of Laubardemont, of Madam de Belfiel and her subordinate demoniacs, is not doubted by heretics only; the old Catholic writers speak no better of them than the Protestants; they think with us, that the assassination of Grandier was the result of a pious fraud; nor do they deny that the nuns and exorcists took an active interest in the accomplishment of their work of darkness. They began with lying; they soon found themselves personally concerned, they became excited, they remembered that their adversaries were real adversaries of the established dogma; they were champions of the truth; the means were sanctified by the end; the result was, that they eventually persuaded themselves and brought into play much hatred and passion, as well as a par-

* M. de Mirville (122) is indignant at this "caprice of public opinion, which leads it to prefer to the very positive testimony of so many men of the highest distinction and integrity, the testimony of a Protestant writer, who appears more than a century after the event."

More than a century after the event! That is much to say. It appears that M. de Mirville must refer to some edition published towards the close of the 15th century. As for me, having under my eyes that of 1693 (55 years after the possession), I admire this new proof of the cool levity with which so many grave questions are solved.

ticular species of sincerity. Those who believe this to be impossible, know very little of the human heart. For my part, I am convinced that Mahomet himself, towards the close of his life, was scarcely conscious of his impostures, and that he almost believed his revelations to come from heaven.

That the same moral phenomenon was accomplished at Loudun, I am willing to grant; the Ursulines may have had hours of full conviction, as well as of poignant remorse. At all events, it is impossible not to say with Saint André (258): "*It is still a problem whether the possession was real, but it ought not to be one.*" And he relates one of the most palpable proofs of fraud. To this we shall again refer. Let us now commence by summing up in a few words, the series of facts which first attracted attention at Loudun in 1632, and were prolonged to 1639.

Loudun contained one of those numerous convents of Ursulines founded in the 16th century, under the patronage of the English Saint Ursula, to whom an error in the translation of the books of legends has given a train of eleven thousand virgins. The fact is, that she had, for a companion, *Undecimila*, so named, doubtless, in consequence of being the eleventh daughter of her parents; this, however, as we have seen, did not prevent the eleven thousand virgins from appearing in person before the eyes of another saint, in virtue of a special favor from God! But let us pass on; the question here is not of the institution of the Ursulines, but of the transactions at Loudun.

The superior of the convent belonged to the family of Cose. She was named Jeanne de Belfiel; among the nuns, there figured, as everywhere, young women of noble blood, the ladies De Sazilli, De Barbezier, De la Mothe, D'Escoubleau. The first was a relative of Richelieu.

It was in the spring of 1632 that witchcraft began to be talked of. It may be that it made its *début*, as in other convents, by simple nervous accidents, which took an epidemic character, and were complicated by the insinuations of a cou-

fessor. It may be that the nervous accidents were themselves brought about by the mischievousness of some of the younger sisters, who felt the need of diversion. They amused themselves, it is said, in terrifying their companions. They visited the nuns and boarders by passing along the roofs. One of the latter, Marie Aubin, an accomplice of the pretended goblins, took care to open the doors to them, at the same time feigning the utmost terror. She often mentioned it afterwards. At all events, what possibly had its origin in the sport of idle girls, was not slow in assuming a more serious character, and in this way :

The old confessor of the Ursulines was dead, and Mignon had just been appointed in his place. The latter had an enemy whom he mortally hated ; Urbain Grandier, Curé of Saint Pierre au Marché, had had violent disputes with him and his family. Did Mignon immediately conceive the plan of cruel vengeance, or did the idea of implicating Grandier in the pretended possession of the Ursulines not come to him until a later period ? I do not know, but I incline to the second hypothesis. It is probable that the confessor, when the sisters, really frightened, told him of the apparitions they had witnessed, himself thought that the devil was not a stranger to this disorder. He foresaw the profit and renown to be derived from it by the community. He therefore stimulated rather than checked the excitement, and ere long, nervous symptoms which would naturally lead to scenes and occupations of this sort, made their appearance. Thus everybody, those who had invented the amusement, those who had been their dupes, the director who had chosen to be duped, and who was, perhaps, really duped at first, all concurred in investing with a Satanic character that which had begun in joke.

No one can tell what course the thing then took. It is not, however, very difficult to imagine that the nuns, in their crisis state, had mixed up with their ravings the name of Urbain Grandier, which Mignon would have been likely to paint to them under black colors. Mignon may then have foreseen an

easy and almost legitimate means of revenging himself. Why might not Urbain Grandier have made a compact with Satan? Why should he have been a stranger to the singular accidents that had spread terror among the community. Hatred is not difficult in matter of proof; Mignon really admitted the culpability of Grandier.

I shall not be expected to show that in the 17th century, a convent of women, in which certain unaccountable facts were produced and nervous attacks manifested, could not pause in mid-career, when the confessor was the first to urge on the nuns. The result could not have been otherwise. Thus, the nervous symptoms multiplied, and assumed an aggravated form; accusations against Grandier were in all mouths. Then Mignon proceeded to exorcisms; he called in one of his friends, Barré, Curé of Chinon. The latter seems to have been a visionary; he practised a thousand extravagances, and aimed at perfect holiness. He arrived at Loudun at the head of his parishioners, who followed him in procession, in order to give notoriety to his doings.

Yet this very notoriety made it impossible longer to confine the prodigy within the walls of the cloister. The moment was come to take one step further, to acquaint the magistrates, and to perform their operations in public. Let us not forget, however, that before coming to this point, Mignon and Barré had had time to prepare everything in the community. The nuns had committed themselves—they could no longer retreat. How many infamies grow out of the fact that we cannot confess our first mistake! But we have not yet reached the infamies, the concerted lies; these will follow, they must follow. Thus far, the question relates only to the manifestation of what they believed true, for the nervous crises were real, the belief in possession was probably sincere, and the idea of the witchcraft of Grandier had possibly made a profound impression on the minds of the sisters. Let us avoid representing to ourselves a comedy arranged, and the parts distributed in advance; things rarely take place after this fashion; the ac-

knowledge and premeditated lie is not introduced until it has become the only resource, until there remains no other way of maintaining previous assertions, and of saving the *honor* of the flag.

The nuns, then, knew their lesson without having positively learned it, and the two exorcists had prepared their plot without, perhaps, giving it a full consideration, when they notified the magistrates of the condition of the Ursulines. Consequently, the bailiff of Loudunois, Guillaume de Cérissai de la Guérinière, and the civil lieutenant, Louis Chauvet, repaired to the convent.

It was on the 11th of October, that they assisted for the first time at the scenes which were to be so often renewed. On one side was Mmes. de Belfiel and Sazilli, a prey to violent excitement, which translated itself into extravagant gestures, feats of strength, cries, and immodest language ; on the other, were the two exorcists assisted by several curés and Carmelite friars, seeking to conjure away the demon.

For more than a year this state of things continued. Nuns were brought forward ; they twisted in their beds, leaped about, howled, bent their bodies in the form of an arch, recoiled before the Holy Sacrament ; and in the midst of the foul words issuing from their mouths, the accusations against Grandier, against that brilliant and noble curé, against the enemy of Mignon, against the man renowned for his talents, and the scandalous treatment of which he was the victim, these accusations were continually repeated with increasing energy.

Yet Grandier gave himself no uneasiness. The bailiff and the civil lieutenant were present at the exorcisms ; they took pains to observe the proofs of fraud and connivance, so that the imputations of the Ursulines seemed to reflect only on themselves and their directors.

There was, nevertheless, nothing on which they could rely. The party of Mignon and Barró was active ; the frequency and the growing violence of the convulsions excited considerable attention ; a spirit of indignation began to show itself against the pretended magician.

It was then that the Archbishop of Bordeaux interposed. He ordered the sequestration of the demoniacs, and resorted to threats in order to satisfy himself of the reality of the possession. Now, here we witness a most remarkable feature, and one that the champions of the Ursulines should take upon themselves to explain—the accidents immediately ceased! This happened at Loudun, just as it afterwards happened at Chinon, at Nîmes, and wherever there was really a disposition to put an end to the diabolical prodigies. The bad spirits showed the most exemplary docility. Is it not wonderful that authority should meet with such prompt obedience from the demons, and that the nuns should so well understand how to dispense with their crisis the instant orders for harsh measures are issued by the minister of state, or simply by the bishop?

The whole matter would have died away, if there had been no special interest at stake in resuscitating possession. Mignon and Barré revived the prodigies; they knew they were about to have assistance; Laubardemont was coming to Loudun.

Here commences, towards the close of the year 1633, an entirely new phase, the tragical phase of the affair, that in which the impartial supervision of civil magistrates is set aside to make room for the violent and merciless will of commissioners determined to prove the possession, and to ruin Grandier. The power of Laubardemont was unlimited; his decisions and judgments were without appeal; he immediately set to work.

Grandier was arrested; his most just demands were denied; he was delivered up to the tried barbarity of Manouri, who was instructed to discover the marks that the devil had stamped upon his body: they confronted him with twelve demoniacs, supported by their six exorcists, and surrounded by an army of Carmelites, Capuchins, and Recollets; they exhibited his four compacts which the nuns had discovered by means of their demons; they declared that he had introduced infernal spirits among them by throwing a bouquet of roses into the convent.

When all was thus prepared for the *dénoûment*, Laubardemont made known the names of the judges, those "good men" who listened to so many masses, visited so many churches, and assisted so devoutly at prayers forty hours in length. We do not see, however, that their probity and piety induced them, in one single instance, to respect the most common rules of justice. They carried the torture of Grandier so far as to break his legs; they promised him that he should be strangled previously to being burned, but they did not keep their word; in short, they resisted entreaties that would have moved a tiger: these are all the virtues I have been able to discover in them.

Grandier dead, one might believe the disturbance would cease. But if hatred was satisfied, other passions were not. The possession had been of immense service to the interests of the community; its celebrity had become European; crowds flocked there from every quarter; the vanity of the demoniacs and the exorcisers was finally interested in the continuation of these odious proceedings. It was convenient, moreover, to avail themselves of a supernatural means of controversy, and to bring arguments from the demons against the Reformation. They continued, therefore, to *give sittings*, and particularly to visitors of distinction; the most celebrated visits were those made by the Duke d'Orleans and the Duchess d'Aiguillon: of these, we shall have occasion to speak.

But Richelieu had no further interest in countenancing the possessions; nor did the reports of persons who had seen them, contribute to maintain the reputation of their prodigies. On the other side, the hand of God weighed heavy on the exorcists; they died one after another. Thus, when Father Tranquille, the most celebrated of them all, gave up the ghost, uttering dreadful cries, this was, as it were, the signal of the termination of the catastrophe. The piece was played, and the curtain slowly fell before an almost deserted house. It is true that the spectacle had lasted seven years, and that from the period of the punishment of Grandier, in August, 1634, until the last scene of the drama, in 1639, it had been prolonged

beyond measure, by repeating ten successive times the operation of expelling each demon, and letting him return, to be expelled anew.

But it was then positively determined to bring the affair to a close ; and when Barré, whom the success of Mignon had inspired with a taste for the thing, attempted its revival in his own house at Chinon, the government having had enough of such doings, vigorously opposed its veto, which the demons evinced no particular desire to resist. At that time, the greatest exorcist in France was Richelieu. If he had chosen, he might have exorcised the demons of Loudun as easily and as quickly as those of Chinon ; but he did not choose, and we shall see why.

I have spoken of comedy ; let me vindicate the use of this word.

The champions of Loudun first oppose to me the testimony of skillful physicians who have certified to the possession ; now, on a close examination of these, this is what we discover :

In place of calling in physicians from the large cities in the vicinity, Poitiers, Angers, Tours, and Saumur, they were chosen from small towns, all of them men without merit or reputation, with the exception of Daniel Roger, the physician of Loudun, whose opinion could not prevail over that of so many ignorant associates. One of them had not taken his degree ; another one afterwards showed his wit in favoring the possession of Chinon, which was acknowledged as a cheat, and the authors of which were punished ; several of them were related to Grandier's mortal enemies or to the nuns. If at a later day, the signature of various doctors belonging to the cities of Niort, Poitiers, and Fontenai, was obtained, it was not that they had investigated the affair and made a report, but because, having come like all the rest of the world to see the exorcisers, the latter took pains to sound them, and in case they seemed complaisant and favorably disposed, to ask them for an attestation. It is notorious that more than a hundred physicians came to

Londun, who refused to give certificates of this sort. (*Hist. des diables*, 121, 122, 222, 223.)

These refusals have far more importance than the compliances ; in fact, physicians then submitted to the yoke of reigning superstitions, as we may be convinced by looking over their reports. They could not, moreover, be strangers to the terror inspired by Richelieu and his formidable Counselor ; to refuse one's signature in such a case, was almost heroism. M. Calmeil himself indicates these considerations (ii. 72, 73) : " to speak the truth, the will of the physicians was controlled by that of the clergy. . . . All these physicians depended more upon the efficacy of exorcisms than upon the power of their art. . . . It would have been dangerous for them to hold any other language." . . .

Among those whom this fear did not cause to waver, we must mention Doctor Duncan, the principal of the Protestant Academy of Saumur, who had the courage to pin firmly to the ground, a nun, whom it had been declared impossible to hold, and who published his observations soon after his return to Saumur. Another Protestant, the physician Fanton, contented himself with refusing to Laubardemont the certificate demanded ; the poor man thus excuses his refusal to express his opinion on the true cause of the possession : " It would have been dangerous for him to act otherwise, and the consequences could not have failed to be injurious both to himself and all his family." (*Hist. des diables*, 441.)

This is not very heroic, but it is none the less instructive ; it shows us whence came so many signatures. Let us add, that the University of Montpellier, when consulted a short time afterwards respecting some facts of possession absolutely similar to those at Londun, voted an answer which signally manifested the disgust this prolonged spectacle had inspired in the minds of sensible men. Does any one wish to know the true and decisive opinion of the medical world at this period ? Let them seek it there.

But there is another consideration upon which our advera-

ries seem to lay much stress. It was even suggested by the author of *Démonomanie de Loudun* : "It is to be believed that our daughters have sufficient regard for their reputation to prevent them from wishing to do anything indecorous. . . . How is it possible for a high-born young woman to bring herself to make a public exhibition of her grimaces, indecent gestures, to use foul language, to expose herself to the gaze and the ridicule of all the world, without being ashamed of her conduct?"

They seem to say in other words, that if the Ursulines had been peasant girls, we might comprehend the grossness of their acts and conversation; but young ladies of the family of De Soudis, De Baracé, De Nogeret ! a relative of Richelieu ! that is inconceivable ! I answer that neither can it be conceived of in respect to nuns born among the humble peasantry. The "high-born young woman," and the young woman of an inferior condition, if both entered the cloister in their youth, should stand on a footing of perfect equality, as regards the delicacy of their sentiments and language. I even confess that I suspect the young lady of having been exposed to dangers which her companion partially escaped. More pains was bestowed upon her education, she learned how to read, she read. Now, that which is an immense advantage in an age when good books, and the Bible in particular, can be placed in the hands of young persons, constituted a formidable inconvenience at a period when the Holy Scriptures were proscribed, and the literary resources were chiefly composed of books calculated thoroughly to corrupt the heart. A nun who had been fed on the Golden Legend, and who had in addition, devoured the proceedings in sorcery or the stories of possessions, had nothing more to learn in fact of infamies ; all the true modesty of her nature was destroyed.

They reason, moreover, as if the Ursulines had been accused of having coolly planned out in advance, their impious and filthy conduct ! I cannot too often repeat that things do not happen thus. By means of bad impulses and mischievous

counsel, by means of lending themselves to an odious system of falsehood, the sisters of Loudun submitted to actual temptation ; their nervous crises were often real, and they then obeyed the ordinary laws of epidemic convulsions ; the remembrance of the possessions of which they had heard, the feats of strength, and the indecent language connected therewith, seized hold of all their faculties, and prompted analogous inspirations. It was impossible that their lips should not give vent to all the impurities and all the blasphemies that defiled their imagination. Bosroger quotes, in his *Piété affligée* (284), a letter written by one of the nuns of Louviers to her confessor ; she gives evidence of the moral disorder produced in the minds of the poor girls when the agitation took possession of them, and when they attributed it to the demon.

"My mind, clouded by the most hideous views of hell, is filled only with blasphemies. . . . This is why I vomit up my rage before me" I dare not continue the quotation, so horrible is this portrait of a soul invaded by the most fatal obsessions. The poor nun closes with these words : "Woe is me !" and we might believe her materially possessed, if we did not know, by the experience of sorcerers, the subjective character of these phenomena. It would, moreover, be difficult to doubt that the devil, in his quality of tempter, contributes largely to produce them.

In this sense, the noble Ursulines of Loudun were very truly the prey of the demon, wherein nothing distinguishes them from the plebeians. Our adversaries do not deny it, but at the same time they would insinuate that it was impossible for the former to practise fraud, and especially fraud of such a nature ! Why so ? Was there, then, no girl of good family among those nuns of Chinon who, a short time afterwards, abandoned themselves to the same barefaced licentiousness, and whose lies were discovered, proved, and punished ? At Chinon, it was thought proper to take a possession with all its disgusting accessories, and it was mingled, doubtless, with a certain por-

tion of sincere excitement, which is never wanting in such a case ; why should not the same act have been accomplished at Loudun in the same manner ?

But still further, and I am wrong in seeking arguments or analogies, when I can invoke the positive testimony of the demoniacs of Loudun themselves ; in their hours of sincere remorse, they loudly proclaimed, and with tears in their eyes, their odious machinations ; they asked pardon of God and men for having conspired to ruin the innocent ; they sought to break their chain, the heavy chain which binds the liar to his lie. Of these touching and decisive confessions, M. de Mirville says not one word, neither of the silence imposed on the false *possédés* of Chinon and other places. And it is thus that history is written by those who pretend to reconstruct it !

I do not blame their intentions ; prejudice explains many things. How explain, if not in this way, the attempt to rehabilitate the proceedings of Loudun, the homage rendered to most "able and upright judges," to Laubardemont, who, "culpable or not in the forms, culpable or not in other proceedings, is completely innocent in this matter ? . . . Let us look more closely into these horrid transactions, if only for the sake of engaging rehabilitators (*réhabilitateurs*) to a little prudence, and inducing the admirers of the Middle Ages to confine their admiration to questions of architecture without extending it to questions of faith, of happiness, of civil guarantees, of justice and morality.

It was not difficult to incite Richelieu against Grandier. Independent of his ties of relationship with the Superior of the Ursulines, it was impossible for him to efface a certain pamphlet from his memory. It had been attributed to Grandier, and contained a most offensive satire directed against the cardinal. Various particulars of his life and ministry were thus revealed, whereat he had evinced great resentment. It had happened, moreover, that in earlier years, when Richelieu was only prior of Coussai, quarrels had taken place between him and Grandier,

who, claiming to be first among the ecclesiastics of the Loudunois, was not willing to yield to the prior. Make Richelieu as angelic as you please, it must, nevertheless, be admitted that these incidents (*Hist. des diables*, 99, 100), taken advantage of by crafty enemies, at the head of whom Laubardemont placed himself from the instant of his arrival, and under whose influence all the commissioners constantly lived, were calculated to stimulate a malignant and despotic spirit, not over scrupulous in its conduct.

There is no doubt that hatred directed the acts of Laubardemont, for the moment he made his appearance at Loudun, the most complete change was effected. Previous to that time, the exorcisms had been subjected to a rigid surveillance, the frauds had been remarked, an order from the archbishop had put a stop to everything, and the resumption of the work had been attempted with timidity, and with only partial success; no sooner does Laubardemont arrive, than success increases, prodigies multiply, independent voices are hushed, the tragedy moves forward to its anticipated *dénoûment*.

I ask, indeed, how it is possible to doubt the iniquity of the transactions, when we compare these two most dissimilar phases of the same affair. I here present a few of the facts which signalized the first, thanks to the impartial vigilance of the bailiff and the civil lieutenant.

Mignon and Barré sometimes performed their exorcisms with closed doors, declaring afterwards, that marvellous things had been done, and that they would draw up a certificate of the details (it is in these certificates, doubtless, that are to be found the famous suspensions in the air, triumphantly cited by M. de Mirville). Whereupon the bailiff made remonstrances, and compelled the exorcists to admit the magistrates and the public. (*Hist. des diables*, 44.)

Another time, the bailiff ordered the separation and sequestration of the demoniacs, intending thus to prevent any concerted action on their part; to this, the superior replied that she did not recognize the jurisdiction of the bailiff, that

she was opposed to the sequestration, because it was contrary to the vow of perpetual seclusion (55).

The bailiff and the civil lieutenant did not cease in their resistance to the insinuations of Barré, who represented to them that their opposition to the prodigy was prejudicial to the glory of the church. They received the petitions of Grandier and did him justice (69).

But they are soon overwhelmed by the insubordination of the nuns, of the exorcists and their party, who are tired of so much justice, so many scruples, and who, above all, can no longer endure to see their impositions, one after the other, discovered. It was necessary to get rid, at any price, of the bailiff and the magistrates who partook of his sentiments. Consequently, the demoniacs were made to declare that they would no longer be exorcised in their presence. On one occasion, admittance was refused to the bailiff accompanied by his officers, and they were obliged to resort to threats, in order to gain an entrance (78, 80, 85).

In short, the interposition of the Archbishop of Bordeaux, who prescribed measures so severe as almost to put an end to the possession, completed the exasperation of the adversaries of the bailiff; his protecting authority was abruptly set aside, and Laubardemont appeared on the theatre of action. From that moment, there was nothing but violence, false sequestrations, scenes prepared beforehand, odious perseutions. The civil magistrates were treated with suspicion, the demoniacs did not fail to hurl against them and against the members of their families, accusations of magic. The mind of the poor civil lieutenant was at last seriously disturbed. After Grandier's tragical end, his terror became habitual, and unsettled his reason. (92, 117, 118, 119, 125, 130, 131, 267, 268).

I have alluded to the false sequestration of the demoniacs. Everybody comprehends, indeed, that if the parties were disposed to fraud, it could only be prevented by isolating them from each other, and putting a stop to all intercourse between them and their exorcists; Grandier incessantly demanded this

measure, and the civil authorities proclaimed its necessity. But what was actually done? Laubardemont, feeling that for form's sake, it was important he should consent to such an arrangement, took care to confine the Ursulines in such a way that several of them were together in the same house, and the principal ones lodged with the enemies of Grandier, in perpetual communication with Mignon and Barré.

Let us take one more step. When the royal authority became interested in the question, the Bishop of Poitiers entered the lists. He said to those who went to meet him on his arrival, "that he had not come to inquire into the truth of the possession, but to make those believe in it, who still doubted." He permitted the exorcist to look upon Grandier's culpability as undoubted, and named him *master of Lucifer* in his formulas. Then it began to be published among the people, that it was necessary for them to believe in possession, since the king, the cardinal, and the bishop, declared it to be real, the effect of which was that they feared to manifest their doubts, and thus to run the risk of passing, in the eyes of Laubardemont, for accomplices of the great sorcerer. One of the principal exorcists, Father Tranquille, himself said, in a pamphlet published by him, "that if there is any person who has shown great clear-sightedness in the affair, and whose judgment should be followed, it is the king, . . . it is His Eminence, the Cardinal. . . . To his piety and zeal are owing the undertaking of this affair, as is plainly to be seen from his letters to M. de Laubardemont." . . . (150, 151.)

It appears, however, that some unadvised ones did not yet understand the truth, but continued to fancy themselves at liberty to regard Grandier as innocent, and the possession as doubtful, so long as judgment had not been pronounced. Pains were taken to enlighten them by publishing the order of July 2d, 1634, which punished *slander* against the *possédés* and the exorcists, with a fine of "ten thousand livres, or a still larger sum, and corporeal punishment if the case demanded." (166.)

Next came the nomination of commissioners. This was equivalent to a sentence of death ; Richelieu never formed a commission except to condemn. They collected all the preceding official reports ; even adding those drawn up by the Lieutenant-General of Chinon from the declarations of the demoniacs of the convent of that place, who also accused Grandier. This testimony of persons whose imposture was afterwards established beyond a doubt, figured in the trial, while they set aside the documents furnished by the bailiff of Loudun, whom public action had great difficulty in protecting against the direct attacks of which his wife, himself, and family, were the object. On one occasion among others, had it not been for the coolness of his wife, who, accused of magic in the open church, summoned the demoniac to exhibit the contract of which she said she was in possession, and closely followed her up until night, the malignity of the exorcists would not have limited itself to annulling the official acts of the magistrates, it would have compromised their persons. (174-178).

We are, indeed, confounded when we remark the complete absence of proofs, or even of pretexts, which signalizes the condemnation of Urbain Grandier. He is not represented as a sorcerer who confesses his guilt ; he is not even a magician denounced by strange witnesses. There is no evidence against him but the frantic ravings of the Ursulines. I am well aware that the attempt was made to connect with them a direct demonstration. The Sister Superior having declared that Grandier's body bore five marks made by the devil's claws, Laubardemont delivered him up to the barbarous operations of the surgeon Manouri, which were performed in his presence. But in vain was their search, two marks only were discovered instead of five. In respect to their insensibility to touch (the marks of the demon always possess this character), this was proved, it is said, in the following manner : The eyes of Grandier were bandaged ; when Manouri applied his probe to either of the two pretended diabolical signs, he made use of the rounded end, and the patient, of course, did not cry out ; when

he applied it to other parts of the body, he plunged the point so deeply into the flesh that the blood gushed forth in torrents, and Grandier's screams could be heard all over the neighborhood. (129, 130.)

Here we have the principal proof alleged in his condemnation ! Supposing even that Manouri's probe had not been managed in this way, it remains certain that he discovered only two marks, and that the demoniacs had announced five; it remains certain that they did not designate the place of the two marks until after it had been ascertained by the surgeon. No one is ignorant, moreover, that certain parts of the body, and especially those bearing particular signs, are sometimes deprived of sensibility.

As regards the other proofs, they are reduced to these :

Grandier had led an irregular life ! That is not contested ; but a man may have a bad reputation without being a magician.

He had been seen to read a work of Agrippa ! The fact is not proved ; but if it were, I shall take the liberty again to reply (and I am personally interested in this charge) : one may read books on magic without becoming a magician.

The Ursulines were visited by visions bearing reference to Grandier; the beginning of their disorderly conduct is connected with a bouquet of roses, found by the superior on the staircase, and to three black thorns, which were put in her hands one evening after prayers ! It is possible that such assertions may have great weight in the eyes of the modern champions of the Middle Ages ; as for me, not being able to see anything more in them than assertions and subjective impressions, I pass on.

The demons were unremitting in their accusations of Grandier ; the very sight of him prompted the *possédés* to a thousand extravagances ; they found several compacts, one of which was stained with drops of blood ; Asmodeus declared that this blood was from the thumb of the master's right hand ! Asmodeus is made to speak through one of the nuns. Admitting

him to have spoken correctly, and Grandier's thumb to have been found slightly grazed without his being able to account for this insignificant accident, there is no great cause for astonishment, for the persons stationed as guards over the accused, as well as the woman in whose house he was at that time placed, would not fail to furnish his enemies all necessary information.

Add to that, the fact that Grandier put to the torture, confessed that he had composed a book on the celibacy of priests, and you have the total amount of proof alleged in favor of his condemnation. I say nothing for the present of the wonders performed by the Ursulines, and which gave weight to their incessant accusations; I shall refer to these by-and-by. That which is deferred is not lost. It is, moreover, instructive to see how they managed to prevent all opposition. The ordinance I have already mentioned, was first provided; later, after the death of Grandier, attempts were vainly made to bring into bad odor the exorcisms that followed their triumphal march. A Protestant apothecary, named Boisse, having ventured to say, at the time of the visit of the Duke d'Orleans, that he knew a Protestant maiden who could throw herself into postures, and perform feats of strength equally wonderful with those of the superior and her sisters, the Duke d'Orleans sent for him, and summoned him to name this maiden. He said she was known to the physician Fournéan, which was true. But Fournéan, not caring to compromise himself, left Boisse exposed to all the anger of the prince, who ordered the criminal lieutenant to arrest him. Boisse had only time to take flight. (305-309.)

Thus, terror reigned to the end. It was still worse before the death of Grandier. The irregular and violent proceedings, the denials of justice, the refusal to receive the petitions and protestations of the accused, or to communicate to him the charges produced against him, announced a resolution of judicial assassination which nothing could move. Moreover, the thing was started; there was no longer any half-way course: either Grandier must perish as a magician, or numerous monks and

ecclesiastics, a convent of nuns, and many persons of eminence among the laity, backed by a bishop, a counselor of state, and the prime minister himself, must be convicted of the most atrocious calumny, and of the most odious machinations.

The death of Grandier was then resolved on, and his examination was only a matter of form. Thus, although nothing had been discovered bearing the slightest resemblance to proof, although every attempt to extort a confession from the accused had signally failed, on the 18th of August, 1634, the sentence was pronounced which declared him "duly convicted of the crimes of magic, witchcraft, and possessions, effected through his agency on the person of numerous Ursuline nuns of the city of London and other places." He was condemned "to be burned alive, with the compacts and the magical characters registered thereon,* together with the manuscript book composed by him against the celibacy of priests, and his ashes thrown to the winds." Care was taken to add, "that the said Grandier should first be submitted to the question, ordinary and extraordinary." (197-199.)

His torture and punishment partook of that character of ferocious and violent hatred which marks the whole proceedings. During the torture, the exorcist Lactance continually cried out : "*Dicas ! dicas !*" and for this reason, he was called by the people *Father Dicas*. But Grandier protested his innocence, at the same time confessing the irregularity of his previous life ; he entreated his persecutors to leave him in peace, but would not give them the satisfaction of acknowledging his crime, even to escape those dreadful torments.

They had evidently calculated on his terror. Laubardemont held a long conversation with him in private before the application of the question, and after he had submitted to it, the same Laubardemont came back with a document already prepared, a signing of which would release him from so much misery. The sufferer, whose limbs were broken, preserved his strength of soul, and from the straw on which he was extended in the Council Chamber, energetically refused the signature that

would transform into truth the long lie of the Ursulines and their accomplices.

I must, indeed, say a few words in regard to this torture inflicted on Grandier ; let us not recoil before the details. His legs were fastened between two boards, and wedges afterwards driven in with a hammer. They gave to Grandier two wedges more than custom allowed ; but these wedges were not large enough to satisfy the vindictiveness of the monks and Laubardemont, who threatened the man upon whom this part of the business devolved, with severe punishment if he did not bring others. The Recollet and the Capuchins who assisted, were not content with exorcising the boards, the wedges, and the hammers ; fearing the devil had power to resist the blows of the profane, they themselves applied the instruments of torture. . . . Grandier fainted several times under their blows, but other blows restored him to consciousness. At length, when his bones were broken, and the marrow was seen to ooze from them, they suspended the torture, and laid him down on the pavement. He prayed during the torture, he still continued to pray, and I certainly hope that his prayers were not in vain. Christ died "for sinners ;" Grandier acknowledged that he was a sinner, while he protested against an iniquitous accusation. Persecuted by the merciless hatred of men, he looked to Him who gives pardon and peace.

Finally, not being able to extort any confession, they decided to burn him. He was borne to the place of punishment. There, he solemnly pardoned his enemies, as he himself hoped for pardon. The executioner placed him on an iron ring fastened to a stake, making him turn his back to the church of Sainte-Croix. It was five or six o'clock in the evening.

The Fathers exorcised the air and the wood, and then asked the patient if he were not yet willing to confess ; to which he replied, "that he had nothing more to say, and that he hoped shortly to be with his God." They had promised him two things : that he might speak to the people, and that he should be strangled before the fire was lighted. But they continued to lie and deceive until the end. When he undertook to address

the people, the exorcists threw so large a quantity of holy water into his face, as to make it impossible for him to speak. It is even asserted that one of their number ran up and kissed him, in order to drown his words, and that Grandier cried out : " Behold the kiss of Judas ;" whereupon their malice became so ungovernable, that they repeatedly struck him in the face with an iron crucifix, which they held out to him as if to make him embrace it.

When the executioner prepared to set fire to the pile, Grandier exclaimed two or three times : " Is that what they promised me ?" Notwithstanding this, Father Lactance, taking a bundle of straw, lighted it by means of a torch, and threw it on the wood. Thus Grandier was burned alive ; as the flames rose up around him, his voice was heard, issuing from their midst : "*Miserere mei, Deus!* My God, have pity on me !" (200-218.)

Any reflections would be superfluous, and particularly as it is very certain that the population of London did not partake of the opinion of those writers who, at the present time, offer themselves as apologists for Laubardemont, and proclaim the equity of the proceedings. On one occasion, their indignation was so great, that they assembled officially at the sound of the bell of the Hôtel de Ville, and voted a letter to the king, wherein they complained of the slanders in which the *possédés* were allowed to indulge, and which Laubardemont encouraged. The petition of the authorities and inhabitants of London spoke of the "pretended magical compacts, likewise imaginary." As a matter of course, Laubardemont did not allow a document of that character to reach its address ; he issued an order that it should be destroyed, and that he should be furnished with the names of the authors of this high-handed measure. (182, 187, 190.)

I have given an idea of the course of proceedings ; I am now about to say a few words of the possession. We have made the acquaintance of the judges, let us visit the exorcists and the nuns.

One of the motives which actuated the getters-up of this

odious comedy, was the desire to refute Protestantism. Not only did they shut its mouth, in proving the power of exorcisms, but they had the advantage of making the demons of the Ursulines sustain their most learned and orthodox propositions to the confusion of the Reformers, who were quite numerous in the city and its environs.

This was not even all. Advantage was taken of the presence of Laubardemont to deprive them of their portion of the cemetery of Loudun, and to compel them to give up their houses to the possession of the Fête-Dieu. They possessed a college, the buildings of which were coveted by the Ursulines ; Laubardemont published decrees, journeyed back and forth to court, and, at last, the establishment passed from the hands of the Protestants into that of the sisters. (327-339.)

In regard to the dogmatic revelations of the demons, they were wonderfully adapted to a mixed population. Among these demons, the greatest and most serviceable doctor in such matters appears to have been Isaacarum. Here are a few of his declarations :

"It is as true as the flesh of God is in this tabernacle before you." "Saint Joseph is come, who drove out Leviathan (another demon), intimating to him, on the part of God, that it was no longer of use to resist the ministry of the Church."

I beg the reader, here to remark that this important rôle reserved to Joseph, appears to have been an ingenious flattery addressed to Father Joseph, the protector of the exorcists at the side of Richelieu. Pains were taken to publish a small book, entitled : *The glory of Saint Joseph, victorious over the principal demons of the possession of Loudun*. But let us proceed. Isaacarum is not at the end of his theology ; I give a few more phrases extracted from a long edifying harangue which he pronounced towards the close of the possessions, always through the mouth of the superior.

He said that he lost many souls by the attraction of the senses, "that he had acquired much credit with Lucifer by

the fall of Macaire the younger, which he accomplished by visiting him in his desert, and attacking him with the shoe of a woman, and a perfumed handkerchief. . . . That Alu-mette, another demon, of whom Elizabeth de la Croix was possessed, had caught Martinien nearly in the same manner." Having thus expressed himself, Isaacarum perceived that he had spoken to the benefit of men, whereupon he gave vent to dreadful howls, declaring, "that he repented of having come into a body, where he served the counsels of God against his will; that he had for a long time been at work in the world, although Behemoth had been at work still longer than he, and that the latter had been employed from the beginning against Job."

He added, to the great delight of the exorcists, that because of this obsession, Job could murmur as he did, and yet receive this testimony: "In all this, did not Job sin with his lips?" The poor demon was not well posted up in the Scriptures; he did not remember that this testimony rendered in Job's favor, *preceded* the murmurs, instead of following them; he had forgotten the final confession of the patriarch: "Wherefore I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes." This may be said in passing, and without prejudice to the ingenious explanations which Isaacarum felt the necessity of giving in regard to the multiplicity of possessions and of sorcerers, reckoning from the time of the Apostles.

He said, "that before the Incarnation, devils did not possess men as they possessed them afterwards. . . . That after the death of Jesus Christ, the devils tried to imitate Him, and to make themselves in some measure incarnate, possessing various persons by a very subtle mixture impalpable to the senses, and that magicians were such persons as gave them the most assistance in this design." (346, 347, 355, 365, 366, 372-375.)

It was convenient, to say the least of it, thus to obtain a revelation of the magical art, when they wished to burn a magician, and of the dogma of transubstantiation, when it became

necessary to refute the Protestants. Neither was it a matter of indifference to provide for the prosperity of the convent; persons of the most fastidious delicacy on points where they themselves only are concerned, frequently lose their scruples when associated as a fraternity.

I have already related how the Ursulines obtained the award of the reformed college of Loudun. Alms were sent to them from all parts; the generosity of the nobility, who in turn visited the demoniacs, and especially that of the Duke d'Orleans, made them quite opulent. They soon purchased the houses in the neighborhood of the college, of which they had taken possession; they next added thereto extensive grounds, on which they erected buildings; they invested money in tithes, stocks, lands, and finally became one of the richest communities of their order.

Nevertheless, the day of the Ursulines of Loudun was not destined to be of long duration; that fashion passed away, like all others; the contributions ceased to arrive, the visits became less and less frequent, the cardinal grew tired of paying the exorcists the pensions he had at first granted them. Not only did he find that this expenditure had lasted quite long enough, but he learned through Mme. Combalet, his niece, that the game was very badly played, and that it would finally result in scandal. The four thousand francs were, therefore, withheld, and this was, it may be said, the death-blow to the possession:—The more money, the more *devil*. . . .

But let me not subject myself to the reproach of treating with levity a matter like this, in which the comic touches so closely on to that which is hateful and disgusting. Let me rather dwell for a moment on the advantages of all sorts derived by the Ursulines of Loudun from their complaisance. Their reputation, especially, had immensely gained by it; for several years, nothing else was talked of; in distant countries, where certain suspicious details had not penetrated, books and sermons were written about the Ursulines; they formed the general topic of conversation. They received letters compas-

sionating their sufferings, admiring their privileges, and requesting the benefit of their prayers. Various superiors of other convents expressed a desire to visit them, and offer their humble services to these holy women, so dear to God, and to Saint Joseph! (326, 330, 365, 459, 466-470.)

Attendant upon so much glory, there must also have been shame and mortification. In spite of the nervous excitement which occasionally overwhelmed them, and which is in some sort the extenuating circumstance of their crime, it often likewise, necessarily happened that they were fully conscious of the lies to which they were tempted, and which from that time, possessed them. Yes, which *possessed* them, for this was their only, but too real possession.

What must they have thought, when, at the order of the Archbishop of Bordeaux, their demons vanished as if by enchantment; or when they, afterwards, gradually reappeared, and proportioned their manifestations to the protection promised them by the Court? (34, 49, 87, 92, 94, 97, 98, 100, 101.) What must they have thought when their errors or gross frauds shone most conspicuously either before the arrival or after the departure of Laubardemont? Let us mention a few facts.

On a certain occasion, as the superior was being exorcised in presence of the bailiff (this was at a period when they were *persecuted*, even to the point of contradiction), she struggled violently on her bed, while the priest, always keeping in view the controversy in which the church was enlisted, commanded the demon to confess the reality of our Lord's body in the Sacrament. The bailiff perceived a young man named Dessentiers, with a hat on his head; he desired him to take off his hat or leave the apartment. The superior immediately improved the opportunity, and exclaimed that there were Huguenots present. "How many?" demanded the exorcist. "*Tico*," she replied. From which, we may be allowed to conclude that the devil did not know how to count, for, besides Dessentiers, there was Gautier, his brother and four sisters, Fourneau and Angevin. (75.)

The bailiff afterwards desired the exorcist to ask her where was Urbain Grandier at that time. The question being expressed in the terms of the ritual, an answer could not be evaded. The demoniac replied *that he was in the hall of the castle*. The commissioners, half of their number designated by the bailiff, and half by the exorcist, were sent to inquire into the matter, and reported that, far from being in this hall, Grandier had been for more than two hours in a house a long way off.

Such a strange proceeding, such a brutal method of establishing the deception, threw the superior into a stupor; she remained speechless while the commissioners were absent on the investigation; her convulsions disappeared, although the exorcisms were continued. This silence endured more than half an hour. At length, the bailiff having left the chamber, and everybody supposing he had gone to find Grandier, the *possédée* renewed her agitation, and being again interrogated, she asserted that Grandier was walking with the bailiff. Two persons went out in order to ascertain if the devil had succeeded any better this time than the first, and discovered that both answers were equally far from the truth. The nuns had thenceforth only one resource, which they used in declaring that they would no longer be exorcised by the bailiff (77-80.)

It will be remembered that in relation to the marks of the devil on Grandier's body, the superior began by indicating five, while Manouri himself could only succeed in discovering two. It will also be remembered that she refused to designate their locality, until she had been informed of it by the surgeon's report. The demon being then asked why he had not chosen to reply the preceding Saturday: "Because," said he, "I was on that day occupied in conducting to hell the soul of Proust, solicitor to the Parliament of Paris." They had hoped that no one would take the trouble to inquire into the truth of such statements as this; but there were some obstinate and curious people, determined to inspect both the registers of deaths and the list of the solicitors to the parliament; now, it was found, that Proust figured neither in one nor the other. (131.)

Doctor Duncan relates that the first time he saw the nuns, his arrival was the occasion of temporary disgrace to the devil Grésil : the exorcist adjured him to tell the name of the visitor, whereupon the nun, aware of the fact that he was a physician of Saumer, named two other physicians of that city, Benait and Sexier. (148.)

But one of the gravest mistakes committed by the devils of Loudun was that into which they were entrapped by the Count de Lude. (319-391.) He came to Loudun like many others, after the death of Grandier, and the departure of Laubardemont. Having witnessed the convulsions, he pretended to be entirely convinced, and manifested a desire to submit to the *possédés*, a box of relics that had been transmitted to him by his ancestors ; offering, as an excuse, that he wished to know if they were really relics. The exorcists assured him that he could not put them to a better test ; they then took them from his hand, and applied them to the superior, making her a sign she perfectly well understood, but of which the Count, who observed them, also took notice. She instantly gave utterance to horrible cries, and threw her body into frightful contortions ; it seemed as though she were devoured by an invisible fire. The reliquary being removed, she subsided into tranquillity ; whereupon the exorcist turned to the count, and said : "I do not believe, sir, that you now doubt the reality of your relics." "I no longer doubt anything," replied the latter, "but the reality of the possession." The father manifested a desire to see the precious relics ; M. de Lude opened the box, in which the confused and indignant exorcist found only a feather and some hair ! "Ah ! sir," said he, "why have you trifled with us ?" "And you, my father, why do you trifle with God and the world ?"

I shall be told, perhaps, that it is possible for devils to lie ! I answer that the affair of Loudun, from beginning to end, is based on entire veracity. The possessed women know everything, and are mistaken in nothing ; this is the usual argument of their partisans. They accuse Grandier ; then Grandier

is guilty. They make known dogmas ; then the dogmas are divine. How many doctrines would be in peril here, if it were once admitted that the exorcised devils deviated from the truth !

And let it be remarked, moreover, that this theory of the veracity of the exorcised demons was expressly established by the ring-leaders of the Loudun affair ; that, opposed to them, were other contradictory propositions of La Sorbonne, is of little consequence ; it is no concern of mine. I make only one assertion, that according to the terms of their own revelations, the gross errors of the Ursulines are inexplicable. (181, 183, 184, 250, 251.)

In using the word "errors," I do not say enough. Take, for example, their famous Latin : this one of M. de Mirville's great arguments. Let us see what it is worth.

The facts are so little extraordinary here, that we do not even require to have recourse to the analogies furnished us in Animal Magnetism. Loudun gives us nothing which equals either the fact of the peasant girl speaking good French, or that of the servant seizing by the penetration of the thought, the sense of the Hebrew books read by her master. We meet among the Ursulines only a miserable system of fraud, which everywhere betrays itself.

If you wish for the proof of this, draw near to those possessed women. You will, first, be somewhat surprised to remark that the devil of the superior is the only one who has learned his humanities ; the others cannot even pronounce the few phrases of bad Latin which are so much admired in his mouth, and which would shame a scholar of the fourth class.

Let the reader judge for himself. One day, Barré approached the superior, holding in his hands the Sacrament, and said to her : "*Adora Deum tuum, creatorem tuum.*" (Adore thy God, thy Creator.) She replied, at a venture : "*Adoro te.*" (I adore thee.) "*Quem adoras ?*" (Whom dost thou adore ?) demanded the exorcist. "*Jesus Christus.*" (Jesus Christ.) Annoyed by this solecism, and perceiving that it had attracted the atten-

tion of the audience, Barré endeavored to set her right, and to render her language consistent by changing the form of the question : "*Quis est iste quem adoras?*" (Who is the person thou adorest?) he hastened to say. He hoped she would again repeat : *Jesus Christus*. But the superior having just heard the contemptuous remarks of Daniel Drouin, assessor to the provost, thought she must change the phrase, and replied : "*Jesu Christe.*" This was most unlucky !

Barré then returned to questions with which she was familiar, whereupon the Latin immediately underwent a favorable change. Interrogated on the nature of our Saviour, she replied, like a profound theologian : "*Jesus Christus est substantia Patris.*" (Jesus Christ is the substance of the Father.) Interrogated on the number of her demons, she replied : "*Sex.*" (Six.) It is true, that when the bailiff was so indiscreet as to invite her to express the same things in Greek, she found herself absolutely incapable of doing it. Asmodeus, her principal devil, could not know everything !

But Élimi, the principal devil of the sister Claire, was still less learned. He made an attempt at Latin, and replied haphazard. Intermixing the questions and consequently the answers, he no sooner heard the exorcist ask him : "*Quo pacto ingressus est dæmon?*" (By what compact does the demon enter?) than he responded : "*Duplex.*" (Double.) This evidently applied to something else.

Then they returned to the superior. She, at first, did very well ; but pressed by unexpected questions, and adjured by order of the bailiff, to repeat in Latin, several phrases she had just expressed in French, she made various efforts to speak, but being able to say only, *sisi*, or *titi*, she had no more paroxysms for that day.

The next day the experiments were resumed. The bailiff had brought with him a Scotchman named Stracan, the principal of the college of Loudun. The superior having just pronounced the Latin word *aqua* (water), Stracan begged her to translate it into Scotch. Barré, quite disconcerted, replied

that the demon would do it, "if God chose to permit him." He was, nevertheless, compelled to pronounce the command, and repeat it several times; but the superior exclaimed: "*Nimia curiositas!*" (This is too great curiosity!) Unfortunately, she did not adhere to this apothegm; she took a fancy to add: "*Deus non vult,*" which was intended to signify: God does not choose. Some one remarked that *Deus non vult* would have been more correct. The exorcist attempted to get rid of the difficulty by saying that, indeed, their curiosity was too great; to which the bailiff replied, with the ritual in his hands, that the faculty of speaking strange tongues was one of the official and obligatory marks of possession.

In default of the Scotch, the bailiff proposed Hebrew, adding that the demon ought to be more familiar with that language than all the others. Adjured to pronounce the Hebrew term which corresponds to the Latin *aqua*, the superior did not answer; but she could be heard to pronounce, in quite low tones, these words: "Ah! I abjure!" whereupon a Carmelite, who was at some distance from her, affirmed that she had said, *Jaquaq*, and that this was a Hebrew word signifying: "I have spilled water." But those who were nearer, unanimously attested that she had said, "Ah! I abjure!" which caused the sub-prior of the Carmelites publicly to censure that monk.

The famous response: "*Nimia curiositas!*" served thenceforth as a protection to the superior against embarrassing questions. When the bailiff summoned her to speak Greek, she declared him too curious, and remained dumb as a fish. If he interrogated her concerning circumstances in regard to which she had not been informed—for example, the name of the Bishop who had performed the ceremony of tonsure on Grandier—she confessed her ignorance. But as soon as the exorcist put questions to her from his chief, she experienced not the slightest embarrassment.

At a later period, when new exorcists had assumed the duties of the office, one of them, the father Lactance, remarked that the superior knew very little Latin. He consequently took a

heroic part : he ordered her to reply in French ! It being objected to this, that the devil ought to have a knowledge of Latin, he sometimes answered "that the compact had been made in this way," and sometimes "that there were devils more ignorant even than the peasants !"

Yet he himself had the imprudence to state his questions in Latin, although he exempted the demoniac from replying in the same tongue ; the result of which was some misapprehensions. On one occasion, among others, he asked her how many times the demon had entered in her, employing in his question, the word *quoties*. The superior, thinking that this term was the equivalent of *quando* (when ?), replied : "I did not really notice the day !" (34, 57, 58, 60, 62, 65, 66, 67, 70, 71, 126, 129.)

A manuscript statement, put in circulation at the period of the possession, and which is all the less suspected, because its author, a Roman Catholic, is strongly convinced of the prodigy, nevertheless contains some details confirmatory of those to which I have just referred. They are quoted in *l'Histoire des diables de Loudun*, on pages 157, 158, and 164.

The demoniacs were in presence of Lanbardemont and of the Bishop of Poitiers—that is to say, of the temporal and spiritual heads of the enterprise. Graudier had been sent for, and struggled against the fury of his pretended victims. Having begun to exorcise, in Latin, the sister Catharine, who was the most ignorant of all, the others set up an infernal noise, so great as to render it impossible for him to continue. He then turned to the sister Claire, and announced his intention to interrogate her in Greek, to which the devil was careful to reply through the mouth of the *possédée* : "Indeed ! you are very cunning ! You know perfectly well that one of the first conditions of the compact between you and us, is, that we are not to answer in Greek." In vain did Grandier protest against this falsehood, demanding, moreover, that this pretended compact of silence should be broken. In vain did he add : "It may be done, for God has given power to his Church over the devils ; and, in

fact, you yourselves boast of having broken various others that were of no consequence." His enemies were not anxious to deprive themselves of their only mode of shielding the devils from a trial they were incapable of sustaining ; but they finally permitted him to ask questions in Greek, *provided he first wrote what he intended to say !*

Pushed to an extremity, the *possédée* still continued to boast of her power to answer him in all languages ; but she incurred no danger by this tardy offer, for all her companions renewed their frantic cries, spitting upon Grandier, threatening to break his neck, abandoning themselves to dreadful convulsions ; this was an effectual method of putting an end to importunate questions.

And now, if, from cotemporaneous accounts, we pass to the book of M. de Mirville (124, 125), and to his *official reports* of Laubardemont, which have, in his eyes, the authority of the Gospel, we shall really be astounded. It does not enter the mind of M. de Mirville, that, in order to exculpate the persons accused of falsehood and murder, he must give us something more than documents drawn up by themselves. He neither mentions nor disowns any of these details taken on the spot, and which bear the seal of truth. He gravely quotes the assertions of the commissioners, and affirms that the demoniacs not only spoke Latin, but Greek, Turkish, Spanish, Italian ! Still further, they spoke certain dialects of some of the American savagés ! They challenged Grandier to interrogate them in Greek ; he refused to do so, and remained utterly confounded !

Did M. de Mirville expect, perchance, to find in the *official reports*, the confession of Grandier's triumphs, and the ignorance of the demons ? Did he think that the favorable testimony of the bishop, the almoner, the doctor of La Sorbonne, or the complaisant traveller, might not have been the result of bribery ? Did he imagine that, in order to overthrow the established opinion of two centuries, it would suffice to show us (what we certainly knew very well before !) that Laubardemont was

supported by numerous signatures? This was not the question. Signatures are not wanting, in such times, to any lie or any infamy. Some witnesses are frightened into it; some are bought; some are credulous; some, perhaps, are persuaded "to write first what they intend to say." In this manner, the tests are successful, and the Ursulines speak, equally well, Latin, Greek, Turkish, and even Iroquois.

Thus, to evade the true question, is to trifle with the argument: what is the respective value of the official reports and the statements related in detail which entirely contradict them? Now, as the public conscience has never hesitated between these two classes of documents, the statements being looked upon as true, and bearing, indeed, internal marks of their truth to the minds of all who read them, as the universal opinion rises in opposition to the infamous system of judicial falsehood which grew up under the influence of Laubardemont, it is for you to produce the proof, you who pretend to invert the rôles, and change the order of things. Analyze, then, each of the statements, each of the documents contained in *l'Histoire des diables de Loudun*;* prove that that is a lie; I mean a perpetual lie, a constant invention, for your famous official reports do not even allude to the significant facts to which I have just referred. A demonstration in due form will not be too much, it will possess far more value than a passing laugh

* M. Calmeil himself, who seems to disbelieve the accusation of fraud, although his indignation is excited at the iniquity of the proceedings, M. Calmeil who endeavors to place to the account of the nervous excitement of the Ursulines, their entire participation in the matter, does not hesitate to adopt *l'Histoire des diables de Loudun*, as the most reliable work on the subject, as the surest guide. It is this book which he quotes, which he transcribes on all his pages, to such an extent as, indeed, almost to exclude all the others. He is not disposed to pay the same honor to the *Démonomanie* and other books composed on the authority of the official reports.

Nor were books in repudiation of these disgraceful sources, long in making their appearance. The manuscript narrative put in circulation after the possession, and the author of which, was not only a Catholic, but convinced of the prodigy, contradicts none the less for that, the lies of Laubardemont and the exorcists. Thus, the author of the *Démonomanie*, having dared to state on official authority that Grandier had recoiled before the challenge to interrogate the nuns in Greek, the *narrative* relates, on the contrary, that when he wished to interrogate them in Greek, the *possédées* interrupted him with terrible cries. (*Hist. des diables*, 164, 165.)

at the *jokes* which you do not refute, or the *tale* of the reliquary whose falseness you do not prove.

It is certain that history would soon be *reconstructed* according to the system of M. de Maistre, if it were permitted to transform into historical truths, the allegations contained in the official reports of judicial committees. The judges who have burned sorcerers by hundreds of thousands, affirm that they fly through the air ; inquisitors affirm that dissenters are miserable sinners ; the revolutionary tribunal affirmed that the aristocrats had conspired with the foreigners ; the creatures of Nero and Domitian affirmed that all who were proscribed in their time, were guilty of high-treason ; the Sanhedrim affirmed that Jesus Christ had blasphemed ! All these things are in official reports, but until the present time, no one has ventured to make use of such documents and say : “ You see, sorcerers went to the *sabbat*, the conduct of the dissenters was infamous, the aristocrats had a secret understanding with Pitt and Coburg, all persons looked upon with suspicion by the government of Ancient Rome, intended to assassinate their sovereign, Jesus Christ was a blasphemer ; you see, *it is written*, those who wrote the sentence, have assigned their reasons, and a sentence for which a reason is given, cannot be unjust !

What the partisans of the possession did not formerly dare to undertake, they are courageous enough to try at the present day ; they open these worthless pages, traced by the man-slaughtersers, and they exclaim in a triumphant tone, “ I have here discovered that there is no foundation for your idle tales and ridiculous jests ; I have here discovered that the Ursulines, throughout the whole affair, never committed any error ; I have here discovered that they all possessed a knowledge of Latin, and even of the Turkish language ; I have here discovered that no mention is made, either of the reliquary filled with feathers, the demoniac pinned to the ground by Duncan, the translation of *quoties*, or of the resort to the pretext : *nimia curiositas* ; according to this authority, they triumph, they chal-

lenge, they confound their enemies, they perform things impossible to ordinary mortals ; one of them even remains some time suspended in the air !"

This was the very least that could be put in the official reports of the exorcists and the commissioners. Why do they not add those of the civil lieutenant and the bailiff ? This exclusion alone, shows the confidence to be placed in their statements. I have no fear that any of my readers will hesitate between them and *l'Histoire des diables de Loudun*, at the pages of which, no one can glance without recognizing the faithful registry of facts and of documents. Now, let it be remarked that *all* these facts, and *all* these documents must be absolutely false, for, if they contain the smallest particle of truth, fraud is proved, and the official reports become a tissue of falsehood. In point of lies, one proof is worth a hundred.

To return, for instance, to the Latin of the superior, *l'Histoire des diables de Loudun* relates (76) that the very day on which she committed the mistake of enumerating two Protestants in an assembly which contained at least nine, Barré asked her if, apart from the possession, she had not some knowledge of the Latin tongue. He called upon her to swear to it on the ciborium, to which she, with some difficulty, consented. Yet she acknowledged that she interpreted the *Pater* and the *Credo* to her scholars, while she denied that she likewise explained to them the catechism.

Thus we behold the very natural origin of this small stock of Latin. At a period when Latin was everywhere spoken, in a church that made constant use of it, is it very surprising that an intelligent woman who possessed sufficient acquaintance with it to translate the *Pater* and the *Credo* to the boarders, should have learned to make use of a few of the most frequently recurring words, such as : *pactum*, *urbannus*, *flores*, *rosæ*, *aqua*, *diabolus* ? Her small smattering of Latin, the faults she commits the moment she is tempted beyond the narrow circle in which she is accustomed to move, the absolute ignorance of the

other sisters who do not give Latin lessons to the pupils of the convent, all this is in perfect harmony.

M. Calmeil (ii. 234) thinks with me, that the Latin of the superior was a reminiscence, although he seems to admit the sincerity of the Ursulines, and blames the learned Boissier de Sauvages for having regarded their convulsions as feigned.

I do not go quite so far, as the reader already knows ; I admit that there were at Loudun, real nervous crises, but that they were complicated with fraud, which, in proportion as the thing progressed, became more and more apparent and gross. As regards the feats of strength that accompanied the convulsions, there is nothing in them which exceeds or even reaches the level of analogous phenomena, elsewhere observed. Here is an opportunity to judge.

By means of his official reports, M. de Mirville easily procures less vulgar prodigies. Thus, he mentions (119, 123) an extension of the superior's legs, which increased her length to seven feet, and a suspension in the air to which the commissioners could not but give their assent, since it was exacted by the ritual ! But these fine things run no danger of passing into the class of historical facts.

It is still less extraordinary to see the exorcists thrown to the ground, either because they really desire it, or because they participate in the contagious agitation of the demoniacs. The nuns who throw themselves backward so that the nape of the neck touches their heels, do nothing which may not be seen at any fair, nothing which, moreover, may not be explained by a special physical state. The bounds, the cries, the flight before the sacrament, the licking of the pavement, the obedience to the order to crawl on the ground, the cataleptic insensibility, the paroxysms produced by the sight of Grandier, all enter into the class of facts with which we are familiar.

Read the account published at Poitiers, of the visit of the Duke d'Orleans to Loudun, and you will see the following description of the wonderful feats of Elizabeth Blanchard, in this respect, altogether the most remarkable. "The demon,

the Enemy of the Virgin, appeared, according to the command of Father Elisha, the Capuchin, her ordinary exorcist. He put her to sleep, and rendered her as pliable as a bit of lead. The exorcist then bent her body in various ways, backward and forward, on both sides, so that she almost touched the ground with her head, the demon retaining her in these different positions until the exorcist saw fit to change them, and, during this time, which was quite long, she did not breathe at all through the mouth, and only very faintly through the nose. She was almost insensible, in proof of which, the Father took her arm and pierced it through and through with a pin, without causing any blood to flow, or the girl to manifest any sensibility. Sabulon next appeared, who rolled her through the chapel, causing her to tremble violently, and to make various contortions. He carried her left foot five or six times from her shoulder to her cheek, at the same time firmly holding the leg to her side."

It was the custom, we have seen, for the *possédés* to eject from their stomach foreign substances, such as nails, pins, etc. The superior alone had skill enough to succeed in this, and she chose only the most harmless things. The famous official reports of the commissioners, mention one instance of the vomiting of the barrel of a quill as much as a finger long, and another of the vomiting of a silk button. (148, 149). In this respect, then, we are also below the average.

But it was in presence of his Highness, the Duke d'Orleans, that the great prodigies were accomplished. It would, consequently, seem only just to give them a more particular consideration, although I can discover there nothing worthy of special mention. They relate to nuns who swing backwards and forwards, after the manner of the howling dervishes; to tongues so swollen as to hang from the mouth; to bodies, rolling and twisting themselves into all sorts of shapes; and to arms, arranging themselves in the form of a cross. (289-304.) One single thing seems astonishing, and this was, in fact, what determined the conviction of his Highness. The

demon appeared to divine his thoughts, and obey his unexpressed orders ! (302, 304, -308.) The certificate of the prince holds the following language :

"Being desirous to have a convincing proof of the real possession of these women, having secretly concerted, in an undertone, with Father Tranquille, the Capuchin, to command the demon Sabulon, who actually possessed the said sister Claire, to kiss the right hand of Father Elisha, her exorcist, the said demon promptly obeyed, according to our desire.
... Signed, *Gaston.*"

The importance attributed to such an exploit, makes us smile now-a-days ; but the 17th century was much less advanced than we, and the poor Gaston never gave any proof, either of great character, or great genius. If he had had a little more independence, or a little more judgment, he would, at least, have understood (I say nothing of the fluid phenomenon of the penetration of the thought), that the simplest prudence would have required him to keep to himself the command, of which he desired the execution. If he had been content to write without communicating it, if, indeed, he had communicated it to others than the exorcists, who, perhaps, suggested it to him, without his suspecting it, it is probable that the sister Claire would have been less successful in her divination. In the condition of things at that time, after several years of exercise, it was mere play for the exorcists and the demoniacs to transmit an indication from a distance.

They had, moreover, one resource always at hand for cases in which the experiments failed (145, 146): "It is to *maintain some* in their incredulity," was the cunning reply of the demons! This reminds me of the response of the superior, when too closely cornered by the Latin and Greek examinations: *nimia curiositas!* In this way, did they extricate themselves from all dilemmas.

The fact is, there is nothing wonderful in any of these things, and we may adopt the conclusions of Duncan, as stated in the book to which we have already so often referred

(312, 313): "No one would have wondered at the exploits of the nuns, if they had been performed by mountebanks at the theatre. . . . Besides, these exploits were not common to all the women. . . . If the exorcist had commanded the superior to do what was done by Elizabeth Blanchard, and the sister Agnes to do what was ordinarily done by the two first, he would not have been obeyed. None of these women were raised more than to a trifling height in the air, nor did they remain suspended any considerable time; none of them possessed the power of flying, of walking on the water, in which case they would have been more than mortal. But one's mind must be wholly absorbed in the marvellous, to believe that rolling, tumbling, and crawling on the ground are, in any degree, supernatural." . . .

This becomes all the more difficult to believe, when we know that the agency of fraud has been repeatedly established.

On one occasion, it was in the month of May, and in presence of the terrible Counselor of State, the Ursulines had resolved to distinguish themselves. They were determined to leave simple contortious, and pass to real prodigies. Two, among others, had been announced. The superior and two of the sisters were to raise themselves above the ground, and continue suspended there some time; Laubardemont's coif was to be lifted from his head into the air, remaining there for the space of a *Miserecre*. The first trick completely failed, because one of the spectators had the audacity to lift the bottom of the superior's floating garment, and show that the tip of one of her feet touched the ground; this want of success discouraged the two other *possédées* as well as their demons, Cerberus and Eazas. But Béherit had made up his mind to restore the honor of the convent, and the exorcist, Lactance, described, in advance, the suspension of the coif. Nevertheless, the appointed time having arrived, nothing moved, although besieged by the most solemn adjurations! . . . What was the matter?—Some suspicious individuals, remarking that it was late, that the church was badly lighted, and that Laubardemont was seated

at some distance from the rest of the assemblage, ascended to the roof, and there found, directly over the Counselor's head, the man who was charged, so it is said, with letting down through a hole, the little fish-hook and line destined, with Lanbardemont's assistance, to remove his coif. Be that as it may, there was no prodigy, no singing of the *Miserere*, and the discomfiture was complete. (134-135.)

These failures had a bad effect on the possession ; many persons who had visited Loudun expressly to witness miracles, returned thence but little satisfied. Father Tranquille himself, thus complains in his book : " Many persons having come to see the wonders of Loudun, went away dissatisfied if the devils did not at first give them the signs they demanded, and thus increased the number of unbelievers." In order to make amends for these defeats, which no one would ever suspect from reading the book of M. de Mirville, or the invariably triumphant official reports that serve as his authority, they fixed on a prodigy more easy to accomplish than the suspensions in the air. Lactance announced that three of the seven demons of the superior would take their departure on the 20th of May, without fail, and that in leaving her body, they would make three wounds on her left side, and three corresponding holes in her chemise, the waist of her petticoat and robe. The largest of the three holes would be of the length of a pin.

The commander of Laporte, who was at that time at Loudun, expressing a fear that the superior might herself, inflict those wounds, he was told that her hands should be bound behind her back at the moment when Asmodeus, Grésil des Trônes, and Amant des Puissances were thus to leave her body. Nevertheless, when the day arrived, the superior appeared with her hands perfectly free, in presence of the immense crowd gathered together in the church of Sainte-Croix. Doctor Duncan immediately remonstrated, and the exorcist admitted that it was right to bind the *possédée* ; but he added that as many of the people had come a long distance, and had not yet seen the convulsions, they ought not to be deprived of this portion

of the spectacle, with which the performances would commence.

Indeed, after having made known, through the medium of the physicians present, that the side of the superior, her chemise and other garments were whole, they proceeded to the contortions. These were violent and continued, until leaning over on her left side, and remaining a moment in this position, she uttered a groan, and showed her right hand, the fingers of which were red with blood. When she was examined, two holes were found in the dress, three in the waist of the petticoat and the chemise. The skin was pierced in three places, the wounds were nothing more than scratches, one of which was of the size of a grain of barley. Yet all three were bloody.

Laubardemont himself was confused at such evident imposition, and annoyed at the manner in which the promise made to the commander of Laporte had been eluded ; he could not help admitting that "it was lamely done ;" from which we are by no means to infer that he wrote the same thing in his official reports. We find nothing registered there but success ; the truth, however, is elsewhere brought to light, and especially in the work published by Duncan after his return to Saumur, for which courageous undertaking Laubardemont would have made him feel the weight of his displeasure, had it not been for the energetic protection of the Marshal de Brézé. Duncan remarked in this work, that the hands were free ; that a small knife might easily have been concealed ; that if the devils had really left her, it was not in obedience to the power of the exorcism, for there had been no command given ; that they had not, according to their promise, made three incisions in the robe, because one of them corresponded to an opening in this garment ; that, in short, the incisions were much larger in the garments than in the skin, which proved that they had been made from without, instead of from within.

Grandier also made some observations confirmatory of those made by Duncan. He states that had it not been for the groans

of the superior and the blood on the ends of her fingers, the success of the exorcists might have been complete ; the superior should have wounded herself at the same moment, but she should have continued the convulsions ; her hands should afterwards have been tied, according to promise ; the exorcisms should have been pronounced, and then only, should the three devils have been summoned to depart. It is certain that thus the gravest objections would have been overcome ; the thing then *would not have been lamely done*. But God did not permit it.

"Why," asks Grandier further on, "did the devils take their departure by cutting the flesh instead of burning it? Because it is easier to conceal a knife than fire, about the person. Why did they make their exit through the side rather than through the forehead or nose? Because the superior could not have wounded herself in the face without being detected in the act? Why the left side rather than the right side? Because more convenient for the action of the right hand. Why did she lean over on her side and remain in that position? Why were her fingers bloody? Why that groan? Why those slight wounds?" All of them questions not difficult to answer.

Did Laubardemont pay any attention to the document to which I refer? Most assuredly not. He made out his official report, stating the expulsion of Asmodeus, of Grésil and Amant, by three wounds made below the region of the heart, from the body of Sister Jeanue des Anges, and this instrument aided in bringing about the burning of Grandier, as it is to aid in the reconstruction of history and in rendering a tardy justice to the unfortunate Laubardemont!

The next day, Lactance sought to palliate an offense at which everybody was indignant. He demanded of Balaam why his three companions had left while the hands of the superior were concealed from the people. It was then that the demon made his great reply so well adapted to explain all defeats. This was done for the purpose of *maintaining some in their incredulity*. (134-145.)

Nothing was better calculated to attain this end than the

result of another experiment related by Duncan. Still relying, and perhaps with too much confidence on the protection of the Marshal de Brézé, he ventured to hold back the superior, and thus prevent the execution of the motions ordered by Lactance. The monk was furious, he multiplied his orders. "I cannot," at last exclaimed the superior, "for he holds me." "Let go her arm," said the exorcist to Duncan, for how can she make the contortions if you hold her back?" "If it is a demon," replied Duncan, in a very loud voice, "he should be stronger than I." "However good a philosopher you may be," returned Lactance, "your argument is bad, for a demon out of the body is stronger than you; but being in a weak body, his strength is not necessarily equal to yours." "This good father," adds Duncan in his book, "did not remember to have read in the Gospel that the demoniacs broke their chains, and that the ritual demands, among other marks of possession, that proof should be given of extraordinary power.

The next day, he treated the Sister Agnes in the same way, until they requested him not to squeeze her hand so tightly, assigning as their reasons, that the superior had complained of his hurting her. (146, 147.)

I shall not dwell on the little impositions practised every day; on those, for example, which led to the discovery of the four compacts of Grandier, one of which, instead of falling from the ceiling, as had been announced, fell prosaically from the head-dress of the superior. (164.)

Saint André (*Lettres au sujet de la magie*, 258-261), gives the following statement from the pen of M. de Monconis, who, with many others, had had the curiosity to visit the *possédés* of Loudun: "On the morning of the 8th of May, 1645, I went to see the Superior of the Ursulines. . . . My patience was put to the test by being obliged to wait in the parlor more than half an hour. This delay made me suspect some artifice. For that reason, after paying her my compliments, I begged her to show me the characters that the demon who possessed her, had marked on her hand while she was being exorcised; she com-

plied with my request, and drawing off the glove from the left hand, I saw, in letters of blood on the back, beginning at the wrist and extending to the little finger, the following words : *Jesus*, on the part nearest the shoulder ; *Mary*, lower down ; *Joseph*, lower still ; and on the fourth line, *François de Sales*. She told me of all the wickedness of the priest Grandier. . . . At length, took my leave, but not until I had requested the privilege of again looking at her hand, which she very civilly extended to me through the grating. Then, examining it closely, I remarked to her that the letters were not so red as when she came in ; and as it seemed to me that the letters might be made to scale off, and that the skin of the whole hand rose up so as to resemble a thin coating of dried starch, I took the end of my nail, and by a light touch, carried away a portion of the letter *m*, at which she was very much surprised, although the place remained as fair as the rest of the hand. I was satisfied with that, and made my adieus."

Words thus engraved on the hand were one of the last frauds of Loudun, and one of the grossest. It was not long before it was openly and everywhere laughed at. When the Duchess d'Aiguillon (Mme. de Combalot) left the Château de Richelieu for the purpose of visiting the scene of the possessions, she did not even condescend to demand the exhibition of this prodigy, for a short time so famous ; one of her train having, in presence of her ladyship, produced it on her arm without the assistance of any demon, she preferred to witness another exploit rather more extraordinary, an account of which had particularly struck her : it consisted in one of the Ursulines stretching herself out on the ground, and becoming so heavy as to render it impossible to lift her.

Having arrived at the convent, the work of investigation was begun by arranging that the Marquis de Faure should take his station in front of the Marshal de Brézé, who ordinarily preceded him ; they were desirous to see if the devil, always posted up on such matters, would not be caught in the snare. Their anticipations were correct ; the name De Brézé was applied to

M. de Faure. But overlooking this little adventure, they proceeded to the exorcisms.

A scene then took place which serves as a proper pendant to that furnished us by the audacity of Duncan. Duncan had held back the demon ; Mme. de Rambouillet, on the contrary, made him let go his hold. It was to her that the exorcist addressed himself, because he had remarked her curiosity and apparent credulity. Mme. de Rambouillet did not require to be told a second time ; she gave her gloves to her attendant, and taking hold of the nun, not by the place the exorcist had indicated, but by the head, she raised her without difficulty, to the great astonishment of the audience. (391-397.)

I will mention, in conclusion, the results of two other visits (400, 401). The first was made by the Duke and Duchess de la Tremouille ; they dwelt at Thouars, and yielded to their curiosity to see the demoniacs. They wished to try the experiment that had succeeded so well in presence of the Duke d'Orleans ; but, either more clear-sighted or more courageous than he, they refused to communicate to the exorcist the secret to be revealed. Consequently, three whole hours were passed in adjurations to the demon, without extracting any response.

Two Parliament Counselors, who were equally prudent, obtained the same result ; their secret will could not be penetrated, and the demoniacs extricated themselves from the dilemma, by urging a *compact of silence*, which prevented the devil from speaking.

I must here say a few words relative to one of the prodigies which made most impression upon the Duke d'Orleans, and which most clearly shows that these exorcists and demoniacs finally went so far as to become perfectly unscrupulous in the use of means to accomplish their ends. They resorted to the consecrated wafer, in order to produce the effect ! (Calmeil, ii. 43-45, 57, 62. *Histoire des diables*, 256-263, 285, 292-295, 302, 303.)

I shall not relate, in all their details, the profanations men-

tioned in the passages to which I refer : the bloody wafers, the wafers swallowed and ejected, the sacraments which serve to prove the demons, or to restore conviction to unsettled minds. I restrict myself to one or two incidents.

Even as the performances of the superior excelled those of the other nuns, so did those of Elizabeth Blanchard bear the palm among the secular possessions (for the contagion soon spread beyond the walls of the cloister); she represented herself as possessed by six devils, Astaroth, Charbon d'Impureté, Beelzebub, Lion d'Enfer, Péron, and Maron ; she had a monopoly of the exercises in which figured the Host. Previous to the celebrated scene played before His Highness, she had already made her *début* in presence of Laubardemont.

Grandier had just been put to death ; his enemies felt the necessity of some great miracle, to banish the remembrance of so many horrors. A wafer was therefore placed on Elizabeth's lips, and in this situation, it became spotted with blood, which, they were eager to show, could not have come from the mouth of the demoniac, and concluded therefrom (must I indeed transcribe this blasphemy?) that it was the blood of Jesus Christ, shed in honor of the assassination of Grandier, as it had formerly been shed on the cross !

This was not all. It had been agreed upon by two of the Récollet monks that Elizabeth should make a movement of adoration, which she did, saying : " I adore the precious blood of Jesus Christ."

In short, an opportunity like this for inviting the demons to resume their theological discourses against the Reformation, was not to be lost. The possessed woman declared (in French, for Latin was not in her line), " that it was the blood of Jesus Christ, thus spread on the consecrated wafer, in order to convince the infidels and the ungodly, who say it is only bread." After a confession of faith so explicit, it would seem that she need not have carried the matter further ; but the next day, she was seized with scruples, terrors, horrors. " I will not answer you touching this blood. . . . I am going mad. . . .

God has done that, in order that more reverence shall be paid to the Holy Sacrament ; I am obliged to say so, by the power of God. . . . I cannot tell it without suffering pain. . . . I am going mad it is the blood, it is the blood of the Son of Man ; I adore"

It would be repugnant to my feelings to transcribe this examination in full. It is sufficient to add that the bloody wafer was carried with great ceremony to the altar, and placed in a tabernacle, of which Laubardemont took the key. The act had been previously arranged, be it understood, and now figures in the official reports.

We next come to the second representation—that in which the Duke d'Orleans participated. The miracle this time consisted, not in making blood appear upon the wafer, but in keeping it upon the lips and teeth of the demoniac, without wetting it ! The reader may judge for himself concerning the value of such a wonder.

It was still Elizabeth Blanchard. Her demon Astaroth began by throwing her into convulsions. Her tongue livid, swollen, and hanging from her mouth, she rolls and writhes about until she approaches the feet of the priest, who puts the sacrament upon her lips, and commands the demon to prevent the element from becoming in any way moistened. This is followed by contortions : the demon breathes through her lips ; and, although the wafer trembles, it continues to adhere. The exorcist withdraws the wafer, and shows, by touching it with his fingers, that it is neither wet nor sticky ; then, after wiping Elizabeth's teeth with his surplice, he applies the wafer to them with equal success. He finally orders the *possédée* to swallow the wafer ; her mouth is examined, and nothing found there ; she is made to drink a glass of water. . . . But, at a new command, the wafer appears intact on the end of the tongue.

It is possible that the reader may not have been able to overcome his disgust sufficiently to follow me thus far. I do not intend to inflict upon him the description of the physical deformities manifested in the demoniac, when the different

demons were adjured to visit various parts of the body. When Beelzebub was ordered to take up his abode in the face, the throat throbbed, and swelled to an extraordinary size, and became as hard as wood. When the same thing was required of the other devils, their passage through the body was indicated by throbbings and tumors.

These are the most remarkable things that I have found on the subject of the consecrated wafers. In regard to those which were "transported at command, and, without visible motive power, in obedience to the order of the Duke d'Orleans, mentally transmitted to the exorcists," I do not know where M. de Mirville has discovered them. (*Pneumatologie*, 122.) Doubtless in books manufactured from the official reports! I see the certificate signed by Gaston; I see the wafer taken dry from the lips and teeth; the wafer swallowed, and restored intact; the order to kiss the hand of Father Elisha communicated to the ear, and executed without words; but I see no trace of the wafer displaced without contact—which, nevertheless, would have been still more extraordinary.

I shall not push my advantages too far. With the information furnished by the affair of Loudun, a whole treatise might be composed on the nature and manners of the demons—a treatise at which no serious man could help shrugging his shoulders.

Without speaking of their strange names—which, in themselves alone, irresistibly demonstrate their untruth—the devils teach the existence of an infernal trinity, formed of Lucifer, Beelzebub, and Leviathan. (*Hist. des diables*, 283.) The demons and their *possédés* sometimes go to the country, for a day or two's rest from their labors. (168.) These evil spirits, moreover, are not wanting in complaisance; an order from Laubardemont suffices to change all their ideas. They, at first, declared that they would not take their departure until after a pilgrimage in a certain distant country; but the Counselor of State, not liking the aspect of affairs, the demons consented to be expelled without leaving Loudun. (366, 367, 370.) This

expulsion is effected in such a way, that there are always a few demoniacs remaining : they are not entirely delivered ; and, if one demon is driven out, his comrade is left in peace, and charged with the duty of dogmatically commenting on the expulsion. (380-382.) They may even be recalled at need, when their information on any particular subject is considered essential. (346, 354-356.) Their theology is orthodox, and their morality, on occasion, is quite edifying. (371, 372.) Their docility is explained by the fact that they may be subjected to punishment. This happened to one of the devils of the superior, who was chained for a month under the portrait of St. Joseph, and who, confined there in a space not more than a foot square, felt himself scorched by the proximity of the Holy Sacrament. (405.) It remains to comprehend why it took seven years to expel them, when it was so well known how to imprison them, and why the superior waited so long for "the fluid vapor" to escape from her arm, leaving, in its flight, the famous, but surely not very diabolical mark : *Maria*. (380.)

I do not pretend to fathom the depths of this great mystery (313), in which the exorcists continually show themselves very powerful in compelling obedience from the demons, and utterly powerless in expelling them. The gradual and imperfect expulsion of the seven demons of the superior, is, in itself, a complete drama, with innumerable catastrophes ; they are bound not to bring it to a conclusion until they have gone through with all the five acts, the infernal actors leaving the stage by the right entrance, to return by the left. (340, 342, 346, 349, 364-370.) Finally, a grand *neuvaine* delivered the demoniac, who, by way of recompense, was transformed into a saint ; her arms bore the sacred marks ; she was miraculously sustained ; and the perspiration of her body, the chemise with which it was dried, became infallible means of cure. The odor alone of these objects, put to flight the demon Souillon, who possessed a poor woman ; and Mme. Laubardemont (this was only justice !) was one of the first to benefit in her infirmities, by the power of the so-called *unction*. (376-385, 403-441.) A

long time afterwards, the superior again had visions, and performed miracles. (470-471.)

But, to avoid fatiguing the reader, I must omit many most significant details. The invasion by material contagion (40, 71); the unconsenting dependence relatively to the devil, who occupies the body without possessing the soul (39, 62, 157); the violent hatred against Grandier—that is to say, “Satan divided against Satan” (158, 159, 162); the double personality (279-281); the effect produced by the application of the sacrament (274, 285); the singular enjoyments procured by possession (458, 459); the fine miracles and the glorious marks with which the whole affair concludes, not only in reference to the superior, but in reference to other sisters (345, 348, 352-359);—all this would demand a complete analysis and description.

I can only allude to these passages, as well as to the account of the celestial dream which so capitally fills up the interval (369, 370) caused by a temporary absence of the demons compelled to show themselves at the *sabbat*. There are only two points upon which, in conclusion, I feel the right to insist: the remorse repeatedly manifested by the Ursulines, and the chastisements of God which burst over the heads of the exorcists.

One day, this was at the commencement of the affair, the superior, exhausted by a long sitting, finished with these words: *Iniquitous judgments!* (67.) Another day, urged by the exorcist to swear on the ciborium, she replied: “My father, you make me take a great many oaths; I fear very much that God will punish me.” (76.) On the 3d of July, 1634, at a period when the persecution against Grandier was at its height, the sister Claire was seen in tears in the church of the castle whither she had been taken to be exorcised. She declared that everything she had said for the last two weeks, was only pure calumny and lies; that she had done nothing except by order of the Récollets, of Mignon, and the Carmelites, and that if she were separated from all companionship, it would be found that these things were only sham, and the

result of malice. Two days afterwards, the poor creature repeated the confession, and even tried to make her escape ; but Démonans pursued, and brought her back. (168, 169.)

The sister Agnes, emboldened by this example, frequently held the same language, tearfully beseeching those who assisted in the exorcisms, to deliver her from the horrible captivity, under the weight of which she groaned. (169.) La Nogeret, also, on one occasion, protested that she had accused an innocent person, for which she asked pardon from God ; then turning to Laubardemont, she declared that she was obliged to make this confession, in order to relieve her conscience. (170.)

We need not fear that these touching confessions figure either in the official reports, or in the *Démonomanie* ! Yet, they were renewed on several occasions after the death of Grandier. (401-403.) The sister Agnes being one day exorcised in presence of a physician from Château-Gonthier, who addressed her some questions in Greek, she ingenuously replied : " that she did not understand that language, having never learned it." The exorcist found fault with her in terms, giving her to understand that she had not performed her part, rather than indicating his belief in the reality of the possession. He afterwards desired to continue the exorcism, but she exclaimed : " that she was not a demoniac ; that they had long tormented her in private to compel her to the things which she did in public ; that if God had not sustained her, she would have been in despair, and that she was very unfortunate in being in the hands of such people." She wept while she spoke, and the greater part of the spectators burst into tears.

The sister Claire, being exorcised in the presence of a lawyer from Saumur and several other persons, was burned by a wire dipped in liquid sulphur, which the exorcist made use of to smoke out one of her demons. When she felt the pain, she threw herself backward, deploring her condition, and complaining of the tyranny of those who compelled her to pretend that she was possessed. She ardently prayed to God to deliver her

from her misery. Had it not been for a lady of quality, who followed her as she left the church, and brought her back to the convent, she would never have re-entered.

But the nun who experienced the most violent remorse, was the superior. She was, on one occasion, seized with such a lively consciousness of her crime, that she attempted to take her own life. This was before the unfortunate woman, whom we have seen descend step by step to the gross fraud which characterized the latter days of the possession, had become completely hardened. (232.) She had, the evening previous, in presence of Laubardemont, made a solemn deposition, which would complete the ruin of Grandier. Horror-struck at what she had done, she stripped herself to her chemise, uncovered her head, and with a rope round her neck and a taper in her hand, remained two hours in the middle of the court, while the rain was pouring down in torrents. After which, she rushed into the parlor, and throwing herself on her knees before Laubardemont, declared to him that she was about to repair the fault she had committed in accusing the innocent Grandier. Then, withdrawing into the garden, she fastened the rope to a tree, and would have been strangled, had not some of the other sisters interfered.

We feel a certain relief when we occasionally meet in this hideous history of Loudun, the real language of the heart, an involuntary homage to justice, a return to truth. It is a sort of reparation made to the victim ; it is a proof, too, that all goodness was not yet dead in the hearts of the poor Ursulines. It takes time to kill the conscience.

Perhaps it also gave some signs of life among the exorcists themselves ; the human heart contains such vast treasures of inconsistency ! The fact is, that soon after the execution of Grandier, Father Lactance died in an inexpressible agony of rage and despair. Father Surin, who took his place, became almost a lunatic. " Deprived of the external use of his faculties, he could neither walk, nor speak, nor write, and was a prey to violent temptations. In this humiliating condition, it

was thought best, for his own safety, to keep him in confinement." (Article *Surin*, in the *Biographie Universelle* of Michaud.) He remained in such a state of stupidity, that he could not say a *Pater*. On one occasion, the demon threw him from a window upon the rock on which was built the monastery of the Jesuits, and broke his thigh. He was finally cured, and lived a long time. (*Calmeil*, ii., 64.)

But it is especially in relation to Father Tranquille that were manifested the dreadful crises in which the hand of God clearly showed itself. An invincible melancholy, violence, cries so loud as to cause the population of Loudun to assemble in mobs around the convent ; these are some few signs of the punishment which the exorcist suffered. Nothing can equal the horror of his last moments ; the funeral pile of Grandier was a bed of roses in comparison with the couch on which writhed the Capuchin. The monks, his companions, saw there only a proof of his holiness, and the hatred borne him by the devil ! They therefore wrote on his tomb : " Here lies the humble Father Tranquille. . . . The demons not being longer able to endure the courage he displayed in his employment of exorcist, tormented him so that he died."

The horrible end of this exorcist made such a vivid impression on Father Lucas, who witnessed it, that he, in his turn, fell into a fit of madness. It took several of the monks to hold him, and even then, he could not be prevented from kicking at the body of the deceased, until it was removed from the chamber.

I do not dwell on these dismal scenes, to which we should also add the hallucinations of the surgeon Manouri, who fancied he saw Grandier at his side, and who shortly afterwards expired in presence of this formidable vision.

Those who wish for details, are referred to *l'Histoire des diables de Loudun* (263-267, 274-276, 287-288, 441-458, 470-473). They will then understand the last cries of Father Tranquille : " Ah ! how I suffer ! I suffer more than all the devils together, more than all the damned." They will assist

at the opening of his body by those who wished to assure themselves that no evil spell still remained there ; they will see his immediate transformation into a saint, his garments divided, his bier broken up and the pieces preserved as relics.

I have already dwelt too long on this matter, and shall conclude its investigation without inquiring if God chastised the other accomplices in the assassination of Loudun. Did its principal author, Laubardemont, go unpunished on earth ? I cannot tell. I only know that his son perished by a violent death in the flower of his age.

Be that as it may, the tragical end of Father Tranquille nearly marks the term of the possession. This was in 1638 ; the following year, there was no more question of it. But the epidemic, after extending itself through Loudun, even beyond the walls of the convent, had gained a foothold in several other localities, always attacking women or young girls, and particularly nuns. It showed some unpleasant symptoms at Avignon and Nîmes ; it burst out with considerable violence at Chinon. An account of its manifestations at the latter place, will complete my demonstration of the true character of the fact. The world was getting tired of hearing of demoniacs, of exorcists raging mad, of frauds and discovered machinations. The new manifestations were, therefore, welcomed with but little enthusiasm. The devils were ordered to return to silence, and they, of course, obeyed.

At Nîmes, where the possession manifested itself with more energy, it was condemned by the faculty of Montpellier, and soon disappeared ! The prodigy died out in the midst of general disgust, as was also the case at Loudun, where the possession was no longer anything more than a diversion, or a celestial favor ! The secular *possédés* went to exorcisms at certain hours, as they would have gone to walk. When asked by those who met them on their way, if they were possessed, they replied : " Yes, thank God !" and the devotees who assisted at this play, envied their happiness : " We are not so blest," they would cry out, " God does not love us enough for that !"

When the disease assumes such a mitigated form, it is no longer of sufficient consequence to occupy our attention. The devils of Loudun turned into angels, and the demoniacs gradually became saints ; a proof that the affair was coming to an end.

Attempts were, indeed, made to resuscitate the real possessions in the neighborhood of Avignon ; but Mazarin then exercised there the functions of vice-legate of the Pope, and was not anxious to have any troubles of this nature upon his hands. He peremptorily prohibited it, and the demons submitted to his authority. (*Hist. des diables*, 315.)

At Chinon, it was more difficult to make them listen to reason. It is true that one of the old exorcists of Loudun, Barré, was there, and desired not to remain inactive. It is instructive to witness the establishment and suppression of the fraud at Chinon, by the public authority itself. Barré was of no less importance than Mignon, Lactance, or Tranquille ; the sisters of Chinon were of no less importance than those of Loudun. But Barré and his nuns were officially convicted of falsehood. A hint for those who manifest astonishment when we suppose the existence of fraud at Loudun ! (359—364, 386—389, 482—565).

Barré defended himself to the best of his ability, and Laubardemont, who was opportunely appointed intendant of Maine, Touraine, and Anjou, lent him his protection against the decisions of the official authorities of Paris. Thus the affair did not terminate so quickly as in the Papal dominions governed by Mazarin. Nevertheless, the *possédés* of Chinon having abused their impunity, the Curés Santerre and Magloire having each, in turn, incurred the risk of passing for magicians, and filling the rôle of Urbain Grandier, it was decided to put a complete end to the comedy. The demoniacs were placed in seclusion, Barré was exiled, and nothing more was heard of magicians or possession.

This was the period in which tranquillity was also restored at Loudun. No evidence of the late proceedings remained, except

the riches acquired by the Ursulines, and a few marvellous objects offered to the devotion or the curiosity of travellers. In this way, the Carmelites made great capital out of the bloody wafer still preserved in their church, and the compact of Grandier, an authentic copy of which had been brought them by a demon. It read as follows : " Monsieur and Master Lucifer, I acknowledge you for my God, . . . and in case I fail to serve and adore you, and to pay homage to you three times a day, I give you my life as belonging to you." *The rough draught is in hell, in one corner of the earth, in the cabinet of Lucifer, signed with the blood of the magician* (270, 271).

Let us pause here. The reader has now under his eyes the complete proof of the degrading and sanguinary practices which for seven long years defiled the City of Loudun. He will not be astonished if I give vent to the feelings that have accumulated in my heart, while relating this crime, and if I address a few serious words to those who have dared to be its apologists.

We cannot be too severe towards such outrages, even when, as in this case, they find some excuse in a prejudice which makes all impartiality impossible. M. de Mirville, and others who have attempted the work, accept a very heavy responsibility ! To approve of the affair of Loudun, is to take its part ; it is also to show in what spirit they would act if they had the power. The party which thus reveals itself, is, God be thanked, the victim of a great delusion : it is deceived in the age, and I trust it is equally deceived in the country ; France of the present day, would not, for forty-eight successive hours, bear with the tendencies which are now complaisantly held up for her approval.

But, dangerous or not, it is none the less a duty to offer a few earnest words of admonition to the honorable men whom I address. This is not an innocent pastime ; the fancy for rehabilitations at any price, under all circumstances to be regretted, for the tendency of error is always pernicious, may yet sometimes be satisfied, without directly outraging and

wounding the public conscience. If history has forgotten or done injustice to certain personages of former times, correct the mistake, if you think it worth while ; no one will be greatly alarmed.

To reinstate Laubardemont, is quite another affair. Humanity receives only one compensation for the great crimes perpetrated against her ; it is the sentiment of horror and indignation which follows in their train. Refrain from meddling with her indignation, that precious treasure, the painful accumulation of ages ; there is a point, beyond which she will not endure.

I conclude this portion of my work with the fact which the champions of sorcery themselves have chosen ; it was necessary to examine it in its details, for it is the details, which, in such cases, tell the story, and an accurate analysis alone can put a stop to empty declamation. This example, moreover, suffices ; well may it be said : *Ab uno disce omnes !* The London affair contains at once, the two great classes of diabolical prodigies, sorcery and possession ; we feel authorized, then, to preserve our tranquillity, when, in future, those who have held such a triumphant tone, shall proclaim on other points, judgments not less arrogant, not less peremptory.

We have endeavored to estimate successively, the vulgar superstitions connected with magic, the confessions of sorcerers, possessions, particularly those of London ; and the invariable conclusion at which we have arrived, is, that there is no trace of anything supernatural in this second branch of the supernatural Apocrypha.

Let us now pass to the third.

CHAPTER III.

THE SUPERNATURAL APOCRYPHA.

ANIMAL MAGNETISM.

THE amateurs of the Supernatural Apocrypha have, of course, made the most of Animal Magnetism, and the curious phenomena connected with it. It is another story added to the edifice, of which knocking-spirits form the crown. The human intellect needed this apprenticeship, that it might be prepared to accept cotemporary prodigies ; if it had not begun by false miracles, by ancient sorceries, and by the more recent magic of Mesmerism, it would have been incapable of receiving the new wonders just invented in America.

We have done ample justice to sorceries and pretended miracles ; we have discovered that, aside from fraud, they were based on nothing but physical and physiological effects. An examination of the Mesmeric phenomena will conduct us to the same conclusion.

Such is not, be it understood, the conviction of the Marquis de Mirville. I quote from his own words :

“ Let our modern magnetizers try to sell a simple act of the will for a hundred louis, as did Mesmer ; men would laugh in their face. But Mesmer sold other things.” . . .

“ What will it be, when to all these authorities, ancient and modern ” (M. de Mirville has just indicated them), “ we shall presently add the authority, *par excellence*, that of M. le Baron Dupotet and of his journal, the only organ of philosophical

and practical magnetism at this moment in Paris. What will it be, when we shall read in his pages the most frank and the most complete disavowal of his old naturalist theories, and the formidable announcement of his new and mysterious associations? But let us not anticipate: let us content ourselves for the present, with establishing that which results from his first admissions, that is to say, the effects of Animal Magnetism are not due, as has been hitherto asserted, to the simple development of a human faculty, but, according to the masters themselves, we must there acknowledge, first of all, the intervention, or at least, the shadowing forth of an extra-natural, or superhuman cause." (*Pneumatologie*, 261, 271.)

Then follows an entire chapter, bearing this title: "Transcendent facts of Magnetism, or the intervention of spirits demonstrated by facts." In it M. de Mirville pretends to prove the insufficiency of the natural explanation demanded of the nervous fluid or force, whatever it may be called, of which we, in certain cases, dispose, and he actually mentions some results, for which fluid action cannot account: such as the will deposited in talismans, causing obedience to its mandates at distances of hundreds of leagues, and at intervals of months! men and furniture flying through the air! the existence of magnetizers, who make rain and fine weather!

This all leads to the grand revelations of M. Dupotet, who declares, "that there is magic in the smallest magnetic fact," and who understands by magic, "the assistance of the occult powers." The new sorcerer tremblingly asks himself if it is wise to awaken the spirit of divination, and to teach men where it reposes. "A secret instinct," he adds, "my conscience tells me, that I do wrong to meddle with these things." Elsewhere, he says, "I have felt the touch of this formidable power. . . . The bond was drawn up, the compact was consummated; an occult power came to my assistance, combined itself with the forces of my own nature, and enabled me to see the light. It is thus that I discovered the road to true magic." (270-293.)

We also find M. de Mirville, on this point in perfect harmony with the author of *la Religion constatée universellement* (vol. ii. 159, 160, 184, 202, 203, 217, 223-242). I note this, because I am anxious to take nothing of their importance from the tendencies we combat, and which many are inclined to attribute to individual fancy, or passing error; on the contrary, they belong to a very ancient, a very consistent system, which audaciously shows itself whenever it judges the moment favorable, but which, avowed or concealed, remains none the less immovable. If the dreams of sorcery and of the Middle Ages were only a whim, they would give us no concern; but they indicate the existence of a large party, which is, assuredly, lacking neither in cunning nor in perseverance. These are the terms in which it expressed itself, in 1833.

"The most remarkable of the phenomena, for the last half century designated by the name of Animal Magnetism and Magnetic Somnambulism, are nothing else than such as were formerly named effects of possession, magic, sorcery, and enchantment."

"History, both sacred and profane, relates a great number of examples of human bodies somnambulically seized by infernal spirits whom no one had evoked."

"If the bodies somnambulized are deprived by spirits of the empire of their souls, if it is spirits who paralyze them, strike them with lethargy, move them, agitate them and express themselves through their mouths, the somnambulists, when reëntered into possession of their bodies, must be wholly ignorant of what has happened. And this precisely, is always the case." . . .

"This cause being once admitted, all the facts of somnambulism explain themselves with a facility and a simplicity which nothing disturbs. The magnetizer invokes the somnambulist power upon a living human body. When evoked, it invisibly seizes hold of the body. . . . Thus removed from the empire of the soul, this body is at the disposition of somnambulizing spirits." . . .

"Inherent in somnambulism is the immorality which defiles almost all its victims; it excites within them condemnable emotions, kindles shameful passions. The beings, then, whose power somnambulizes mortals, are visibly spirits of imposture and vice—enemies of the human race—seeking to deprave it. They also seek, often successfully, to corrupt the body, to fill it with disease." . . .

"It does not necessarily follow, nor have we anywhere asserted, that all the facts classed under the denomination of Animal Magnetism, have superhuman power for their cause. . . . However, . . . now that we have unveiled the interposition of infernal spirits in the principal facts of somnambulist scenes, we must be on the watch against the artifices of these seductive geniuses, whose passions are interested in practising their deceptions at the very source of the phenomena they produce."

The conclusions are then the same. Among the Mesmeric facts, some of them partake of the character of the supernatural, and of the infernal supernatural. We shall make it our business to see if this proposition can be sustained, and in order to that, we shall examine, in succession, ordinary Mesmerism, and the magic Mesmerism of M. Dupotet.

M. Deleuze, who, even in his time, was everywhere met with the accusation of sorcery, became indignant at it, conscious as he was of being an honest man. Armed by a long course of experiments in magnetic phenomena, he had no difficulty in refuting the book of M. l'Abbé Wurtz (*superstitions des philosophes*), in which reappeared, during the year 1817, all the creeds of the 13th century, and which was liberally distributed among the seminaries. In it were to be found phrases like this: "While the world affected no longer to believe in the devil, it was he who played the chief part in the lodges of the Free-masons, in the centres of the illuminated. . . . He was travestied, now into an extraordinary man, now into a natural philosopher, now into a magnetizer." . . .

(148.)

Thus we see that the imputation is not new. In order to render it plausible, it is necessary to begin by enlarging the list of prodigies effected by Animal Magnetism. It is clear that if men attribute to it prophecies, the transportation of men and furniture through the air, they give themselves the right to affirm that magnetism is diabolical ; but to collect together by handful, all the stories current on this subject, is not to change their character ; fables do not become truth merely because they are affirmed in a peremptory tone. A little criticism is necessary in such matters.

In looking over the contents of M. de Mirville's book from page 277 to page 284, what do I find ? Magnetic wonders heaped upon other wonders. At first sight, we are dazzled ; but ere long, we remark that the facts are less certain or less extraordinary than they appear to be.

A priest who was for some time professor among the Jesuits, *relates* in manuscript notes, that in virtue of an energetic act of his will, some curtain rings which he held tightly in his hands, and which he sought to retain, were hurled to the other extremity of the chamber ! He adds that a *fauteuil* set to turning round, and that it rolled without any assistance, all about the floor ! Supposing that the memory of this priest is entirely correct, is it not possible that a certain fluid action may have been developed within him ? Is it not probable, moreover, that he himself, divided as he was between the intention to remain passive and the will that accomplished the motion, may have unconsciously given to the rings and the *fauteuil*, an impulsion analogous to that communicated by the electric girls, of whom so much has been said ; analogous to that which might naturally have been supposed in the phenomenon of Turning Tables, if the latter had been limited to rotations or projections, if it had not presented the fact of elevations without contact ?

A person whom M. de Mirville carried upon his shoulders, greatly increased in weight as soon as he had the desire to become heavier ! Another person, placed on the ground, could no longer be lifted from it, after he had mentally willed

to adhere to the floor; the combined exertions of four men were not sufficient to make him move an inch ! Biology daily accomplishes the same miracle, which is wholly a mental operation, and has no objective reality. M. de Mirville and his friends were doubtless biologized ; perhaps the very orders they thought they issued, were imposed on them by the magnetizer. If, in place of the man, a piece of paper had been substituted, they might have equally exhausted themselves in vain attempts to detach it from the ground. Now, a physiological phenomenon is not a prodigy.

This explanation applies to the experiments of Doctor Teste. If he renders certain persons or certain things invisible, if he transforms a glass of water into a glass of orgeat, if he annihilates the staircase and prevents his somnambulist from descending lower, if he places imaginary barriers in his path, he does nothing which is not everywhere done at the present day, nothing which is not embraced in the vast category of internal impressions communicated by magnetization.

As for those witnesses who *relate* to M. de Mirville that they have seen men flying among the lights of a drawing room, I advise him to interrogate them anew. In drawing-rooms "very far advanced," many astonishing things are effected, which, unfortunately, never leave the theatre of their origin, and which, decidedly, seem to fear the broad light of day. Do they result from enthusiasm ? from exaggeration ? from hallucination ? I cannot say. I wait for these wonders to be effected in public places.

M. de Mirville will answer, perhaps, that they have already been effected, that a somnambulist fell down upon the Batignolles in mid-day (296). But, unfortunately, *it was visible only to the initiated*. This is probably the case at the house of Doctor Ch——, who effects similar transportations through the air. I suppose also that when the catechumens of the Catholic missionaries in China, vault into the air and sail about at their pleasure, the prodigy is perceived by the initiated alone.

Thus, in this order of phenomena, we always fall back upon

our habitual explanation ; sometimes hallucination, sometimes biology.

It is this last which accounts for some grave facts in the experience of M. Alexandre Dumas, and quoted by M. de Mirville (295) from the 13th volume of his *Memoirs*. "In her case," said he (speaking of a young somnambulist whom he had magnetized without premeditation, at the house of the public prosecutor of the republic at Joigny), "in her case, all the sensations were completely roused ; fire was ice and ice was fire I encircled her forehead with a band of fictitious snow, and she soon began to shiver Then I suddenly ordered the clothes to dry, and they dried." M. Alexandre Dumas changes water into *kirsch* ; he surrounds his somnambulist, not asleep, he it remembered, with a circle of iron, which he forbids her to leave ; he persuades her that she holds a poignard in her hand.

Behold many of the facts which appear supernatural, but which have no claim to that title ; they, in no way, depart from the domain of physiology and physics ; with our intelligence, such as it is, with our nerves and fluid action, we are prepared to explain them. In other words, nothing exterior, nothing real takes place, except what results from our sensations.

We come now to other stories which have not even the merit of corresponding to subjective impressions ; the imagination has been the sole contributor. I rank in this class, magnetic talismans and predictions.

That magnetized waters are impregnated with some physical power, I do not attempt to affirm, but I comprehend that it may be so. I comprehend, also, that magnetism may act at a distance, and communicate certain impressions to the person upon whom it acts. The talisman is quite another thing ; it transports us into the domain of the supernatural, and in this way : "It should be known," says M. de Mirville (274), "that they name as magnetic auxiliaries, all magnetized objects that serve as vehicles for the occult influence deposited in them by

the magnetizer : these are the talismans of the ancients. Sometimes the talisman produces such or such effects on the person to whom it is sent, according to such or such circumstances ; *it therefore follows, that this travelling influence, at a distance even of two hundred leagues, and after intervals of months, fulfills all the recommendations of its employer ;* while the latter sleeps, forgets, and ignores, it must forget nothing, it must weigh everything, and decide according to circumstances."

If this is indeed the actual state of things, then the supernatural is demonstrated ; but its partisans affirm it without establishing the intelligence of the magnetic auxiliaries, or even the intelligence of the tables. They state as a fact, that the magnetized water remembers the commissions with which it is intrusted ; that it reflects and decides according to the emergency, endeavoring to acquit itself of its duty in the best possible way ; they state as a fact, that the tables make admirable responses, compose sublime verses, reproduce the thoughts of great men who no longer exist ; then, having stated these things as facts, they pass on. Intelligent men will not be satisfied with assertions so gratuitous. They will demand when, where, and by whom it has been established, that magnetic talismans have regulated their conduct with so much perspicacity ; then, opening the books of M. Deleuze, they will find something quite different from what is claimed to be discovered in them.

M. Delenze does not, in the least, suppose intelligent auxiliaries : he supposes auxiliaries impregnated with a fluid which they preserve a certain number of days. This is very different, and, although I am far from regarding the fact as certain, even stated in these terms, I shall quote the words of M. Delenze himself. (*Instruction pratique*, 10, 61-63, 68-75, 345, 348, 364, 365, 373.) They prove that, in his eyes, talismans are a folly, and that he sees a physical agent instead of a spirit, in the magnetized objects made use of.

"The magnetic fluid that emanates from us . . . perhaps borne by an intermediate agent." . . .

"The auxiliaries are magnetized water, wool, cotton, plates of glass, etc., that have been magnetized ; magnetized trees, buckets, or reservoirs. . . . I have seen magnetized water produce such marvellous effects as to make me fear I was laboring under an illusion. . . . It preserved its virtue for several days, and numerous facts seemed to prove that this was not entirely lost until after the expiration of several weeks."

"I have often seen magnetized socks produce a warmth in the foot which the wearer had been unable to obtain by any other means."

"Somnambulists, and even other persons who are in the magnetic state, recognize, by an impression for which we cannot account (because this modification of the taste sleeps within us), whether water has been magnetized ; whether by their own magnetizer or another ; whether it has been merely touched by a magnetized person ;—and they sometimes vomit up to the last drop, water that has been touched by a stranger."

M. Delenze goes so far as to think, that when music is resorted to as an agency for putting somnambulists to sleep, it would be well to magnetize the harp or piano made use of. He goes thus far, no further.

For myself, who am not even disposed to accompany him thus far, and who believe that the pretended action of magnetic objects rests, perhaps, on illusion and confusion, I refuse, for the strongest of reasons, to place any faith in talismans endowed with intelligence to act and decide for themselves.

I have said that the above-mentioned phenomena result, perhaps, from illusion and confusion. From illusion, in fact ; for no one has any right to affirm that invalids gathered around a magnetized tree or bucket, that those who wear socks which they suppose impregnated with a curative virtue, do not experience sudden warmth or some sort of nervous effect, by the sole action of the idea with which their imagination is impressed. Confusion also ; for, in cases where nothing announces to the invalid that certain water is magnetized, that certain other water is not, that this is intact, that that has been touched by

a stranger, it is forgotten that the knowledge may have been revealed to him by the penetration of the thought—the constant and fundamental phenomenon of magnetism. The impression attributed to the auxiliary is probably produced by magnetism itself.

I am, however, unable to speak positively on a subject with which I am so little acquainted, although it has often occupied my earnest attention. It is sufficient for me to have stripped from the auxiliaries the pretended supernatural envelope in which they have been muffled. I would say as much in regard to pretended somnambulist prophecies. The more I examine the experiments related by men who know how to use their eyes and their judgments, the more am I struck with the truth of this remark, that the only incontestable predictions are those which relate to accidents resulting from morbid conditions, to crises, to cures, to death.

M. de Mirville (193) gives us, it is true, one or two predictions of another nature : in the month of November, 1847, some somnambulists informed him, through the medium of other persons by whom they had been consulted, that the republic would arise, and endure three or four years! They informed him, in the month of March, 1848, that anarchy would continue until the days of Saint John, and that a general would put an end to it! Several of his friends were informed, in addition, that a pontiff would die on the same day, which prediction they believed to have reference to the pope!

I answer, that, without for an instant questioning the sincerity of M. de Mirville and his friends, I am sufficiently well acquainted with the human heart, to be certain that their prophecies, if published *in extenso* before the events, would not have tallied quite so well with them; that nothing is said about thousands of other somnambulist prophecies which have failed to be realized; I say, in short, that, even confining ourselves to the happy coincidences (and, as a matter of course, there have been some), many people, in 1847, who were not sorcerers, predicted the republic. On the other hand, how was it possible

to speak of a republic in this country, without limiting its duration to three or four years? How was it possible not to foresee, in the beginning of 1848, that we were on the eve of a military reaction? How could we help divining that it would be directed by a general? The pontiff still remains! but it is precisely concerning such details that it is important to institute a rigid investigation, or, better yet, cause a note of the prophecy to be taken down, according to legal forms, before the event. Was the word *pontiff* employed? Was it not simply announced that a *priest*, that *priests*, would die, or, in terms still more vague, that priests would be compelled to suffer? Nothing more than this would have been needed, after the death of the Archbishop of Paris, to persuade many people that the assassination of the pontiff had been predicted, and that this particular moment had been fixed upon. We are so adroit in self-deception! we are so eager after the marvellous!

With regard to divinations which relate to the progress, the incidents, the happy or fatal issue of disease, they do not seem to be contested.

"The somnambulic faculty of prevision," says M. Bertrand, "when limited to the faculty of announcing in advance, organic modifications which cannot be anticipated, and indicating with the greatest precision the moment when these changes or crises are to begin, their duration and the principal symptoms they may be expected to present, however incomprehensible it may be, is founded on numerous and positive facts." (*Du Magnétisme animal*, 418.)

The Commissioners of the Academy of Medicine, charged with the examination of magnetic facts, have cited among other examples, that of a journeyman hatter, named Cazot, who predicted a month in advance, the day and the hour of his epileptic attacks. Messrs. Broussais and Frappart have proved by certificate, a prediction not less extraordinary. In short, the writings of Messrs. Georget, Rostan, Petetin, Deleuze, etc., are filled with these medical prophecies, which relate not only to the somnambulist himself, but to the invalids

with whom he is *en rapport*. (See *Religion constatée*, ii., 195-199.)

I have named M. Deleuze. By referring to his book, from which I have already quoted, it will there be seen (274, 276, 280, 288), that he thus limits the direct attestation of the faculty of divination. He expresses himself, moreover, with his usual reserve :

"The faculty of prevision," he writes, "the most incontestable of all, never extends itself beyond a certain number of objects ; it is conditional, and if the facts are sufficiently numerous to prove its existence, we can, in no case, however, entirely depend on the accuracy of its application."

We gather from his book, taking it as a whole, that although he does not show enough resolution, perhaps, in rejecting the divining presentiments manifested by somnambulists in regard to the various events of life, he considers these presentiments as stained with frequent errors, which lead those who listen to them into very grave faults. In regard to the marvellous tact which discerns the disease, which foresees a crisis near at hand and selects the remedies, he everywhere proclaims its reality.

Now, there is no appearance of the supernatural, there is no trace of divination in this phenomenon. On the one hand, somnambulists are quite often mistaken in their diagnostics, in their therapeutics, and in their indications relative to the future progress of the disease; on the other, it is easy to comprehend, that, seeing the real state of the organs, perceiving what passes in the interior of the body, they are enabled to foresee the accidents which are preparing favorable chances or final dissolution. If a good physician, in virtue of a single inspection of external symptoms, announces many things correctly, it is not surprising that a somnambulist, even though unlearned, should, in virtue of an inspection of the internal symptoms, be able to speak with still more certainty. The latter sees what the former is obliged to conjecture.

But prevision, and I return to that, is not divination. The

supernatural phenomena of magnetism disappear then, one after another, when subjected to a close examination ; there are no talismans endowed with intelligence, no somnambulist prophets.

Its other phenomena seem to lend themselves still less to the interpretation of the champions of sorcery, who yet pretend to appropriate them. To these I shall presently refer.

Having indicated what is pure illusion in Animal Magnetism, I am about to indicate what seems to me to possess the character of truth.

I say what *seems* to me to possess this character. I am anxious, indeed, not to be too positive when the question concerns a science comparatively new, whose adepts are divided on various points, and which the most iniquitous contempt showered upon it by official science, has sometimes contributed to throw into the hands of charlatans. There are some general facts connected with it, the demonstration of which is achieved, and which the voluntarily blind, alone, are unable to see ; but there are also many particular assertions circulated in conversation and newspapers, which have avoided all serious inquiry, and which a prudent man should subject to quarantine, for they come from a quarter frequently infected by a contagion of exaggeration and credulity.

As for fraud, which plays a part by no means insignificant in the fabrication of the magnetic wonders, I think it may be passed over without remark. In fact, more is suspected than really exists ; that which is real is always discovered sooner or later, and a discovered fraud throws discredit on a hundred irrefutable truths. The academies seem to have taken a fancy to this mode of refutation, and in necessitating the contact of respectable magnetizers with those of evil renown, it would seem as though they reckoned on the disrepute into which the ones will bring the others. Thus, they will always have the trickery practised by the unscrupulous to oppose to the serious success

of honest men ; anecdotes will be made to answer for experiments, the world will refuse to see, it will veil its face—from motives of decency and virtue.

Far, then, from denying the presence of imposture, I cannot conceive how it should have been otherwise, in a position such as Animal Magnetism has been made to occupy. Leaving that, I attach myself to facts which have a true value, and form the elements of this science foreseen by Van Helmont in the 17th century, noisily introduced by Mesmer, and which Messrs. de Puységur and Deleuze (I pass over its living champions in silence) have practised with a devotion that cannot be sufficiently admired.

The history of Mesmerism is familiar to everybody, therefore I shall not relate it. I shall merely establish the reality of the facts, the proof of which I derive, first, from the very conduct of the Academy of Medicine, by whom the new phenomena are rejected.

The first report, still celebrated, is of the year 1784 ; Laurent de Jussieu, Franklin, Lavoisier and Bailly, formed a part of the commission instituted by the government in the Academy of Medicine, in the Faculty, and in the Academy of Science. The course pursued was not the best, and it laid itself open to criticism ; they had the great Hall of the Tub (*baquet*), the *Hell of convulsions*, where the effects of nervous contagion and expectancy were of themselves sufficient to determine the crisis ; they afterwards devoted themselves with considerable ardor, to the investigation of magnetized trees and glasses, that is to say, to the most controvertible part of the discovery. The result was, that the commissioners, having observed frequent errors, and being convinced of the effect produced on invalids by the public investigation and treatment of their maladies, were naturally led to draw conclusions unfavorable to Mesmerism, and to regard the imagination or the touch as the only causes of the phenomena they witnessed. "All the effects observed in what are styled the crises," so speaks the report of Bailly, "spring, either from a disturbance of the functions of

the diaphragm (of the nervous, diaphragmatic plexus) by some physical cause, such as touch or pressure, or from the power with which the imagination is endowed, to act on this organ and to derange its functions.

Thus far, there was not much to be said. The advocates of the new agent having materialized it beyond measure, having pretended to incorporate it in trees and liquids, having compared it, in all respects, to the loadstone, and attributed to it two poles, the commissioners felt it their duty to state that they had recognized the existence of no fluid fulfilling these conditions. They were careful, however, not to go too far in their negations. M. Arago has published the following very just observations respecting their work: "Analogous or inverse effects might evidently be occasioned by a subtle, invisible, imponderable fluid, by a sort of nervous or magnetic fluid, if the term be preferred, circulating through our organs. Therefore, the commissioners were very careful to avoid speaking of *impossibility* in connection with this subject. Their thesis was more modest; they contented themselves with saying that *nothing demonstrated* the existence of such a fluid. (*Annuaire* of 1853, 437.)

Such was the conclusion of the public report of Bailly; in the secret report addressed to the king, the terms of which are now known, he forcibly describes the extraordinary effects of magnetization. "All," he says, "are under the control of the magnetizer; no matter how profound, seemingly, is their slumber, a word, a sign, a glance from him awakens them. We cannot help recognizing from these constant effects, *a great power* which agitates the sick, overcomes them, and of which the magnetizer seems to be the depository."

The summary of the first and fairest encounter that has taken place between official science and Mesmerism, would not be complete if I were to omit to add that Laurent de Jussieu separated himself from the other commissioners, and based the refusal of his signature on the ground that "several well verified facts, *independent of the imagination*, and established to his

mind beyond a doubt, sufficed to make him admit the existence or the possibility of a fluid or agent which passes from one being to another, . . . sometimes even without contact, and at a distance."

Jussieu afterwards sought to identify this agent with animal heat, which is of very little consequence to the question. The fact is, this eminent mind thenceforth took an independent position between the universal fluid of Mesmer and the academic theory, which explains everything by the action of the imagination on the nerves. He did not, however, help the position of Animal Magnetism, crushed as it was by the declared opinion of such illustrious men. The world looked upon it as dead, but it revived, and to such an extent, that, in 1825, it was necessary to commence the investigation over again. This time, the facts were more certain, and the doctrines less positive; very little was said of magnetized trees and the universal fluid; but the penetration of the thought, insensibility, magnetization at a distance, were the subjects of discussion. Men were approaching the true foundation of the science.

Regular experiments had been made for several years previous in the various hospitals of Paris, and official reports, signed by twenty-nine physicians, confirmed the results as decisive; it was then that Doctor Foissac compelled the Academy of Medicine to take an active part in the matter. It hesitated; but in presence of so many facts, in presence of a magnetic clinic established at Berlin, and the serious study to which learned Germany fearlessly devoted itself, it dared not refuse to examine, and named a commission of eleven members, charged to conduct the investigation in the most rigid manner.

The commission labored diligently for five years, and it was only after having engaged an equal length of time, in experiments of all sorts over which it had entire control, that it presented its report (June, 1831) through the medium of M. Husson. This report was signed by all the commissioners, without exception.

"It is demonstrated to us," they declare, "that magnetic sleep has been produced in circumstances where the magnetized persons have not been able to see or gain any knowledge of the means employed to determine it." They relate, indeed, numerous experiments in which the magnetizer, introduced into a separate apartment without the knowledge of the somnambulist, operated conformably to instructions received at the very moment, and thus produced, at a distance, almost instantaneous sleep. Here the imagination could have nothing to do with it, since no sign announced to the somnambulist, either the vicinity of his magnetizer, or his action at the prescribed instant, which was known to no one in advance.

The sleep, moreover, was very profound. Several examples of this nature are mentioned in the report.

"Cazot was in a somnambulist state when M. Fouquier suddenly thrust a pin of an inch in length, into his right hand, between the forefinger and thumb; he pierced the lobe of his ear with the same pin; his eyelids were raised, and the ball struck several times with the head of a pin, without his showing the least sign of sensibility." Another time they applied flasks of ammonia to the nose; they sat on the body of the somnambulist; they endeavored to tickle him. Nothing could disturb his slumber.

The report also speaks of a terrible operation (the removal of the right breast), which was performed by M. Cloquet upon Madame Plantin. During the twelve minutes that the operation lasted, the invalid, previously magnetized, "continued to converse calmly with the operator, giving not the slightest evidence of sensation; no movement of the limbs or of the features, no change in the respiration or in the voice, no emotion, even of the pulse, was manifested."

The commissioners convinced themselves of the reality of the magnetic influence by personal experience; one of their number, M. Itard, magnetized eighteen times, and a very rebellious subject, was each time relieved of headache.

In regard to clairvoyance, the commission reports several

facts. Among others, it speaks of a law student, M. Villagrând, whose eyelids were kept closed by the different members of the commission, and who, nevertheless, recognized cards entirely new, and read from a book open before him.

In short, the interior life, the state of the body, the prevision of crises, the instinctive prescription of remedies, are forcibly attested in this report, from which I here transcribe its principal conclusions.

"Magnetism acts on persons of different sexes and ages. Some of the magnetized invalids have received no benefit, others have been more or less relieved. . . . Considered as an agent of physiological phenomena, or as a therapeutic method, magnetism ought always to find a place in the list of medical studies. . . . The magnetized person can not only be acted upon, but he can, without his knowledge, be thrown into and aroused from a complete somnambule condition, when the operator is out of his sight, at a certain distance from him, and separated by doors. The greater number of somnambulists whom we have seen, were completely insensible. . . . The phenomenon of clairvoyance takes place, then, even with the fingers pressed tightly over the eyelids. The previsions of two somnambulists, relative to their health, were realized with remarkable accuracy."

The Academy was rather astonished at such a report ; for a long time it shrunk from the discussion ; yet, the experiments continued to multiply ; the physicians especially, were struck by a phenomenon with which ether and chloroform have since familiarized us : the complete suppression of sensibility. At the will of the magnetizers, the invalids submitted to their control, fell into conditions favorable to the performance of the most atrocious operations ; moxa* was placed on the skin, producing large sores without causing any suffering, pistols were discharged close to the head of the somnambulists without making them start, without interrupting the sentence they

* See Brande's Cyclopaedia.—TRANS.

had commenced. All this could not long pass unperceived, nor could the report of the eleven commissioners be silently consigned to oblivion ; the academy then decided to discuss it, and the result was that they refused to print the report, voting only for the autograph copy which remains shut up in the archives of the Academy of Medicine !

This was not very encouraging, one must allow. It was to say to the magnetizers : " Whether you succeed or not, whether our commissioners are opposed to you, or whether, after five years of investigation, you bring them all over to your convictions, is of little consequence ! We will, at the very outset, accept the unfavorable, reject the favorable reports. Were we to become of your opinion, we should renounce all faith in ourselves."

Thus, after the severe blow given, in 1837, to the report of M. Husson, and which brings to our mind the course now pursued in reference to Turning Tables, there was, as it were, a marked divorce between Animal Magnetism and the scientific men of this country. By an inevitable consequence, charlatans invaded in greater force than ever, the abandoned ground, even as the spirits have monopolized the tables since the promulgation of anathemas against them. But let us finish our statement.

There was no difficulty in obtaining the report contradicting that of M. Husson. Doctor Berna having claimed an inquiry, M. Dubois handed in a report which professed to demolish everything established by the old commissioners. M. Husson energetically protested, and showed, that in matters pertaining to the physiological state, the failure of one experiment does not destroy the success of anterior experiments. Then came Mlle. Pigeaire and her bandage, the history of which would lead me too far ; then, the reciprocal challenges, the prizes offered by M. Berna to the Academicians who should read a single word with the rejected bandage over their eyes, by M. Burdin to the somnambulists who should read through a mask placed six inches from their face. We were at that point when the Turning Tables most seasonably made their appearance, to

revive the debate, in furnishing to magnetism an unlooked-for argument, the unanswerable proof of a fluid action produced and directed by the human will.

The real injustice of the Academy commenced at the period of M. Husson's report. Until then, she had been in the right. I fully understand that she is not to be expected to stand forth as godmother to all new ideas, but that it is her duty to examine before accepting them. The reserve of the Bailly report was quite justifiable; the unjustifiable part was to reject and throw into the background what had been carefully established by means of her own commissioners; the unjustifiable part was the refusal to examine, the almost *naïve* declaration which rejects as *impossible*, all those magnetic phenomena, of which we do not possess the explanation, or of which the explanation rests upon a fluid or force obedient to our thought.

Do phenomena of this sort exist? To doubt it, one must reckon, as of no account, the innumerable facts, at the head of which figure those collected under the inspection of the commissioners of the Academy of Medicine. One must also deny natural somnambulism, assuredly not less extraordinary than magnetic somnambulism. Inasmuch as the existence of natural somnambulists cannot be denied (and who will deny it?) little will be gained by contesting Mesmerism. An immense, shameful hiatus, at all events, exists between the description of man, and the forces which sometimes put him in relation with the exterior world.

I find in the book of M. Ernest Bersot (*Mesmer et le Magnétisme animal*, 172-182) some details, themselves borrowed in great part from the article on *Somnambulism*, in the *Encyclopædia*. We shall see from them, whether it is worth while to fight so obstinately against Mesmerism, and whether it becomes those who are actually compelled to admit such natural prodigies, to proclaim *à priori* the impossibility of other analogous prodigies.

An ecclesiastic of the diocese of Bordeaux was afflicted with

somnambulism : he rose in the night and wrote sermons while asleep ; he not only wrote, but also corrected them, being still asleep ; his copies were deposited in their proper places, accompanied with corresponding corrections in the text. His friends, wishing to assure themselves that he could not see, interposed a card between his eyes and the paper ; but he continued to write as though nothing were there ; they then changed the paper, which he perceived, because of the difference in the dimensions ; when they afterwards substituted a paper of precisely the same size as the first, he took it for his own and made corrections that were in exact accordance with the lines written on the old leaf. The same ecclesiastic wrote music, first making all the notes white, and then filling up those that ought to be black !

One evening, the somnambulist Castelli was found at work, translating Italian into French ; he looked out his words in a dictionary as he would have done had he been awake, at the same time, apparently making use of a light standing near ; those who observed him, extinguished the light, and he immediately appeared to be sensible of the darkness ; he felt all over the table for his candle, and relit it in the kitchen. Yet, at the moment when he thought himself in darkness, he was actually in a lighted chamber, lighted, however, by other candles than the one standing at his side, but which were of no use, because he was unconscious that they were burning.

It would be easy to enlarge the list of these anecdotes, and to show in certain natural somnambulists, the penetration of the thought, the extraordinary development of the faculties and of reminiscences, the medical instincts and provisions respecting health, the relative insensibility, in short, which is remarked in magnetic somnambulists.

We have the instance of the poor peasant girl, who, ignorant of even the word somnambulism, is taken ill, but whose illness is carefully concealed by her parents, who are, so to speak, ashamed of it ; she makes no parade of her high facts, and yet she is endowed with a wonderful clearness of vision, she speaks

purely, embroiders skillfully, and directs her own medical treatment. A somnambulist of Geneva every night opened his window, threw himself into the Rhone, took a bath, and returned to bed without being awakened by the sudden contact with the icy water, while the touch of a friendly hand that wished to retain him, but unforeseen and not in his dream, abruptly awoke him, and endangered his life.

Somnambulists who walk on roofs, appearing to see clearly, are not uncommon in any country. A young painter of Poitiers, who, in a somnambulist state, went to work at night in his studio, continued his painting on canvas that had been substituted for his own, adding precisely the features and outlines belonging to the absent picture.

How is it possible not to be struck by the relation which exists between these natural somnambulists who follow their thought, whose clairvoyance is entirely concentrated in this absorbing idea, and the artificial somnambulists whose intelligence is in some sort limited by that of their magnetizer? Doubtless there are likewise differences, and the first are generally more easily awakened, while the awakening of the second depends on the will of the person who has put them to sleep; yet the fundamental analogy is striking, the state is the same during the crisis, the forgetfulness the same afterwards, and the wonder is equal in both.

Be that as it may, and independent of the argument furnished by natural somnambulism, certain Mesmeric facts have acquired so great a value, that official science itself cannot much longer refuse to take them into consideration. These facts range themselves under three principal heads: ordinary physical effects, such as sleep; interior contact as it is manifested in the penetration of the thought; action at a distance, as it has often taken place since the investigation of 1826.

Among the ordinary physical effects, I have already mentioned sleep, and this result of magnetization is too well known for me to dwell on it.

I shall next mention magnetic somnambulism, which is scarcely less well known. This is a state produced by the fluid action of the operator, and during which, the person affected by it, is apparently asleep; if the magnetizer then speaks to him, he replies without awaking; he can even perform various motions, and when he comes out of the crisis, he preserves no remembrance of what has taken place; his eyes are shut, and he usually hears only those who are put *en rapport* with him. The exterior organs of his senses are all, or almost all, in a state of inactivity, nevertheless, he experiences sensations, but through other channels. A sort of interior sense, which is, perhaps, the centre of the others, is manifested in him. (Delenze, *Instruction pratique*, 85.)

We shall return to this interior sense which governs all the so-called supernatural portions of Animal Magnetism, and furnishes the explanation of the greater part of the phenomena. Let us continue to enumerate the ordinary physical effects.

The cures performed by magnetization appear incontestable. M. Delenze, in the book to which I have already referred the reader, speaks of a large number of cures effected by simple passes, and these cures are far from being confined to nervous diseases, being also produced in cases of dropsy, glandular congestion, obstruction, ophthalmia, etc. In diseases where the nerves are affected, the efficacy of magnetism is naturally still more striking. Epilepsy, in particular, often yields to this mode of treatment, and persons subject to sea-sickness, never feel any effect from the very worst weather, when they have been magnetically put to sleep. (viii., ix, 41-60, 61-67, 78, 152, 173, 179, 188-217, 242-245, 338, 354-356, 379, 380, 386, 388-392.)

I do not guarantee the success of all these. I quote from the detailed and repeated declarations of an author of known moderation; I appeal, besides, to every day's experience, and I think I am justified in concluding that the cure of disease should figure among the ordinary physical effects of magnetism.

Another effect, more singular, perhaps, is the unhealthy contagion that is often established between the magnetized and the magnetizer, to the detriment of the first, and sometimes even of the second. (11, 149, 252, 296, 360.)

Mesmeric action produces at will, a paralysis or an insensibility, sometimes partial, sometimes total (120, 121). Here again, the examples are too numerous to be quoted. I will simply refer to the attestation of M. Andral, and the declarations of other distinguished physicians. M. Georget, a member of the Institute, thus expresses himself: "My somnambulists are so insensible to sound, that the very loudest noises, produced unexpectedly to them, do not cause them the slightest emotion. Thus, the discharge of a pistol, the chiming of bells, does not produce the least movement, does not prevent them from continuing in the same tone and without interruption, a conversation already commenced; . . . although they always hear the magnetizer." (*Physiologie du système nerveux*, part I., chap. III.) M. Rostan, in his turn, holds the following language: "The outward life ceases, the somnambulist lives within himself, completely isolated from the exterior world; this isolation is especially complete for the two senses of sight and hearing The eyes of the majority of somnambulists are so insensible to light, that the lashes have been burned without their testifying the least impression; if the lids are raised, and the fingers passed rapidly in front of the eye, the immobility remains complete And yet they are conscious of the objects which surround them; they avoid with the greatest address, obstacles in their path." (*Dictionnaire de Médecine*, the article *Magnétisme animal*.) M. Bertrand (*du Magnétisme animal*, 270) declares that he has witnessed partial paralysis produced by the will of the magnetizer. Sometimes it was an arm, a leg, a hand, or only a finger; at other times, the somnambulist was deprived of certain senses.

It is not, however, by way of privation that the magnetizer usually proceeds; far from suppressing the activity of the senses, he develops it, he excites all the faculties in excess

The memory, especially, takes extraordinary scope and accuracy ; facts, long forgotten, and which the individuals do not even remember ever to have known, idioms which have seemed to leave no trace in the mind, suddenly make their reappearance, giving the character of miracle to that which is, however, only a natural phenomenon. (Deleuze, *Instruction*, 206, 131, 132.)

In regard to the trance, this is a subject to which magnetizers, and M. Deleuze among others, always return with marked complacency. I confess that I am less struck than they, with a state which may be produced by all sorts of excessive nervous excitements, and particularly those connected with the moral emotions. The reality of magnetic action would not be nearly so well demonstrated as it is, if only the philanthropic discourses of certain somnambulists, or the double personality which is active in them when they hear themselves speak, could be invoked in its favor. We have seen the same facts among the prophets of the Cévennes, and among the Jansenists of Saint Médard ; the moral and nervous excitement always translates itself into declamations which are the exact and often elevated reflection of the dominant thought.

I much prefer, in fact of proof, the influence which Mesmerism exercises on animals. "It even appears," says M. Deleuze, "that its action is surer, more constant, more efficacious on them than on man. . . . I have collected a great number of facts, I have witnessed obvious results, and several of my friends have told me of crises that they have produced, and cures that they have effected, with surprising promptitude, on dogs, horses, goats, cows, etc." (288.)

I have just indicated some of the ordinary physical effects ; I am now about to describe more directly, the particular physical effect which, in my opinion, constitutes the true originality of Animal Magnetism. I would speak of the *interior sense*, which we here find at the basis of all the extraordinary phenomena, the penetration of the thought, the perception of morbid symptoms, the prevision of crises and the indication of remedies.

It is so true that the sudden manifestation of the interior sense, of which the others are, perhaps, only the external realization in ordinary life, gives the key to somnambulist prodigies, as to make it certain that natural somnambulism itself there finds its explanation. Without speaking of the displacement of the senses, without supposing that the somnambulists who walk on roofs, or who correct their manuscripts or pictures with closed eyes, *see*, correctly speaking, the objects placed before them, it is sufficient to admit in them the unfolding of the interior sense, of the nervous tact as it is daily verified among magnetized persons. By means of this sense and of somnambulist reminiscences, the perfection of which is unequalled, they are capable of self-direction, and can return to the circle of the idea that pre-occupies them.

With regard to the interior sense of magnetic somnambulists, it seems to me that its existence cannot be gainsayed. Although their clairvoyance in other respects may be denied, it evidently exists on two points: the perception of morbid symptoms invisible to the eye, and the penetration of the thought.

The perception of morbid symptoms is established by M. Delenze, on every page of his book. He relates, in detail, the somnambulist prodigies of diagnosis, and even of therapeutics. Although, with his ordinary prudence, he makes allowance for the grave errors into which the somnambulists sometimes fall, he renders palpable, it may be said, the action of this interior sense, which enters into contact with the organs, and observes facts wholly concealed from the other senses. We comprehend, moreover, from reading his book, that the instinct of remedies develops itself as an inseparable corollary to the real knowledge of the evil, and that the prevision of favorable or unfavorable symptoms is also strictly connected with it.*

* See: 1st, On magnetic somnambulism in general, pages 84, 85, 87, 88, 90-95, 100-105, 111, 116, 117, 120, 123-126, 135, 138, 140, 147, 226, 257, 262, 266, 274, 347, 352, 356-360;

2d, On the diagnosis of somnambulists, pages, 10, 94, 105, 106, 108, 260, 263, 286, 287, 293-299;

The Commissioners of the Academy of Medicine have not less clearly attested this remarkable perception of the pathological state found in somnambulists and in persons put in relation with them. They mention some experiments in which internal symptoms, inappreciable to the eye, and unknown to the physicians, were described by somnambulists, and the correctness of the description afterwards verified by a post-mortem examination of the bodies. One of the members of the Commission, Doctor Marc, having submitted to the examination of a somnambulist, she gave him information in regard to his health, the discomfort he sometimes experienced, and the conformation of his organs, which coincided astonishingly with the reality.

M. Bertrand (*Traité du Somnambulisme*, chap. iii.) relates his observation of a fact quite unforeseen, and which struck him very forcibly. He was with a somnambulist whom he had magnetized, when one of his friends entered the apartment, accompanied by a young man who had been recently wounded in a duel. This was told him in a low tone, without speaking of the sort of wound. He put the somnambulist *en rapport* with the young man, whereupon, apparently talking to herself, she said: "No, no, it is not possible. If a man had received a ball in the head, he would have been killed. . . . He must be mistaken" (the spirit to whom the somnambulist thought she was listening); "he tells me that the gentleman has a ball in his head!" They answered that such was the fact. Then opening her mouth, she indicated, with her finger, that the ball had entered there, and had penetrated to the back of the neck, which was very true. In short, she went so far as to designate, with correctness, some of the teeth which the ball had broken. It should be added that no external sign could have made these things known to the somnambulist, whose eyes, moreover, were shut.

3d, On the therapeutics of the somnambulists, pages 106, 110, 112-114, 267, 288, 352, 363, 382, 400, 401;

4th, On the errors of somnambulists, pages 258, 260, 266, 268, 269, 273, 275, 277-281, 320, 329, 366-370, 382.

It would be easy to mention a great number of analogous facts.

The penetration of the thought, I have said, is the second form under which the interior sense manifests itself. M. Deleuze asserts, in fact, that it is a species of somnambulism, during which the somnambulist reads in the mind of his magnetizer, seizes the thought and the intention of those with whom he is occupied, and especially of those who are occupied with him. Examples of this contact of one mind with that which is passing in another are everywhere to be met with. Physicians have repeatedly observed (*Du magnétisme animal en France*, 444, 449) that women, devoid of education, became capable, during their somnambulatory crises, of understanding Greek, Hebrew, or Latin phrases; they were also able to define certain scientific terms, solely because they perceived the translation of the phrases or the definition of the terms, in the head of the magnetizer.

Pétetin, speaking of the first somnambulist observed by him, thus expresses himself: "If any one formed a thought without manifesting it in words, the patient immediately knew it, and anticipated by her actions, the orders of those who had charge of her, as if the determination had come from herself. Sometimes, when the performance of the mental order was beyond her strength, she begged to have it suspended or revoked." (*Electricité animale*, 103.)

M. de Puységur, alluding to a peasant whom he had magnetized, says: "I have compelled him to move quickly about on his seat, as if dancing to a tune, which, singing mentally myself, I made him repeat aloud. . . . I have no occasion to speak to him; I think in his presence, he understands and answers me." M. Bertrand, who takes this quotation from an article by M. Puységur, adds on his own account:

"Having performed, on my first somnambulist, the process by means of which I usually awakened her, exercising at the same time, a firm will to the contrary, she was seized with strong convulsive movements. 'What is the matter with you?' said

I. 'Indeed,' she replied, 'you tell me to awake, and yet you do not will that I shall awake !'" (*Du Magnétisme animal*, 322, 439.)

All this is very extraordinary; yet, I must acknowledge, that if there was nothing else, if Animal Magnetism did not act at a distance, if tables especially—tables which have neither nerves nor imagination—were not raised without contact, the action of a fluid, or any particular force, might still, in strictness, be denied. It might be maintained that simple nervous excitement, when carried to a certain point, and when it takes place under certain conditions, produces all the phenomena of slumber and development, of exquisite sensibility and entire insensibility, of internal vision and the penetration of the thought. But action at a distance does not comport with this explanation; yet, there are few facts better demonstrated.

We have seen that the commissioners of the Academy of Medicine endeavor to establish this capital point. "A magnetizer," so states their report, "may sometimes throw them into a complete somnambulist state, without their knowledge, when out of their sight, at a certain distance from them, and separated by doors." I myself hold to this precise declaration, the result of careful experiments, continually renewed during five long years. It would be almost to compromise it, to place by its side the stories in circulation respecting somnambulists, who are put to sleep or awakened at an hour determined by their magnetizer, living in another country. The same magnetizer inspires them at a distance, it is said, with the desire for food or drink. One thing is certain, that Doctor Bertrand, above suspicion in this matter, since the action at a distance contradicts his system which explains somnambulism by the imagination, himself relates that he has thrown into the somnambulist state, a person a hundred leagues distant from him. (*Du Magnétisme animal*, 266.)

I here pause in the enumeration of phenomena that may be looked upon as certain. Resolved to proceed with great caution, I do not take upon myself to affirm the reality of

various other facts which yet have the testimony of many witnesses in their favor. Impartiality compels me to admit that their verification is still imperfect.

It is thus, that sight at immense distances, through opaque bodies, or by the agency of other organs than the eyes, appears to me badly demonstrated. We feel that this sight may be different from the interior sense of which we have just spoken; we can conceive of the internal contact of the thoughts, and the internal perception of morbid symptoms, independently of the power to read by the stomach, or through the covering of a box.

Now, the proofs of this last fact will seem to me insufficient, so long as the magnetizers do not surmount the repugnance, very natural, indeed, which has, for several years past, prevented them from facing public ordeals and academic investigation on this point. Their recollections of 1831 have taught them to mistrust the equity of prejudiced judges, who would exaggerate a failure, and who would, perhaps, a second time, refuse to add the sanction of their authority to the success acknowledged by their own commissioners. They remember, in particular, the mixed nature of the phenomena in question, —phenomena in which confidence and the will play an essential part, and it consequently results, that experiments engaged in under these conditions, so calculated to intimidate the operators, are rarely successful.

I acknowledge the justice of such observations, the legitimacy of such sentiments; nevertheless, I boldly declare: magnetizers *must* put all that under their feet, they *must* win the prize offered to those who shall succeed in reading through an opaque body.

Men, the most impartial and open to conviction (I include myself in the number), cannot fully admit facts which still fear the light of day, and which retreat before hostile criticism. When, on one side, I see Major Buckley affirm that his clairvoyant somnambulists, one hundred and forty-eight in number, have already read more than 36,000 words, shut up in boxes;

and when, on the other, I see Professor Simpson, of Edinburgh, promise five hundred pounds sterling to the somnambulist who shall read five verses of Shakspeare, placed in five different boxes, I feel impelled to address an energetic appeal to the one hundred and forty-eight somnambulists of the major.

It would be more profitable to read these five verses than to have read the 36,000 words, a consideration which should have some weight with the champions of reading through opaque bodies. If the conditions of the trial appear unacceptable to them, let them propose others ; but let it be in a loud and intelligible voice, to the discomfiture of their adversaries. I think, indeed, that the nature of mixed phenomena is such, that it would be an evidence of great thoughtlessness not to foresee the inequality of the somnambulic faculties. To attempt to test the matter with a single somnambulist, or in a single sitting, would be simply absurd. Let the magnetizers reserve to themselves freedom to choose their time and place : twenty sittings, for instance, the employment of various somnambulists ; nothing can be more just. To succeed once, is to succeed always ; for there are no coincidences in the world that could make me accidentally hit upon the verse selected by way of test.

Under these conditions, the combat ought to be accepted ; it ought even to be offered, so that the shame of refusal should fall upon the right ones. It is, also, reasonable that the tranquillity of the somnambulists should be secured, and that the *surveillance* should be organized in such a manner as to avoid embarrassing them, or interrupting their work. On the other hand, their adversaries ought not to read the lines, or verses, before they are put in the box, for if they have a knowledge of the contents, the penetration of the thoughts will suffice to win the day for the somnambulists.

I fairly indicate the course to be pursued in order to arrive at the positive verification of the phenomenon of sight at a great distance or through opaque bodies. Those who maintain the reality of the phenomenon, are bound to overcome the

objection resulting from their backwardness in accepting challenges publicly proclaimed ; this objection gives an invincible force to the secret mistrust which springs up within us when we ask ourselves why the police does not have its somnambulists, charged with the duty of detecting thieves and conspirators from a distance, why somnambulists do not describe to us what is now taking place on the Baltic or the Black Sea. I know that there is an answer to these questions ; but it would be better that there should be no excuse for asking them, and this will be the case when Animal Magnetism shall have picked up the glove thrown at its feet, and shall have publicly announced its promise to read, in the course of a certain number of trials, whatever may have been deposited in a box. I say a box, because this is the only decisive experiment ; it renders unnecessary all insipid debates about masks and bandages.

I have just mentioned my motives for still doubting ; it would be unjust not to indicate also, my motives for believing. Sight, at an enormous distance, through opaque bodies, or without the assistance of the eyes, has testimony in its favor, the weight of which I am not disposed to diminish.

Without dwelling on the prodigies of this sort, which the somnambulists of M. Puységur have the reputation of accomplishing—without reproducing the more recent stories concerning somnambulists who designate cards which they have not seen, and describe habitations which they perceive, perhaps, in the mind of their interlocutors, I go direct to the celebrated attestations of Messrs. Rostan, Georget, Filassier, Despine, and Pétetin. Let us commence with Doctor Rostan. (*Dictionnaire de Médecine*, article on *magnétisme*, sect. B.)

"I took my watch, which I placed three or four inches behind the occiput. I asked the somnambulist if she saw anything. 'Certainly. . . . It annoys me : it is a watch.' . . . 'Can you tell me what o'clock it is?' 'It wants ten minutes of eight o'clock.' This was correct. M. Ferrus wished to repeat the experiment himself, and he had the same success.

He turned the hands round several times ; we presented it to her without having seen it : she did not make a mistake."

M. Georget positively declares (*Physiologie du Système Nerveux*, ii. 404) that he has witnessed analogous facts. "One person," he says, "has presented me with very astonishing phenomena. . . . I have met nothing more extraordinary in any work on magnetism, even in that of Pétetin, which does not contain nearly so many phenomena as I myself have had the opportunity to observe."

In the book of M. Filassier (*Quelques Faits* . . . , ii. 25, 53, 55), we find the following: "I caused all the lights to be removed, which left us in darkness. I took my watch, using all necessary precautions to prevent its being seen by the somnambulist, and placed it on her forehead. 'What have you on your forehead?' . . . 'A watch.' 'See what time it is.' . . . 'The large hand points at 6, and the small hand at 7,' she replied, after an intense concentration of her mind. We passed into an adjoining apartment which was lighted, and ascertained that the hour was half past seven by the watch. Thinking she might possibly have hit upon the time merely by a random guess, . . . I turned the hands of my watch round several times, without myself knowing at what hour I had stopped them, and then placed it with the same precautions on the occiput of the somnambulist. 'What hour is it by my watch?' She remained some time in a deep study, and at length said: 'The large hand is at 5, the small hand between 3 and 4, but much nearer the 3.' I passed into the lighted room, and saw, in fact, that the time by the watch was twenty-five minutes past three. I induced my friends to repeat the experiment for themselves. They did it twice as I have described, and with the same circumspection. They placed the watch on the epigastrium of the somnambulist, outside of her clothes. The somnambulist made no mistake."

The same doctor likewise relates that a young somnambulist, Mlle. Clarice Lef—, described at Paris, minute by minute, the movements, the various acts, the attitudes, and even the

secret thoughts of her mother, who was at Arcis-sur-Aube. "Every possible precaution," he adds, "was taken to ascertain the truth regarding this vision into space. The inquiry was conducted by a family of intelligence and strict integrity, in connection with some conscientious physicians. The lucidness of Mlle. Clarice was in all cases justified by the event."

M. Despine, chief physician at the waters of Aix, is the author of the following attestation, which was read by M. Francœur, before the Philomathic Society of Paris: "Not only did our patient hear by the palm of her hand, but we have seen her read without the assistance of the eyes, with the single extremity of her finger, which she moved rapidly to and fro over the page she wished to read. . . . At other times, we have seen her select from a package of more than thirty letters, a particular one called for . . . write several letters, three of which are now in my hands; read them over—always by means of the end of the finger—and correct the faults that had escaped her; recopy one of her letters, word for word, reading with the elbow of the left arm while she wrote with the right hand. . . . During all these operations, a screen of thick pasteboard wholly excluded every ray of light from her eyes. The same phenomena took place on the soles of the feet, on the epigastrium, as well as on various parts of the surface of the body, which seemed to be painful to the slightest touch." (*Du Magnétisme animal en France*, 459.)

But nothing, in this respect, equals the experiments related by M. Pétetin, a member of the Academy of Science, and President of the Medical Society of Lyons towards the close of the last century. His work (*Electricité Animale*) appeared in 1808; it contains an account, not only of his observations, but also those of his Lyonesse colleagues, some of which I now present:

On one occasion, he took bits of various alimentary substances, each in a separate envelope of paper, and placed them, one by one, on the stomach of a somnambulist. She named them all. She designated cards; she told the position of the hands of a watch.

"Another time," writes Pétetin, "I rested my hand on the stomach of the invalid, who, without hesitating, said to me : 'I see through your hand, an antique medal.' I opened my hand, utterly confounded ; the sister-in-law of the somnambulist cast her eyes on the medal, turned pale, and fainted. When she came to herself, she inclosed a piece of paper in a brown and semi-transparent *bonbonnière*, and handed it to me behind her sister's couch. I covered it with my hand, and silently laid it on the stomach of the cataleptic : "I see in your hand," said she, "a box, and in this box, a letter to my address." The terrified sister-in-law trembled in all her limbs. I hastened to open the box, and drew from it a folded letter, bearing the address of the invalid, and post-marked Geneva." . . .

"The next day, before leaving my house to visit my cataleptic patient, I placed, by way of experiment, a very small letter on the upper part of my breast, and covered it with my cloak. . . . A numerous company had assembled. . . . At seven o'clock, the cataleptic was transformed into a listening statue. I drew up my chair, in order to be nearer the invalid. Her head being kept turned aside, I could see only her profile. I threw back my cloak, so as to expose the upper part of my body. 'Ah ! Doctor, how long has it been the fashion to carry letters about in the bosom ?' 'Madam, you must be mistaken.' 'No, I am sure of what I see ; you have a letter in your bosom, which is not larger than that.' And she pointed out with the utmost correctness its position. 'If I were not very discreet, I might tell you its contents ; but as a proof that I have really read it, it contains only two lines and a half, written in very minute characters.' After having obtained permission to open it, everybody saw that the note corresponded to her description.

"A friend of the family suddenly drew a purse from his pocket, placed it in my bosom, closed my vest over it, and pushed me to the side of the invalid. 'Do not trouble yourself, doctor ; you have in your bosom at this moment M. B.'s netted purse. . . . There are a number of *louis* on one

side, and silver on the other. But let no one be alarmed, I am going to mention the most remarkable thing that each person has in his pockets.' 'She commenced with her sister-in-law, and told her that the most interesting thing about her was a letter. The latter was all the more surprised at this, since she had received it that very evening by the post, and had not spoken of it to any one. The invalid then passed on to the pockets of the others, describing their contents with the greatest exactness, and perpetrating a joke at every opportunity."

M. Pétetin speaks of other somnambulists, not less clairvoyant; one of them recognized, in the closed hand of M. Dolomieu, a seal with armorial bearings, and the image of a griffin. She perfectly deciphered the writing on a piece of paper that had been sealed up and placed upon her stomach.

It will, doubtless, have been remarked that almost all these experiments may be explained by the penetration of the thought, for persons who surround the somnambulists, generally know what they have written, what their letters contain, what is in their pockets or purse, what is engraved on their seals. Yet there are exceptions—among others, that of the watch, whose hands were made to turn round in a perfectly dark room. It is possible, then, that we here meet a real phenomenon of sight, penetrating opaque bodies by means of other organs than the eyes. While I hesitate to affirm this, because magnetizers do not evince sufficient alacrity in accepting the challenges actually addressed to them, I assert that the thing is probable, and that in no case is any scientific principle opposed to it.

M. Arago himself has admitted it in his article on Mesmerism, inserted in *l'Annuaire du Bureau des longitudes*. "The man," says he, "who outside of pure mathematics, pronounces the word impossible, is wanting in prudence. . . . Nothing, for example, in all the wonders of somnambulism, is looked upon with more mistrust than an often repeated assertion touching the property possessed by certain persons in a crisis state, of deciphering a letter at a distance, by means of the foot, the hand,

or the stomach. Yet, I do not doubt that the suspicions of even the most rigidly critical minds will be removed after having reflected on the ingenious experiments in which Moser produced, also at a distance, very distinct images of all sorts of objects on all sorts of bodies, and in the most complete darkness."

There will, of course, be found scientific men, who, with less genius than Arago, have less liberality. In order that our field of vision may be extended, we must take a high point of view, and this is not given to all the world. "Since we see by means of the eyes," is the language of some, "it is *impossible* that the image of objects should produce an impression on the other organs, whatever may be the exceptional sensibility occasioned by a particular state!" "The letter being sealed or enclosed in a box," say others, "it is *impossible* that the characters traced in black, on white paper, should be revealed by any effect whatever, on any organ whatever, even by the eyes!" I would advise those who argue so well, to pursue their reasoning to the end, and to demonstrate to M. Moser, that since there is a contradiction between the idea of the image and that of absolute darkness, it is *impossible* that the images should be produced at a distance in darkness! . . . This will probably not prevent the images from being produced.

After all, then, I carry my caution to its extreme limits; not only do I say nothing of the wonderful *mise en scène* of magnetism, of the magnetizers, who, not content with acting on their somnambulists at a distance, amuse themselves with blowing into a handkerchief or glove the fancies and even dreams they would induce in their patient, but I put a mark of interrogation before the serious experiments which treat of the displacement of the senses, and of sight through opaque bodies. I bear in mind that the displacement of the senses corresponds, perhaps, to nothing real, since our senses seem to be only different transformations of the touch; and I add, that it is not more difficult to conceive of our impression of colors or forms traversing an opaque body, than traversing an absolutely dark space like that in which M. Moser operates.

In regard to that part of Animal Magnetism which is henceforth incontestable, it is comprehended in the fact of fluid action, exercised near by or at a distance, on men and on animals. This action has remarkable effects, but none which decidedly exceed the limits of the great central phenomenon : the interior sense, the intellectual contact, the penetration of the thought. The clairvoyance of somnambulists appears, in general, to have only the character of an echo ; its prodigies are prodigies of reminiscence or of perception of images and ideas which fill the minds of persons with whom the somnambulists are *en rapport*.

Such seems to me to be the manifesto of Animal Magnetism. It is but little modified since its origin ; if it has changed and sometimes suppressed its manipulations, if the emission of the fluid or force is effected without buckets, without magnetized trees, and even sometimes without passes, it remains evident that magnetizers continue to revolve round the same phenomena of slumber, of medical effects, of insensibility, of action at a distance, of internal communication. This last phenomenon has continued to be the pivot of the magnetism which is claimed to be supernatural ; I do not see that thus far anything of great consequence has been added to the experiments of Messrs. Deleuze, Puységur, and Pétetin, to those of the commission named by the Academy of Medicine.

If I make this remark, it is certainly not with a view to undervalue a discovery, the importance of which is very great, or to diminish the merit of the distinguished men who devote themselves to a study which, among us, calls for real courage. I feel, on the contrary, that in showing them that they have not been able to get rid of certain facts, I show that these facts are decidedly certain. There are countries (Germany in particular) where the men of science have no fear of compromising themselves, where Animal Magnetism has been treated with the respect which is its due, and yet where they have always finished by returning to fundamental ideas, to truths henceforward established.

Biology itself is not an innovation ; it is only a new form given to an old phenomenon. To bring about, by nervous tension and by fluid action, a state in which the magnetized person, asleep or not, may be at the disposition of the magnetizer ; to profit by this state in order to suggest to the mind become thus passive, a series of images and impressions deprived of all objective reality, is simply to modify the application of principles recognized from the commencement. Why should not the incontestable influence of the magnetizers and the incontestable penetration of the thought, furnish the natural explanation of biological facts ? Why should we go out of our way to seek what is within our reach ?

It is pretended that concentrated attention suffices to biologize, and that there is no magnetism in this matter ! Well, then, let it be tried ! Take twenty persons ; let them fix their attention twenty successive times, yet, not a single one will fall into an automatic state, unless some of the party possess great magnetic power, and will to make use of it. And were it otherwise, what would prevent me from being my own magnetizer, and disengaging the fluid or magnetic force within me, in order to act upon myself in the energetic effort which is to end in my biologization ?

It is, then, evident that biology enters into the known accidents of magnetism, and that the progressive torpor manifested in it, is similar to that which takes possession of a magnetized person. This is all the more striking from the fact that the physical and moral energy of the subject is an obstacle to the success of the experiment ; women, young and rather feeble persons, and especially children, are biologized with most facility. A vigorous man, strong in mind and character, will rarely be brought into the automatic state in which we find the taste of different liquors in the same glass of water, in which we cease to feel blows after having, as we think, inhaled the fumes of a handkerchief impregnated with chloroform, in which

we cease (so it is said) to see certain persons who are declared invisible ; in which, in short, we yield to all suggestions, expressed or not expressed, including the suggestion of sleep. Such a man will only partially submit, even to the ordinary action of magnetism, properly so called.

If biology adds nothing to the primitive discoveries of Mesmerism ; if it be only a very interesting and a very pretty method of explaining the wonders of pretended magic which are, at this day, performed in Egypt, the *sensitives* of Baron de Reichenbach are still less worthy of a place among new principles. Indeed, nothing there is new but the name ; it is true, a name is something ! Instead of saying that magnetic action is exercised on certain persons, particularly on women, and that they then experience a multitude of sensations, the only source of which is found in the mind or in the words of the magnetizer, let them speak of the *sensitives*, of that particular class endowed with mysterious faculties ; let them fix their attention upon the *od*, that cosmical force which, positive and negative all together, circulates through all bodies, and arrives to us, moreover, in incommensurable quantities from the sun. An immense effect will be produced ; there will be opened before the imagination those indefinite perspectives in which human credulity delights to roam.

The *sensitives*, we are told, have a positive pole and a negative pole ; they experience peculiar sensations when in the vicinity of the loadstone ! Is a magnet passed over their arm, they feel prickings ; they see flames issuing from this magnet in the light of day ; their hand is compelled to follow it ! Our answer is, that without denying in itself, the possibility of a reciprocal action between our nervous fluid and the magnet, there are here no facts that demonstrate it, for the sensations of biology suffice to explain the phenomenon, which is shown to have no objective reality, by the fact that the attractive force of the magnet really draws the hand, but the attractive force of the hand does not draw the magnet. Now, such

actions are always rigorously reciprocal, and the movement of the magnet would alone have the value of proof, for the magnet is incapable of the involuntary complaisance to which the hand is liable.

In thus proceeding, by way of elimination and simplification, in discarding facts still contestable, and in bringing the new discoveries within the limits of old principles, I have greatly reduced the list of certain results to which Animal Magnetism has hitherto conducted us. A physical action which is manifested under the form of drowsiness, of alleviation, or even of cure, of partial paralysis, or of total insensibility ; an influence at a distance, which is felt by both men and animals ; an internal sense, in short, which is developed, and the effect of which is to bring minds in contact, to create, as it were, a new way of seeing the objects that enter into the circle of the dominant idea, or into that of the fluid relations submitted to by the magnetized ; this is all that the experiments have put beyond doubt.

Shall we find it necessary to demand of the diabolical supernatural the explanation of such prodigies ? The answer to this question has, for some time, not been doubtful in the eyes of the reader. He sees here, as in the Turning Tables, a mixed phenomenon : the will and the physical agent of which the will disposes. I say the will ; and I do not add the external manipulations. In fact, the will often suffices without the manipulations, while the manipulations without the will, never effect anything.

M. Deleuze has accurately defined mixed phenomena in his *Instruction pratique* (324), when he says : " Those who would establish a theory of magnetism on the properties of matter, and those who would seek it only in the faculties of the soul, alike wander from the truth. Magnetism being an emanation of ourselves directed by the will, equally participates of the two substances that compose our being.

We lose our way, indeed, the moment we discard this faithful analysis. It is rare, at the present day, that it is mutilated by reducing everything to the action of a material agent ; the world is much more inclined to suppress this, either by seeing in magnetic phenomena only the effects of the will and the imagination, or by substituting, in place of the material agent, diabolical power. Let us examine the two systems.

That which speaks only of the will and the imagination, might be sustained, we admit, were it not that magnetization at a distance, and especially the elevation without contact, of the 'Turning Tables, lend to Mesmerism the only irrefutable argument at its disposal. There is no reason, indeed, why the ascendancy of a strong will, which strikes the imagination, and through it affects the nerves, should not, in certain cases, cause drowsiness, insensibility, or developments of dexterity and of the intellectual faculties ; there is no reason, indeed, why it should not induce the manifestation of the interior sense with its perception of the pathological appearance of the organs, and its penetration of the thought. Who can affirm that the intervention of a fluid or any force whatever, is indispensable in such circumstances. Are not the nervous results of moral impressions immense ? Does not fear take the legs from under one ? Does not emotion produce convulsive accidents ? Are not the convulsionaries affected by catalepsy ? Do we not observe in them rigidity and insensibility, either partial or total ? Do they not often display extraordinary strength and agility ? Do they not surprise us by the development of certain senses or faculties, by the accuracy of their reminiscences ? And who would dare to determine the insurmountable limit of nervous phenomena ? When the obstinate fixedness of my eyes on the same object ends in putting me to sleep, when a view of the water that flows under a bridge exercises an attraction over me, when the sight of a serpent or of a toad takes from a poor bird its strength to fly, is there necessarily a fluid in play ? Why should there be one, even in the most extraordinary acts of natural, or

magnetic somnambulism? Have we not seen the Chevalier de Barbarin, resorting to faith and the will alone, excluding (at least he thought so) all process of magnetization, and yet obtaining the somnambulist's truce and cure? Is it not obvious, moreover, that the symptoms manifested in Mesmer's sibylline cave were such as are constantly observed in nervous epidemics: yawning, uneasiness, drowsiness, hysteric convulsions? Does not Animal Magnetism, although at the present day rid of its multitudes of convulsionaries, still bring on nervous crises? In short, is not the magnetic state an unhealthy state, and is it not upon invalids that Mesmerism exercises the most marked influence.

Thus far, the adversaries of magnetism have a right to deny its fluid, and to interpret its prodigies by the imagination and the nerves. The action exercised on small children, and on animals, does not, in itself, cause them any serious disturbance; for imagination and nerves are not wanting, either in animals or little children; how, then, can it be affirmed that the glance of a magnetizer, in which is portrayed an energetic will, is not the only cause of the impressions they experience. In this respect, I deem that M. Husson has gone too far, when, after citing the example of two children, one of twenty-eight months old, the other, deaf and dumb, who did not know what was done to them, and who were, nevertheless, sensible to magnetic action, he concludes that the imagination had no part in the result. Strictly speaking, it might have occasioned it; certain gestures, and certain glances of the eye have power to disturb the nervous system of those even, who are absolutely ignorant of the subject in question.

Magnetization at a distance is not exposed to the same objection. If it be demonstrated that sleep or other effects may be produced from a distance, at the minute willed, in a person not previously forewarned by any sign, it is certain that the magnetizer has disposed of a fluid or force. For myself, I believe that the demonstration is complete on this point, and that the persevering investigations of the Academy of Medi-

cine no longer leave room for legitimate doubt ; yet, there are tenacious doubters who are still tormented by vague suspicions ; it seems to them that some sort of secret communication must have been established between the magnetizer and the magnetized, and they regard the fluid as contestable, so long as it does not manifest its presence in inert bodies—in objects deprived of nerves and imagination.

It is to skeptics of this sort that the Turning Tables and their elevations without contact, offer a decisive proof—a visible and tangible proof—of the presence of a physical agent. I am aware that they will not convince all ; but it is less important to conquer incredulity than to render it inexcusable.

They will possess another merit, for which I am still more grateful to them ; they will render inexcusable the credulity of men who discover the supernatural in Mesmerism. From the moment the natural and material cause is demonstrated, it is no longer allowable to suppose a miraculous cause. Now, I ask, what Mesmeric phenomenon is there, which the fluid, obedient to the will, does not suffice to explain ? Is it drowsiness, is it the performance of cures, is it insensibility, is it the interior sense with its various applications, is it action at a distance ? Evidently, no. In order to justify the supernatural explanation, its partisans are obliged to invent supernatural facts, deprived, as we have seen, of all reality ; they suppose intelligent auxiliaries, who bear in mind the orders with which they are charged, and who modify their tenor according to circumstances ; they add to simple medical previsions real prodigies !

Determined to study magnetism, such as it is, and not such as it is imagined to be, I do not think it my duty to dwell longer on the error into which the champions of the supernatural apocrypha here fall. That which they insist upon discovering everywhere, that which they have demanded of old legends, of sorcery proceedings, and of stories of possession, that which they now demand of the spirits of the Speaking Tables, they would naturally also ask of magnetism. A descrip-

tion of this has sufficed to refute them. I have, in general, followed no other method in this discussion ; I have related facts, and the facts have rendered argument unnecessary.

"The facts !" they exclaim, "you have been careful not to report them all ! You speak at great length of ordinary magnetism, but you barely touch on magical magnetism, which is our principal argument !"

I must, then, say one word in relation to this melancholy episode : I shall have no difficulty in showing that here, also, it is absurd to have recourse to Satanic prodigies. And first, to give an outline of magical magnetism, the magnetism of M. Dupotet.

All his sorceries may, in general, be classed with the most simple and most familiar phenomena of biology. Thus, the famous *magic circle* of M. Dupotet, that fatal ring traced by him on the floor during my absence, that invisible ring in which he places me, and which it is impossible for me to leave, what else is it than one of the ordinary experiments of biological magnetism ? Subjected to the will of the magnetizer, I receive from him the impression of an impossibility, which, from that moment exists for me. If M. Dupotet, then, mentally orders me to turn in one direction, I turn ; if he prohibits me from lifting my feet from the ground, it seems to me that they are riveted there ; all of which is not more extraordinary than that I should find the taste of champagne in a glass of water, because such is the will of the magnetizer or of any other energetic person with whom I may be in magnetic *rappor*t. In the magic circle, M. Dupotet will make me see shipwrecks and conflagrations, he will fill, at pleasure, my heart with gentle or tempestuous emotions ; M. de Laborde's magician did the same, and M. de Laborde himself, who is not a magician, has obtained, with other biologized children, results not less remarkable.

The lines of good and evil do not extend beyond the magic

circle, in so far as the marvellous is concerned. Here are two lines traced on the floor : the first is white, terminated by a triangle ; the second is black, terminated by a serpent. An individual awake, as are generally the subjects of biology, presents himself for the purpose of testing the experiment. It may be that he is, as yet, only partially under the influence exercised by a certain degree of anxious expectation, of mysterious preparations, and of the magnetic action developed without passes, by the will of M. Dupotet ; it may be that he fancies he is about to show the insignificance of the magic lines. But scarcely does his foot touch the fatal marks, than his emotion becomes intense ; attracted by the line of evil, and inclining to that of good, he attains neither one nor the other, but becomes exhausted and a prey to real convulsions.

It is thus, at least, that the fact is related. Is it very certain that everybody is at liberty to try the experiment ? Those who attend the dominical conferences of M. Dupotet at Paris, are they not, whatever may be said, and whatever they may themselves think, extremely disposed to admit the diabolical supernatural ? If one of the profane should rise and take his place upon the floor, would he not find that one of the initiated had anticipated him ? Does it not very naturally and very honestly happen by the effect of a general law which is everywhere obeyed, that the unsuccessful experiments are not taken into consideration ? I would venture to ask these, as well as some other questions which the reader may divine. In any case, whatever may be the superiority of the magnetic action disposed of by M. Dupotet, whatever may be the impressibility of our imagination in presence of doings in magic, of the silent attention of an assembly of the initiated, of the acts, the expression of countenance and the appalling assurance of the sorcerer, whatever may be the agitation caused in our minds by the single idea of these two lines and the two terms in which they end, whatever may be the moral disturbance produced in us by the fact of our witnessing nervous crises in one

or two other experimenters, although it may be true that no one can resist such a mass of enervating circumstances, I shall have none the less a right to say that the empire exercised over the assembly by M. Dupotet, comes within the ordinary facts of biological magnetism. Mesmer's famous Hall of convulsionaries was nothing in comparison with the magical hall of M. Dupotet, and I incline to the opinion that if, instead of performing his operations with great ceremony at his own house, where the believers predominated, and where he was always allowed to commence with noise and excitement, M. Dupotet had quietly come to your house or mine, to draw his lines on our floors, and had asked us to put our feet on them, you and I would, probably, have been able to move about on these two lines, according to our pleasure, or even leave them entirely, without experiencing any effects from the pretended power which the chalk or charcoal are said to contain.

The magic mirror of M. Dupotet, of M. Segouin, or of any other modern magician, has precisely the same sort of action. We shall be told that the spirits have been fixed there by an incantation of witchcraft, that the virtues and vices reside in the charcoal and in the filings, or in the signs of the Zodiac which surround the mirror. Scarcely are the eyes of the experimenter attentively directed to this fatidical glass, than the trembling commences ; signs of terror or of anger are to be seen ; tears roll down the cheeks, and the magnetizer is sometimes obliged to interrupt a paroxysm that threatens to become dangerous.

I can easily conceive that these things may be, nevertheless. I do not believe there is anything magical connected with the mirror except its name . . . unless biology is also magical, and with it, all magnetism, and all the natural facts it may please us to inscribe in the catalogue of sorceries !

If any one calls my attention to the fact that M. Dupotet confesses to his dealings in magic, that he acknowledges himself guilty, very guilty, I answer that such illusions are not new ; the magicians and sorcerers of olden times, also con-

fessed their crime, and related in what manner the spirit of darkness acted in and through them. In one sense, they were guilty, for a recourse to the devil cannot be innocent, although its miraculous results may be only a dream. For a still stronger reason is it true that an appeal to Satan at the present day, is not made without sin, and that its inutility in regard to prodigies does not destroy its fatal reality in regard to the intention. Satan plays his part, and a terrible part in all spurious sorcery.

But this is not the part attributed to him by M. Dupotet, when he says : "For the operation of the magic mirror, with a bit of coal we trace a circle, taking care that all its parts are blackened. Our intentions are clearly formed in our minds : no hesitation in our thoughts : we will that the *animal spirits* shall be fixed and remain confined in this small space, that they shall call there *ambient and similar spirits*, so that a communication may be established between them, and a sort of alliance result therefrom."

This language, which supposes neither simple fascination nor a fluid action, implies the existence of an occult and supernatural power which takes possession of the operator. M. Dupotet, who, for a long time, expressed himself with extreme caution, has finally rendered his thought perfectly clear. "I seem," he writes, "to hear the partisans of magnetism say : 'Bah ! Is not everything discovered ? Have we not somnambulism and ecstasy ? What can there be more ?' 'There is something which you have not divined ; for, groping your way like the blind man, you do not see what is by your side, what actually touches you.' 'What is it, then ?' 'I am about to trust you with this great secret. *By a sort of mental evocation, by a mysterious appeal, the spirit evoked by you, having need, in order to communicate with mortals, to make use of the organs of the latter, takes possession of their domicile without ceremony, and soon causes the arms or hands to move.*" . . .

I have already mentioned the very significant confession of M. Dupotet. He declares "that he has felt the touch of this

formidable power;" this force (another would say "this devil") agitated all his being as soon as it had been evoked by him. He acknowledges that the "compact was consummated," and thus he thinks he has found true magic.

Once more I repeat, this is sadly serious, notwithstanding the strange illusion of which M. Dupotet is the victim. He who did not, at that time, believe in the devil, though he has since declared for his majesty, invents some sort of invisible beings by way of explaining facts for which physiology and physics, properly consulted, would very satisfactorily account. "In the performance of my labors," he says, "I confess that I experienced a degree of fear. I saw extraordinary things, strange spectacles, and I felt within me the approach and contact, as it were, of *invisible beings*. I was in the full possession of my reason; my incredulity, even, had not left me. I cannot tell what it was that deprived me of my courage and filled me with terror. I did not believe in the devil; but, I say it without reservation, my skepticism was finally conquered. One may well be permitted a slight shudder when the house trembles." (*Magie dévoilée*, 147, 152 and 153, 221.)

M. de Mirville makes similar confessions, at which no one will be surprised. "Let M. Dupotet, however, not deceive himself," he writes (286). "He is not the discoverer of the magico-magnetic force; he has made no other progress in his experiments than that of having once more brought to light, and more clearly perhaps, the nullity of the rational magnetic theories, and of having again demonstrated that something else than material fluids or psychological manifestations is necessary to furnish the clue to the art he professes; a clue which the humblest sacristan of the most modest church, or the shepherd of his village will, perhaps, know before him."

As for the *shepherd*, that is a matter of course; it has long been demonstrated that whoever takes care of sheep sells himself to the devil! Seriously speaking, it is deplorable to see so many sincere and intelligent men, at the present day, falling into such enormous, such gratuitous error. Psychology and the fluids do

not suffice! Why not? Is it because one of the pupils (*"expérimentés"*) of M. Dupotet, on the occasion of his first appearance at his conferences, ignorant of what had previously taken place there, and personally unknown to the magnetizer, insisted upon following the mark of an old line, traced at former operations, and to which the brush had been repeatedly applied? But, to suppose there to have been no illusion in the verification of this fact, it enters as clearly as the others into the phenomena of biology. The old line was present to the memory of M. Dupotet, and his pupil was in an admirable condition to submit to this new magnetic suggestion.

Thus we always find ourselves in presence of these two opposite theories, between which the reader must make his choice; the one maintains that natural explanations, so long as they are possible and sufficient, should be preferred; the other indignantly rejects explanations so vulgar and common-place, while it constantly supposes the supernatural. The champions of this last hypothesis, nowhere give greater evidence of their weakness than in the theory of magical or non-magical Mesmerism. At the sight of the most ordinary phenomena, the development of the faculties or paralysis, the manifestation of the internal sense and biological passivity, they cry out prodigy, they reject or make subordinate, physiology and the fluids! For what reason? Because it pleases them so to do. It is impossible to discover any other motive. Struck, like every one else, with the close relation that exists between a great number of the facts of old magic and those of Animal Magnetism, they find it too simple to say with us: "Magic is often only magnetism." They much prefer to say: "Magnetism is often magic."

They quote, by way of demonstration, these words of M. Dupotet: "Magnetism is magic. Does not history preserve to us the melancholy example of what happened to past generations in regard to sorcery and magic? The facts were only too real. . . . But how have I discovered this art? From

what source have I learned it? from my own ideas? No, it is nature herself who has taught it to me. How? in producing under my eyes, at first, without my seeking it, indubitable facts of sorcery and magic. . . . In truth, what is somnambule sleep? A result of magical power. What is magnetization at a distance, by the thought and without *rappports*, if it be not the action exercised by shepherds and sorcerers? . . . That which you call nervous fluid, magnetism, ecstacy, the ancients called the occult power of the soul, subjection, the influence of spells." (*Magie dévoilée*, 50, 51.)

The Chevalier Gougenot des Mousseaux, who fights under the same banner as M. de Mirville, rejoices with him over these assertions of M. Dupotet, whom these gentlemen seem to regard as almost infallible, since he has come to the conclusion that he is a magician. Listen to M. de Mousseaux:

"It would, then, show ignorance or folly, henceforth to attribute to the forces of physical nature the grand phenomena of magnetism, and to apply the name *reality* to the pretended fluid which serves as its agent. Or, indeed, if this natural fluid exists, as we are rather inclined to think, its physical action is reduced to effects far more paltry than one would suppose. Perhaps, however—and the thing is quite singular—perhaps it must be admitted, whatever may be its power or its weakness, that its existence is necessary or useful to the spirits who like to join with us in the practices of magic. For this fluid (this *spiritus inserviens animæ* of certain theurgy), according to the opinion of very remarkable observers, might well be the instrument of these spirits and their means of operating on matter. . . . We, therefore, conclude that either the fluid of magnetism does not exist, or its physical action is weak; or rather, according to some men of very remarkable sagacity, it is often seen to become, as it were, a natural link to which the spirits are suspended, and by which they operate." . . . (*Mœurs et Pratiques des démons*, 216–219.)

What a quantity of assertions! I demand the proofs. These they would seem to offer us in the attacks directed

against Christianity by many of the magician magnetizers and the majority of the *mediums*, who now-a-days follow in their footsteps. They insinuate that to attack religion thus, one must have made a compact with Satan.

Alas ! the ordinary compact in which there is nothing magical, that which abandons our wicked hearts to the influence of the tempter, this compact is fully sufficient to explain such impiety. Is there any necessity of transforming all the enemies of the Gospel into sorcerers ? Now, it would be all the more absurd to reason thus in reference to the present subject of our consideration, since transcendent magnetism has not only its school of magic, but it has also had its Catholic school. Were those men who invoked the Virgin and the angels also magicians ? Their prodigies, the constant reality of which I am, moreover, very far from admitting, were they accomplished by the action of the devil ? The illuminated Catholics of Avignon, with their stigmata, their deliverances from possessions, with their anticipated submission to the judgments of the Roman church, did they hold the language of M. Dupotet : " I have felt the touch of this formidable power . . . the bond was drawn up, the compact consummated ? "

Far from supposing magic to be magnetism, let us have the good sense to see magnetism in magic. Let us open our eyes to the evidence, let us follow that principle of common wisdom which requires that, so long as the natural explanation is possible, we do not resort to the supernatural. We shall thus find the key to many prodigies.

Let us take, for example, those still practised in Egypt and in India. There, the pretended sorcerers effect cures, practise divinations, charm serpents, and fall into a deathlike insensibility. This is very surprising ; it is not inexplicable.

Here is an old Hindoo woman, who is called upon to discover stolen goods ; she enters gradually into a nervous paroxysm, or perhaps the interior sense is quickened, and brings her in contact with the sought for objects, with the authors of the offense.

I leave out of the question everything that comes under the head of imposition or of sagacity, everything founded on the simple knowledge of the human heart, like the divinations of that brahmin, who, likewise called upon to discover a thief, solemnly weighed out some small portions of rice, and invited all the Hindoo servants of the house successively, to eat the part set before them, declaring that the throat of the guilty one would close up so that he could not swallow it ; a result which frequently and naturally takes place by the simple effect of emotion.

Such miracles require no commentary. It is otherwise with the fact related by the Rev. William Buyer (*Northern India*, 369-370), of a man possessing power to suspend in himself, sensibility, and, in a measure, life. The story is confirmed by the testimony of numerous European officers, which, as we know, by no means excludes illusions or errors. Nevertheless, supposing it to be entirely true, and it is corroborated by many analogous facts, it might be accounted for in this way :

The man in question might have fallen into a complete lethargy ; he might have been, according to a programme previously agreed upon, sewed in a winding-sheet, shut up in his coffin, and interred in a tomb of very solid brick. This tomb might have remained sealed for a month. Afterwards opened, the patient might have been found there in the same state of insensibility ; milk having been introduced into his mouth, he would be immediately resuscitated and able to mount his camel and continue his journey. I do not positively assert that things actually happened thus, or that the tomb was inhabited for thirty days ; but more or less prolonged, the apparent suspension of life was none the less produced at will by this Indian, and it appears that the same power is also possessed by many others of his countrymen. It is impossible to overlook in it, one of the most distinguishing characteristics of the nervous state, brought on by certain crises, and which is also caused at a specified hour by the action of the fluid or magnetic force.

But there is another feature, still more astonishing, perhaps, which seems to be presented in the practices of modern magicians almost as distinctly as in the history of the convulsions of Saint Médard. I would speak of that invulnerability, of that relative impenetrability which characterizes the great *secours*. The charmers of serpents seem to be not less invulnerable—I mean those who are to be seen every day in the Indies and in Egypt, those so correctly described in the book of Mr. Lane (*Account of the Manners and Customs of the Modern Egyptians*, ii., 103, 104), those described by Mr. Spry (*Modern India*, i., 209 and following). In respect to the charmers of serpents of antiquity, although Galen and Strabo attribute to them exactly the same wonders, I shall pass them by, pausing for an instant only, on the acts and gestures of a Hindoo charmer, and of an Egyptian *psylle*. Mr. Spry, a very distinguished physician, whose skepticism, moreover, was absolute on this point, gives us the following information :

“He was in company with some other Englishmen. Having taken with them a charmer, they conducted him to a heap of ruins at a great distance. There, they caused him to lay aside his clothes, so as to make sure he played them no tricks, and they closely watched his movements. He approached the ruins, uttering a hissing noise like that of serpents, and agitating his limbs and features more and more violently. Thereupon, serpents after serpents were seen to appear, all belonging to the most venomous species. They gradually drew near to the charmer, who took them in his hand and put them in his basket.”

Up to this point, it may be said, there is no evidence of anything more than a fascinating or stupefying action exercised on animals ; the invulnerability of man does not show itself. But it is difficult not to suppose something analogous to this phenomenon, when the charmer afterwards ties the serpents around his neck and puts them entirely into his mouth. This is also done by the *psylles* of Modern Egypt. From a covered tub, one of them will draw a serpent whose bite is mortal. He

will wind it around his neck, like a ribbon. He will place the head of the reptile in his mouth, which it enters, fold after fold, until even its tail disappears. Then, he will slowly withdraw it. And let no one say he has removed his venomous teeth, for they are seen shining in the open jaws of the animal; neither let any one pretend that the creature has been tamed, for the *psylle* will call and catch the serpent in your presence, from any old wall you may point out to him.

Of whatever nature the action exercised may be, whether it applies to the serpent alone, or whether it also modifies the fibres of the charmer, it classes itself in all cases, as is evident, in the category of effects sometimes produced by fluid operations and nervous crises.

There is, however, no relation between the invulnerability of the charmers and the miracle which Jesus Christ promised to show forth in the midst of the Apostolic generation. Paul, shaking into the fire the viper fastened to his hand (*Acts* xxviii. 3-6) did not act like a charmer of serpents: he rendered inoffensive, through the power of the Lord, the venom already introduced into his body. No charmer ever has done, or ever will do, anything similar to this. We may be sure that, if the apostle had merely magnetically subdued the viper so as to handle it with impunity, the inhabitants of Melita, accustomed as they were to see prodigies, would not have been tempted to take him for a god.

My demonstration is finished. Magical magnetism furnishes no more arguments than ordinary magnetism to the theory of the supernatural. Neither does the empirical magnetism of the Egyptians or the Hindoos exceed the limits of purely physiological or physical effects. The partisans of the supernatural have, then, only one other resource—the spirits of the speaking tables, and of these they consequently take every possible advantage. But, before passing to this last portion of our study, I am anxious to say a few words in relation to one or

two painful thoughts arising from the examination of the mesmeric phenomena.

"You speak to us," will be said by more than one reader, "of influences, magnetically exercised, of the penetration of the thought by the internal sense. I prefer to attribute such a power to the devil, against whom I know I must be on my guard, than to men who, by a material process, may ruin, at their pleasure, my free will, or betray to the first comer the secrets of my heart!" But where do they see that free-will is destroyed, and the secrets of the heart betrayed? Let us commence with free-will.

M. Deleuze (*Instruction*, 11, 96, 97, 99, 118, 119, 138, 147, 238, 240, 241, 266, 269, 279, 281, 375-377) admits, in a degree, doubtless excessive, the good or bad impulse which the magnetizer, according to his theory, is able to communicate to the magnetized. "He may sometimes arrange with him the means of correcting his faults, of rendering his conduct more regular, of breaking off dangerous connections."—"The magnetizer may, after having agreed with the somnambulists to that effect, communicate to them while in the somnambule state, an idea or a will which shall influence them in a waking state, without their knowing the cause. Thus the magnetizer says to the somnambulist: "You will return home at such an hour; you will not go this evening to the theatre; you will dress yourself in a certain way; you will make no difficulty in taking such a medicine."—"Magnetism, when accompanied by somnambulism, ordinarily gives to the somnambulist a very strong affection for her magnetizer, and this affection continues in the waking state, even after the treatment is finished."—"I would recommend to the magnetizer to excite, in his patient, confidence in God, and religious sentiments. . . . When she is cured, she will think of him in her prayers."

In the *Letter from a foreign physician*, which closes the volume of M. Deleuze, his correspondent recurs to the fact mentioned by the author, which seems most contrary to our free will—the determinative influence that the will of the magnetizer, acting

in concert with the somnambulist during his crisis, continues to exercise in a waking state. "This fact," says he, "enters into the same category with another well-known phenomenon—that in which, when we form a resolution to awake at a certain hour, we invariably rouse ourselves at the appointed moment. The impression of our will penetrates through sleep, and produces its action without our being sensible of the succession or the existence of the intermediate ideas." He adds the following curious details: "One of my somnambulists had been expressly forbidden to eat of certain dishes of which she was very fond, but she could not abstain, notwithstanding all my remonstrances, in her waking state. Foreseeing, then, the inutility of further representations on my part, she begged me to will that, each time she was tempted to partake of these dishes, she should be seized with inexpressible anguish, and that her throat should close up; things which actually happened. The same person was ordered to take cold baths, which she disliked beyond all expression. Well aware that she could not conquer this repugnance, she entreated me to will strongly, that, the instant she had taken off her clothes, she should, in spite of herself, plunge into the bathing-tub, and there fall into the somnambulist state; and this was done, to the great astonishment of all who knew her. This singular empire of a foreign will, solicited as a relief, supplying the place of one's own will, extends both to moral and intellectual things; and I have often in the case of this same somnambulist, recalled thoughts and sentiments to her mind, or induced actions which were apparently in contradiction with her real disposition. Two souls were then in conflict in the same person."

These are the limits of the empire of magnetism under its somnambulist form: it directs certain physical or moral acts, but only after having been tacitly or morally accepted; the somnambulist so little loses his free-will, that he himself solicits the assistance of the magnetizer, and resists, with invincible energy, propositions offensive to him. If he afterwards, when awake, forgets this agreement, and receives impulses to which

he does not remember having consented, it is none the less true that this free consent has existed on his part, and that the phenomenon which gives him the strength to overcome actual repugnances by means of a previous resolution, does not essentially differ from that which is every day observed in the life of men of a persistent will.

But does not magnetism under its second, under its biological form, expose itself to the objection? These obvious manifestations of free-will, this resistance, this consent which we discover at the basis of somnambulist obedience, are they equally apparent in biological obedience? I admit there is no trace of them. The biologized person submits to impressions without controlling and without debating them; he sees, feels, touches, simply because he has been commanded to touch, feel and see; acted upon by this power alone, he even experiences sentiments which his moral being has not accepted, has not willed. I was told, the other day, of a man whose conscience seemed to have served as a plaything for his magnetizer. "Do you wish," he asked, "that I should give him the instinct to steal?" And instantly, his victim stealthily creeps towards you, takes your handkerchief, and puts it in his pocket. "Do you wish me to give him back his honesty?" Restitution of the articles is then made, accompanied with touching confessions and tears. "Do you wish me to make him perform an act of worship?" His knees bend under him, and his eyes are humbly raised towards heaven.

I do not deny the facts; I contest the interpretation given to them. "You see," it is said, "that biological magnetism itself disposes of our will, it inflects and changes it at pleasure!" Certainly not, for it begins by completely suspending the exercise of the will, and this is what characterizes biology. Where there is no longer any will, there can be no question of free-will. Has it ever been pretended that insanity or imbecility are in contradiction with free-will? Yet any one might, by wounding certain of my essential organs, make me an imbecile; a material accident might make me a fool. In this condition, I should conceive ideas and adopt resolutions, the responsibility of

which would not rest with me, and all because of a slight physical injury.

The conclusion is easy to draw : certain diseases, certain crises of the human body, disturb or even suspend intellectual and moral life ; that which the man then does, is not accomplished by his intellectual and moral nature ; as long as he obeys suggestions or a fixed idea, he remains equally a stranger to the acts performed by him. I can only shrug my shoulders when I hear it said : "Go, magnetizers and biologizers : take the place of the missionary ; convert the Pagan nations, by suggesting to them the idea of Christ ; correct debauchery, by suggesting the idea of temperance and virtue !" To this superficial objection, there is only one answer : The morbid state once passed away, the suggestion also passes away ; the *me*, the all-important self, who was absent, then returns, and there remains absolutely nothing of what was done without him, nothing, not even a remembrance.

Thus, free will is no more compromised by biological magnetism than by somnambulist magnetism. The somnambulist resists injunctions which displease him ; the biologized subject remains a stranger to everything, forgets everything.

Men are, nevertheless, indignant that material facts should have such power over us ; they say : if the magnetizer is unable to overcome the fundamental repugnances of his somnambulists, does he not dictate to them various indifferent acts ; does he not contribute to make them adopt, during the crisis, resolutions, the empire of which is greatly prolonged ; does he not positively introduce a new element into their determinations ?

Those who reason thus, seem to believe that all influence exercised over us by others, and in particular every impulse proceeding from a physical cause, is irreconcilable with our free-will ! If this were the case, free-will could never exist ; and yet it does exist to such an extent that a man without free-will (I do not say without liberty) cannot even be conceived of ; everybody instinctively feels that the human *me* is sus-

pended during insanity or during the biological crisis, as during lethargy.

I have said that free will could never exist if it were irreconcilable with the often very powerful influence of extraneous impulses, and especially of physical causes. Where is the man, indeed, who is secure from this influence? Let us enumerate the various forms under which it is produced: I have lived surrounded by good examples, or I have breathed from my cradle, the corrupt atmosphere of vice; still further, the blood which flows in my veins, bears with it good or evil dispositions. Do not these influences immensely surpass, in energy, that exercised by a magnetizer whose propositions must be made acceptable, and who limits his despotism to continuing, during the waking hours, what has been agreed upon during the somnambulist state, joining thereto, perhaps, a few analogous directions, a cup of milk, a cold bath? God, who preserves our free-will from the blows under which it would seem that it must be crushed, God, who does not abandon the man plunged into the lowest depths of infamy, or led away by the most perverse hereditary propensities, who enables him to respond to the outward or the secret appeals of grace, and to use his free-will to escape from the bondage of sin, cannot He protect the moral man against a less vital aggression?

But our opponents do not yet give it up, they pretend to doubt the resistance of the somnambulists; they would make us believe in their absolute subjection; they speak to us of their affection for their magnetizer! Affection is not subjection. Yes, the somnambulist loves him who does him good; he experiences a natural sentiment of confidence and gratitude. Attempt, however, to overstep this limit, and to exact a servile obedience; attempt, for example, to impose on a somnambulist opinions or acts contrary to his principles, and you will see in what manner he maintains his free-will!

M. Delenue forcibly establishes this in his *Instruction pratique* (240, 241, 281): "What has been related," he says, "of the

dependence of the somnambulists upon their magnetizer, has inspired ill-founded prejudices against somnambulism. This dependence is only relative ; it has its necessary limits, and cannot result in the consequences that have hitherto caused it to be looked upon with suspicion. The somnambulist preserves his reason and the use of his will; when he feels that the magnetizer wishes him well, he yields to him, and strengthened by him, he resolves to conquer a bad habit, to resist a pernicious inclination or fancy, to take a medicine for which he has an aversion ; he derives benefit from the ascendancy of the magnetizer over him, and is put in an advantageous position, which may continue during the waking hours. Sometimes he obeys the orders of his magnetizer in regard to indifferent matters, because the desire to please gets the better of whatever spirit of opposition he may feel ; but the latter never obtains from him the disclosure of a secret which it is his duty or interest to conceal, neither anything contrary to his principles of integrity which direct him in the waking state. A reprehensible act revolts him, and throws him into convulsions."

M. Deleuze, who has just spoken of the principles of integrity of the somnambulists, elsewhere admits that all do not possess these, and states that they also know how to defend their evil instincts or mischievous opinions against their magnetizer ; in no sense can it be said that they are absolutely subjected. "Many somnambulists," writes M. Deleuze, "preserve the passions and inclinations which they had in a waking state. There are some very good ones, who even sacrifice themselves for others ; some are profoundly selfish ; some are of an angelic purity ; . . . some are to be found, who preserve, in somnambulism, the depravity of their waking state ; some, who calculate their interests, and who profit by what is told them, in order to procure themselves advantages ; vanity and jealousy are quite common among them."

He quotes, in conclusion, as a summary of his opinion, the following passage from M. Passavant, who himself maintains some very remarkable facts : "Exterior agents may, in spite of

us, carry disorder into our physical organization ; but our moral organization depends only on our will. So long as man wishes to be free, he remains so, as much in somnambulism as in the waking state. We may wound, we may kill ; but we cannot corrupt a human being without his consent."

This assuredly does not hinder man, either in the somnambulist or waking state, from being surrounded by influences which act upon him to a greater or less degree. The authority of the magnetizer, the confidence and affection he inspires, constitute one of these influences. In relation to this as in relation to the others, free-will is manifested not only in what he resists, but also in what he sometimes yields, in spite of strong repugnances. Why desire that somnambulists should be more free than men in their ordinary state ? It is sufficient that they should be as much so. Now, even as you, in order to spare the feelings of the author, reluctantly embrace an opinion displeasing to you, so does this somnambulist obey injunctions which annoy or justly offend him, but with which he cannot refuse to comply without grieving his magnetizer. That such an influence may be carried too far, is not to be doubted ; that certain souls (feminine souls especially) thus satisfy their baleful taste for direction, their thirst for dependence, their necessity to shake off legitimate responsibility, and to believe in a man instead of in truth, I am not disposed to deny. Moreover, this is the history of all influences, without exception, and no one has the right to say that the individual who examines, who reasons, who now abandons himself to temptations, and now resists or struggles, is transformed into a machine, the springs of which are held by a foreign hand.

This is all the more striking from the fact, that the resistance ceases as soon as physical effects are in question. The somnambulist who debates propositions with his magnetizer, and who obeys only on good grounds, is seized, whether he wills it or not, by the fluid power, which lulls him to sleep, awakens the interior sense within him, and establishes the contact of the thoughts. He has just overcome a moral

attraction; he immediately yields to the material attraction, and when the magnetizer wills him to move in one direction, he is compelled to obey his command. Bound by cords or by fluids, it signifies but little, we go whither we are led, and our free will has nothing to do with an act in which the forces alone are in play, in which our body alone is acted upon.

I would say as much of the fluid penetration, by means of which the somnambulist sometimes receives the rebound of the sentiments, or acts of his magnetizer. The latter, tired out, takes a bath, and experiences decided relief; the somnambulist, ignorant of this circumstance, receives, perhaps, at the same instant, the sensation of being immersed in warm water, and of unexpected comfort. But here, still, the free-will is not in question; our ordinary senses transmit to us their perceptions without consulting us, so also does the interior sense transmit to us its impressions. The independence of the moral man is entirely separate from the question as to whether we enter in contact with tangible objects, or with thoughts, images, and impressions.

The only power that could menace or ruin it, would be one capable of modifying our opinions and sentiments, without our knowledge and consent. Thanks be to God, such a power does not exist, and never has existed. It is, as we have seen, one of the impieties of traditional belief, to suppose a magical action, charms, witchcraft—a Satan, with power to act otherwise than as a tempter, or sorcerers, disposing of our affections at their pleasure. There are biologized subjects, and there are fools; there are states of crisis or of alienation, during which the moral life is, in some sort, suspended; although a person biologized passively submits to the ideas suggested, although a fool obeys the caprices of his imagination, although a maniac accomplishes his crime with tears and sobs, and yields to the irresistible temptations of his fury, no one pretends that the man is responsible for these facts; it is in his house, but during his absence, they are accomplished. Quite different seems to have been the condition of those poor

wretches whom magical possession visibly defiled, and whom it impelled to bind themselves to the devil by a compact often irrevocable. Quite different would be the condition of the magnetized, if their convictions and their sentiments were really at the disposal of others, which I have proved to be, in no respect, the case.

If there be any one who also feels anxiety, in regard to the morality and the religion of the phenomenon I have designated under the name of penetration of the thought, I shall have no difficulty in dissipating these respectable fears.

Might it not be said, indeed, that the magnetizer puts at our disposal the divine omniscience ; that he, in a measure, prepares us to imitate Him of whom it is written : "Thou knowest my down-sitting and mine up-rising ; thou understandest my thought afar-off. . . . For there is not a word in my tongue, but lo, O Lord, thou knowest it altogether ;" Him who reads the hearts of all men, who takes note of all our tears, who counts all our sighs, who hears and answers all our silent prayers ! Let us not be disturbed ; the magnetizers and the somnambulists are simple men, and they do nothing that exceeds the humble sphere in which we move here below. They are no better acquainted than you or I with the secret thoughts of the persons by whom they are surrounded. The following are the limits of the truly wonderful fact of magnetic lucidness :

In the first place, certain somnambulists come in contact with the thought of their magnetizers, and of the individuals who are introduced to them in this special relation. They read, then, only in minds that have been voluntarily opened to them. Now, we are at perfect liberty to reveal to any one that which takes place within us, and whoever consents to enter in relation with a lucid somnambulist, well knows that he consents to such a relation, that he gives up to the latter a portion of his secrets. A portion, I have said, for the lucidness greatly varies, and in no case extends to everything.

In the second place, the penetration of the thought is some-

times effected without there being any relation established by the union of the will of the person introduced, with the will of the magnetizer ; but what then takes place ? A nervous action has been developed in some one of the assistants, which, in making visible the images in his mind, has rendered them accessible to magnetic perception. Are there not, also, in ordinary life, some diseases or emotions which impel us to say everything aloud, and to reveal all our secrets ? Well ! the same accidents are produced in Mesmerism. To the voluntary confession of persons regularly introduced, is thus joined the involuntary confession of persons affected by the magnetic disease (if I may be allowed the expression) ; and these are the limits of that penetration of the thought to which it is attempted to give a character almost divine !

Having quieted the scruples to which magnetism gives rise, I must, in conclusion, dissipate the illusions it has generated. My object being to reduce it to its legitimate proportions, the proportions of a natural fact, it is important that I should at once refute, both those who would make it a monstrosity in moral order, a revolt against established laws, a manifestation of that magic which is evidently irreconcilable with free-will, and those who would convert it into a wonder, a celestial revelation, a sort of miracle destined to bring to light the great truths concerning the soul and the life to come.

Magnetism is not more celestial than infernal ; it is what all mixed phenomena are, in which a physical agent is at the disposal of moral impulses, and especially those of the will.

I fully comprehend that they should say with M. Deleuze (*Instruction*, 86-142) :

“ The phenomena we are made to observe in somnambulism, demonstrate the distinction of the two substances, the double existence of the interior man and of the exterior man in the same individual ; they offer the direct proof of the spirituality of the soul, and the answer to all objections that have been

raised against its immortality." "Among the men who have made magnetism their study, there are, unfortunately, some materialists. I cannot conceive how it is possible that many of the phenomena witnessed by them, such as sight at a distance, prevision, the action of the will, the communication of the thoughts without external signs, could have failed to appear in their eyes as sufficient proof of the spirituality of the soul." Again am I obliged to admit that the most ordinary acts of the human thought seem to me as strong a refutation of materialism as the extraordinary acts of somnambulists. Those who can only believe in matter when they meet with intelligence (and the whole question is there), will be likely to maintain their fatal confusion in the domain of somnambulism, and will find no difficulty in attributing to their thinking matter, their forces, their vibrations, the acts which are accomplished by the aid of the internal sense.

I think, then, that M. Delenze has a slight tendency to romance in regard to the virtues of magnetism ; but his enthusiasm on this point especially misleads him when, not content with seeing in somnambulists a living demonstration of Spiritualism, he seems to accept their ecstatic discourses as a *quasi*-divine revelation of the truth.

Doubtless, he makes his reservations, and does not impute to the state of ecstasy, the privilege of promulgating dogmas ; yet, he places the ecstatic somnambulists so high, he shows them soaring so far above error, and littleness, and human passions, he paints them so pious, so loving, so disinterested, so charitable, that one cannot help supposing him to be of the conviction expressed by his correspondent in the *letter of a physician* (382-385), when he says : " It is a matter of constant observation, that, although the inferior states of somnambulism vary in their character and direction, it is always devoted to religious ideas, to the purest and most elevated sentiments, and bears the same character in all religions, in all times, and in all countries. It appears to me that the human soul then enters into a region where there is nothing conventional,

nothing traditional, nothing arbitrary. . . . I know nothing on earth that can, to the same degree, inspire the enthusiasm of virtue, create and fortify the religious sentiments, purify the soul, turn it from the vanities of this world, and lead it back to that region whence flow all life and all truth."

I know of no more magnificent terms in which to describe a divine revelation, the manifestation of absolute truth. Now, if any one will take the trouble to collect the scattered fragments of this religion of the ecstasies (*Instruction*, 126-128, 132, 133-135, 139-141), they will discover that it is the exact reflection of the doctrines current at the period when M. Deleuze made his observations; that rather vague philanthropy, that indifference to dogmas, that latitudinarianism which equally accepts or despises all religions, that mysticism which believes it has annihilated questions because it has ascended so high that it no longer sees them; it is that deism, which, with the intention of preserving the Gospel, takes away from it the divinity of Christ and his sacrifice, its justification by faith, its new birth, the authority of the Scriptures, and much else besides; it is that respectable and by no means troublesome religion, whose creed is made up of three or four articles: the existence of God, Providence, the spirituality of the soul, the future life, and well-doing.

I trust I shall not be accused of any ironical intention. Those who ridicule the philanthropists are often not as worthy as they. When they are serious, modest, and devoted, like M. Deleuze, it is impossible not to entertain a profound respect for them; but the Gospel surely contains other things than such as the philanthropists have found there, and those who have felt its power, will experience no transports in view of the refreshing common-places uniformly recited by ecstasies for the last thirty years, common-places embellished with most unscriptural assertions of the intercession of saints, and the expiation of sins by acts of charity.

The fact is, that the ecstatic somnambulists were, at that time, the faithful echoes of the opinions in the midst of which

they lived, and with which they, as well as their magnetizers, were imbued. Since then, this beautiful harmony has been somewhat disturbed, for the simple reason that the revealed truth has been seriously accepted by some few, and the awakening of strong convictions (an awakening, moreover, the extent and depth of which I do not exaggerate), has compromised the indifference on the subject of dogmas, which is the very basis and essence of philanthropic deism.

Thus, the revelations of the somnambulists are, at the present day, frequently in opposition, instead of in accordance with each other. I am inclined to believe that they would have been still further opposed at the time of M. Delenze, if ecstasies could then have been procured from among the real disciples of the Bible, from among consistent Catholics, or, indeed, from among the Caffres or Hindoos. The ones would have promulgated precise, positive doctrines, excluding in their very nature, everything opposed to them ; the others would have proclaimed Pantheism, or denied the existence of God. All would have satisfactorily proved that magnetism is not a revelation, but an echo ; that it is not a miraculous fact, but a natural phenomenon.

CHAPTER IV.

SUPERNATURAL APOCRYPHA.

SPEAKING TABLES AND THEIR SPIRITS.

THE study we have just completed, logically brings us to our present subject of consideration, which properly crowns this work. In magnetism, we have touched upon those still partially explored and mysterious branches of science, which include much of the explanation, and consequently, the negation of the marvellous ; in magnetism, we have witnessed the instructive spectacle of a discovery, which discredited, or nearly so, as long as it has nothing to recommend it but its grandeur and reasonableness, gains proselytes by thousands from the moment it seems to step on the ground of magic and phenomena that transcend the limits of human knowledge. As it has been with magnetism, so is it now with Turning Tables, a most magnificent complement of the anterior discovery ; an unanswerable demonstration of a force or fluid disposed of by our will : reasonable, the tables are ridiculed ; supernatural, they are extolled to the skies.

The public would not condescend to interest themselves in this phenomenon, until the Turning Tables had yielded their place to speaking tables. "A physical law," say they, "what is that to us ! Why let it trouble us, even though it may open a perspective view of the most obscure portions of both human and physical nature ! How shall we confront the anathemas of the academies which will not hear of any modification of their

official system ! But speak to us of a Satanic prodigy ; speak to us of spirits, of the souls of the dead and their revelations ! These things embarrass no theory ; they are not classed in any treatise of physiology or physics. We have no objection.

Speaking tables are then in favor. It remains to be seen if their interest will be lasting. I suspect, however, that the world will get tired, after a while, of listening to nonsense repeated by Franklin, insipidities by Voltaire, almanac verses by Corneille, prosaic sermons by Bossuet. Yet, a profound evil must result from it all ; modern civilization will have taken a step backward ; baleful superstitions will have resumed possession of many souls ; prejudice, passion, violence, all the dregs of the ignorant and corrupt heart, will have been stirred up from the very bottom ; in short, two anti-Christian revelations, that of the Unitarian spirits of America, and that of the diabolical spirits of the Old World, will have propagated their perverse doctrines. Now is the time to speak, if we would not have this mischief always abiding with us.

Nor have I the least disposition to trifle with a subject which is only too solemn, although its details often present a ridiculous aspect. Let us first briefly review the phenomena, the manner in which they have been produced and in what they consist.

It is well known that the first blows (*rappings, knockings*) were heard about six years since, in a house at Hydesville, (State of New York,) which was inhabited by the Fox family. Two young girls, well prepared by the reputation of this residence, where it was said strange noises had previously been heard, were witnesses of the *début of Spiritualism*. Sounds, ordered by them and expressing ideas by means of a conventional alphabet, motion communicated to articles of furniture, and especially to tables, nothing was lacking in these original manifestations. Already were found in combination, physical effects on one side, intelligent responses and the souls of the dead to which they were attributed, on the other.

Erè long, analogous facts occurred in the neighborhood, then in the adjoining counties, and afterwards throughout the whole

United States. I borrow from M. le Comte de Richemond (*le Mystère de la danse des tables dévoilé*) some information which I believe to be correct in relation to the marvellous things that many persons in these various places fancied they saw brought to light.

“By means of knocks and a repetition of the alphabet, the invisible beings who produce them, have succeeded in making affirmative and negative signs, in counting, in writing sentences and even entire pages. But this is far from being all. Not only do they beat marches, following the rhythm of the airs indicated to or sung with them, imitate all sorts of sounds, such as those of the saw, plane, shuttle, the sea, rain, and thunder, but they have likewise been heard to play tunes upon the violin and guitar, ring bells, and even execute without the presence of any musical instrument, magnificent bits of military music. At other times, and our own experience would seem to be embraced in this class of phenomena, articles of furniture, and objects of all sorts and sizes, are to be seen putting themselves in motion without any known or apparent cause except the simple demand of the spectators, while others, on the contrary, adhere so firmly to the floor as to render it impossible for several men, exerting their utmost strength, to move them. Enormous tables traverse apartments with frightful rapidity, although encumbered with a weight of several hundred pounds ; others are rocked to and fro, inclined in an angle of more than 45 degrees, without throwing off the objects placed on their top ; others springing upon one foot, actually execute a dance, notwithstanding they, at the same time, support the weight of several persons. Men themselves are carried from one chamber to another, or elevated into the air where they remain suspended several minutes. There, hands without bodies, are often seen and felt, or remaining invisible, they affix the signatures of deceased persons or others upon papers that have not been touched. Here, transparent forms of human beings have been perceived, and their voices have sometimes been heard. In other places, crockery breaks of itself, cloth drops in pieces, vases are upset,

wax candles are extinguished and relighted, apartments are suddenly illuminated and as suddenly restored to darkness, windows are broken by blows from stones, women's head-dresses taken off." . . .

"What are the necessary conditions for the development of those manifestations? The only one we have as yet been able to establish as indispensable, is the presence of certain individuals who are necessary intermediate agents between man and the author of these phenomena, and who for that reason are designated by the name of *mediums*." . . .

"Independent of the *rapping mediums*, that is to say, of those in whose presence knocks are heard, there are persons who, under the influence of spirits, suddenly fall into nervous conditions entirely resembling those often produced by magnetism, and who, for the time being, become real automats, of whose members and organs the spirits dispose at will. In this condition, the *mediums* reply to the verbal and even mental questions addressed to the spirits, by spasmodic and involuntary motions, striking blows with the hand, making signs with the head or body, or indicating with the fingers successive letters of the alphabet, with a rapidity so great as often to render it difficult to follow them. Others, the *writing mediums*, suddenly feel their arm seized by a tetanic stiffness, and provided with a pen or pencil, they serve as passive instruments for writing or designating things which the spirits wish to make known, and sometimes they write entire volumes without bringing their own intelligence into action. The speaking mediums are veritable pythonesses; in a voice often different from their own, they pronounce, either awake, or sometimes in their natural sleep, words with which they are inspired, or which are put directly into their mouth. Instances are even given, although the fact has been strongly contested, of *mediums* who speak and write European and Oriental languages, of which they are ignorant in their ordinary state, or tongues utterly unknown, the strange tones of which recall to mind the dialect of the American savages."

“ Sometimes, *mediums* who have previously been wakeful, magnetic clairvoyants, or who are brought into this condition by the action of the spirits, are actually enabled to see and hear them ; as, for example, the ecstatic subjects of Cahagnet ; or, what is still more satisfactory, they describe the minutest details of scenes or animated *tableaux*, into the midst of which these spirits transport them. In short, there are *mediums*, who, under the influence of spirits, imitate, with surprising clearness, the countenance, voice, appearance and gestures of persons they have never known, and act scenes from their lives with such truthfulness, as to make it impossible not to recognize the individual whom they represent.” (*Le Mystère de la danse des tables*, 8-17.)

After having related these facts, of which he does not affirm the entire certainty, although he admits their reality far beyond the point I feel at liberty to admit it, and accepts their supernatural origin with a facility which astonishes me, M. de Richemond goes on to establish that the spirits are all souls, souls of relatives or friends, souls of celebrated personages.

“ They carry their imprudence so far as to bring on the stage our Saviour and his Apostles, the devil and the damned . . . but they do not always suitably sustain the *rôle* they assume, often committing the grossest errors in facts, dates, places, and being frequently incapable of answering the most trivial question. Yet it frequently happens that they not only give pertinent replies to verbal and mental questions proposed by any one present, but they also furnish quite surprising proofs of their identity, either by showing an acquaintance with facts known only to the person who interrogates and the individual whose name they bear, or by their language, writing, and signature. . . . Sometimes, even, they give to individuals in whom they take an interest, excellent advice in relation to their personal affairs, their health, dangers that threaten them, reforms to be made in their habits and character, all of which shows a perfect knowledge, on the part of the spirits, of everything that concerns these individuals, their relatives and friends, and which

would compel us to believe that they foresee the future up to a certain point, or at least that they can form much more extensive and accurate conjectures regarding it than men."

"There are spirits, who, through the agency of their *mediums*, describe diseases, foresee crises, dictate their treatment, and effect a cure by the imposition of hands, or magnetic passes, similar to the practices of clairvoyant somnambulists. Others have given, in relation to old and forgotten facts, recent facts ignored by every one present, or even in relation to events passing at a distance, of which they could naturally have no knowledge, connected and circumstantial details, which are sometimes found to be incredibly exact. A great number of spirits dictate on philosophical, political, moral or scientific questions, essays in prose or verse, and even whole volumes, which often contain remarkable things, entirely superior to the capacity of the *medium*, but which, still oftener, abound in common-place, frivolous, incoherent or absurd ideas, corresponding little to the name of their supposed author."

The above analysis is written by a man of eminence and distinction, who is too sagacious not to make some reserves, but who, at the same time, positively attributes to the spirits the phenomena observed, or thought to be observed, in America. I have taken pains to lay it before the reader, in order that he may be convinced of my disposition to treat the subject with perfect candor, and to allow due weight to the facts of *Spiritualism*.

Spiritualism, have I said ; in fact there is no longer question of anything else. The physical side of the phenomenon has been rapidly absorbed by the marvellous side ; thanks to the avidity with which Unitarians have seized hold of this powerful engine of propagandism, ere long nothing more will be heard of rotations and elevations ; souls, with their revelations and their prodigies, are occupying the whole ground.

I will accept things as they have happened, and passing over in silence that which the Americans have neglected, that is to say, the true and beautiful discovery, I will confine myself to

the follies which have attracted universal attention. They have made their way with unheard-of rapidity. It is by increasing thousands that the *mediums* are, at the present time, counted in the United States ; all the cities in the Union have *spiritual clubs*, and Philadelphia, alone, numbers more than three hundred ; the books and journals devoted to the spirits multiply every day ; men of standing range themselves in the ranks of the believers, and Judge Edmonds, former President of the Senate,* fearlessly places himself at their head ; in short, whole populations are thrown into commotion or hurried away by the movement, and a new science studies the spirits, classes them, describes their habits and customs, fixes their hierarchy, promulgates their revelations.

From the United States, the contagion has spread to other countries of the New World, Canada and Mexico. Next comes the turn of Europe. Here, also, the true discovery has been compelled to yield its place to the *spiritualist* phantasmagoria. Men of science would have nothing to do with Turning Tables, considering them unworthy of notice, but they have thrown themselves headlong, into the superstition of speaking tables ; it gains ground ; it has its circles of the initiated, and its regular evocators in all the cities ; it publishes books, the sale of which is immense ; it establishes journals ; in one word, the Old World follows exactly in the steps of the New. The only difference consists in this, that *Spiritualism* with us, has not become the almost exclusive instrument of the Unitarian doctrines ; all doctrines make use of it, and give themselves the satisfaction of proclaiming their particular creeds through the organ of the spirits, but the party that employs them with the most uniformity, activity, and talent, is that of which the manifesto is written by M. de Mirville, and which, seizing on the wing an unhopcd-for occasion, attempts to restore the marvellous of ancient times, by means of the marvellous of modern

* The Author here, evidently, confounds the New York State Senate with the Senate of the United States.—*Trans.*

times, and thus to justify its sorceries, its exorcisms, its massacres, all the atrocities of the Middle Ages.

Be this as it may, and independently of the diversity of application to which they have been subjected on both shores of the Atlantic, there can be only two opinions concerning the phenomena in question. Are they natural? are they supernatural? These cover the whole ground. I shall easily be able to show that all middle terms introduced into the discussion, are comprehended, either in one solution or the other. Much erudition and intellect have been spent in inventing, now a fluid magic, now magical and intelligent fluids; but it is very certain that if magic is exclusively fluid, it does not merit the name of magic, and if fluids are intelligent, they no longer deserve the name of fluids.

We must then choose between the explanation I propose, and that which (under different forms, and in speaking, now of devils, now of souls, now even of intelligent fluids) supposes the intervention of superhuman powers. One of two things is necessary, either to agree with me that all this marvellous decomposes itself into real fluid action, hallucination, and errors of testimony; or to agree with Messrs. de Mirville and des Mousseaux, that the devil at the present day, works as he did in olden times among the *possédés* and sorcerers, that he expressly declares it, that he sometimes demands a compact before he begins his work, and that he, moreover, manifests in his responses, an intelligence which never pertains to matter, a *superintelligence* even, which man cannot possess. Those who participate in this sort of belief, cannot do better than join M. de Richemond, in his conclusion: "In place of spending their time in gazing at, or making the tables dance, faithful priests and laity will shudder as they think of the danger that has menaced them; and their faith, revived by the sight of illusions which recall to their minds the Middle Ages, and the times of the primitive church, will become capable of removing mountains. Then, seizing their pastoral staff for the defense of their dear flock, Our Lords, the Bishops, and, if necessary,

Our Holy Father, the Pope himself, will exclaim, in the name of him to whom all power has been given in heaven, upon earth, and in hell :

' Vade retro, Satanas !'

words which have never been more justly applied."

By the side of this theory, which has the merit of being consistent with itself, of knowing what it wants, and whither it tends, there have been brought forward many others, which, although they assume to combat it, are only reproductions of the same, in scientific disguise ; men, who have no tenderness for the Middle Ages, who are by no means anxious to restore Laubardemont ; men, who, far from seeing the devil everywhere, do not even acknowledge his existence, also maintain the reality of the prodigies enumerated by M. de Richemond. How make their credulity and their incredulity accord ?

The ones, and they are by far the greater number, dispense with all theory ; they get out of the dilemma by substituting apparitions for demons ; and in that they have so much the less trouble, for, it is in reality, as apparitions, and not as demons, that the spirits almost always present themselves to those who call them. They are souls of the dead, souls that establish their identity, souls that deny Satan.

The others, without ordinarily contesting the intervention of apparitions, endeavor to make it depend, as well as the other phenomena, on a fluid, a force, a vibration. They imagine that they thus re-enter the domain of natural science ; deceived by a peurile war of words, they persuade themselves that the employment of certain expressions is sufficient to change the character of things ; they produce magic in their own way, and have full faith in the power of their formulas. But the formulas never overthrow the insurmountable barrier which separates matter from thought, and the doctrine of intelligent fluids will always remain identified with the theory of superna-

tural intelligences, served or not, by the fluids, with this difference, that the first expresses very badly what the second expresses very well. This illogical doctrine introduces a contradiction in terms, which can conceal only from an inattentive mind the real bearing of its affirmations. As often as any intelligent action whatever, which is neither the reflection nor the result of a human thought, shall be admitted—as often as we shall be presented with revelations which surpass the knowledge of the spectators—so often must we resign ourselves to a conclusion in favor of Divine miracle, Satanic prodigy, or the intervention of apparitions. That which is intelligent proceeds from intelligence: the intelligence of God, of man, of demons, of the dead. It is, then, absurd to labor in placing to the account of a fluid, facts which, bearing, moreover, the impress of a thought, cannot be attributed to the impulsion of any living man. That a man may intelligently dispose of a fluid, I can conceive; that a spirit may intelligently dispose of a fluid, I can likewise conceive. That a spirit may produce intelligent acts, without recourse to a fluid, I can still better conceive; but that a fluid accomplishes the same acts when it is directed by neither man nor spirit, is utterly beyond my conception.

Now, it is into this enormous error, into this anti-philosophical confusion that a great proportion of those are fallen, who have sought the impossible reconciliation of *Spiritualism* with physics. It does not suffice to borrow from M. de Reichenbach the mysterious term *od* or *odyle*; the nature of things defies all terminologies. You will name *od*, the magnetic fluid, the nervous fluid, the fluid of somnambulism and Turning Tables; you will incorporate it in the theory of the universal fluid; you will even connect it with the phenomenon of life; in fine, you will attribute to it an immense rôle, a rôle indicated by the name you give it, which is derived from the Sanscrit, and signifies motion. To all this, I have nothing to say. Whether you are right or wrong, I neither know nor care to know. But what I do know perfectly well, and what you also ought to

know is, that if *od* is a fluid, it is not an intelligence ; I know, and you also ought to know, that a theory which does not recognize the connection between the operations of the soul and corporeal organs, which confounds spirit with matter without establishing their reciprocal dependence, which supposes intelligent matter to exist by itself in its single quality of matter ; such a theory is neither more nor less than absolute materialism.

Henceforth, we are on the grand road, the termination of which has frankly been indicated to us by M. Cahagnet, and which is none other than material atheism, in all its crudity : a fluid that is the soul of man, a fluid that is God ! “The *od*,” he writes (*Lettres odiques*, 101, 102), “is the God Spirit, the Universal Spirit, ether, the electric and magnetic fluid, the fluid of life. It is, as it were, the modification of a single substance, which is the life Divine, the breath of the Eternal. It is a substance, of which the objectivity appears to be modified by the groups it forms and animates. It is, as it were, the substantial soul of the world, rendered sometimes sensible to the naked eye.”

Mr. Rogers does not go so far as to sign this appalling profession of faith ; yet, he unwittingly performs a formal act of materialism,* when he pretends to explain by means of the *od*, the marvellous things attributed to the Spirits. His book (*The Philosophy of Mysterious Agents*) expresses upon this point, the opinion of an entire school, and herein consists its importance.

He is there in presence of knocks, celestial symphonies, revelations which everywhere exceed the science and thought of men who have witnessed similar scenes. He is in presence of the gift of prophecy, and the gift of tongues ; do you

* The principle of materialism may be adopted without deducing its consequences. The same writer will speak of intelligent matter, and afterwards maintain the *Spiritualist* doctrines on the soul and on God. But logic never renounces its rights, and no principle ever remains sterile. The idea of intelligent matter will not have been circulated with impunity. This age will often come in contact with it.

believe that he will hesitate? No, *od* explains these things, and *od* is a physical agent, nothing more; with him one has the advantage of not trespassing on the domain of magic, or the supernatural. Do you know whence proceed these *natural* prodigies? Some "sensitive" person has unconsciously allowed his *od* to escape, which, joining itself to the universal or terrestrial (*mundane, or earthly*) emanations, and especially to those that are disengaged in certain localities, produces musical harmonies, the sudden knowledge of foreign languages, and of facts previously ignored!

If phantoms are in question, the system is also prepared for them. Sometimes they exist only in the imagination of those who believe they see them; but sometimes, they have an objective and formidable reality. How so? The *odyle* fluid disengages itself from all the particles of a dead body; the *od* of the individual who thinks of the dead person, takes possession of this luminous mould; the *od* universal also plays its part, the upshot of which is, that a very good spectre lives and acts.

He acts with intelligence, revealing circumstances ignored by the living! Behold the point where disappears this semblance of a physical explanation, which the system of Mr. Rogers attempts to maintain.

What Mr. Rogers has attempted in the United States, M. Morin has also attempted with us. I would add, that his theory is much more ingenious, and much more learned, that it often approaches the truth, and that those who have courage to pursue his thought beyond the thick veils that envelop it, will there discover more than one luminous indication to repay them for their trouble. In his book (*Comment l'Esprit vient aux tables*), and in his journal (*la Magic au XIX^e siècle*), M. Morin seems to try to make himself as obscure as possible, he exhibits everything at halves, he advances no proposition which he does not afterwards appear to withdraw, and he adds to the punishment of his readers, by encompassing

with cabalistic formulas and equally fantastic outlines, a discussion which, in itself, certainly does not lack spirit ; he, nevertheless, in spite of himself, throws light on several important parts of the subject. By directing our attention to the faith that performs so many prodigies, to the power of which certain effects are naturally proportioned, by showing us in vibration the physical agent of which the faith disposes, and which others prefer to designate by the name of fluid, by establishing, moreover, the reality of the hallucinations that engraft themselves on these natural effects, and modify them through the influence of biological or magnetic action, he touches the true solution of the problem in question. Why must he, by overshooting his mark, fail to attain it, and how is it that his vibrations, becoming the agents of a revelation which exceeds acquired knowledge, an infallible revelation which reveals the past and divines the future, necessarily awaken the idea of intelligent matter !

M. Morin is not a materialist ; nevertheless, he lays the very corner-stone of materialism. True, he does not have recourse to the *od* and its wonders of superhuman perspicacity ; yet, there is really no great difference between his revealing vibrations, and the magic fluid of the American men of science. Read over the work (*Spiritualism*) written by the learned Judge Edmonds and his friends, a work, of which more than one edition has been sold every month since its publication, and which, like the work of Mr. Rogers, expresses the views of those intelligent men to whom the diabolical interpretation of the phenomenon is repugnant ; you will there find the *od*, even when scientifically emitted by a sort of battery carried by one of the evoked phantoms, described as dictating to the *mediums*, phrases in Hebrew, Sanscrit, and other languages, of which they were previously quite ignorant. Then taking up the book and journal of M. Morin, you will be told of *vibrations*, which, after being very naturally developed under the powerful action of faith and instinct, after having taken for their principal organ the sensitive persons whom magnetism

converts into somnambulists, are not satisfied with communicating motion to inert bodies, and endowing them with an apparent intelligence, but go far beyond this thought, and discover the mysteries of the past, of the future, of the absolute. Between these two theories I see no essential difference, if it be not, that in the common effort to shuffle out of the difficulty by identifying matter with intelligence, one has laid the emphasis on the first term, the other on the second.

Yes, M. Morin so speaks of faith, will, and instinct, he so spiritualizes everything, that one is almost tempted to believe in the entire suppression of the physical agent between human thought and the result obtained. Yet the vibrations are something, and they are incapable of adding anything whatever, to the thought or the instinct that puts them in play. There can be no more science in the effect than in the cause. If there be, we must necessarily admit that other causes have intervened, and that to the will of man and material vibration, are joined, either intelligence of vibration, or the direct action of spirits.

M. Morin fully believes that he has succeeded in avoiding this consequence. Let us follow him for a moment, in order that the reader may judge for himself.

He first rejects the fluids, supplying their place by vibrations. This, I consider of no importance. "*Let us not insult with the name of fluid,*" is his language, "electricity, and the other imponderable bodies ; let us speak of nervous vibration ;" very well, as he pleases ! I am quite willing to present, word for word, the following declarations of M. Morin.

"I believe in vibration, that is to say, in contrasted motion, as the unitary principle. And it is not the nervous fluid alone which here finds its origin ; but sound, which is already admitted ; light, also presumed to be nothing more than a vibration ; odor and taste, which are only that ; electricity, heat, terrestrial magnetism, still called fluids from our powerlessness to obtain a clearer conception of the truth, all of

which will soon be known as simple modifications, or more correctly speaking, the various directions (or qualities) of perpetual, infinite, and absolute motion." "All intervention of fluids or spirits resolves itself into the biological force of vibration, the sole cause of motion in every and each thing, in every and each person."

Neither adopting nor rejecting these hypotheses, I pass on, nor shall I lose my temper if M. Morin maltreats another hypothesis, that of the fluids, if he denies all intermediate agents between matter and motion, if he crushes "these irrational hybrids, invented by a powerlessness to explain." (*Comment l'Esprit vient aux tables*, 33, 34, 35, 37, 55, 68.)

Once more, I repeat, the question is not there. Fluid, od, force, vibration, motion, either of these terms suits me; none of them seem to me authorized by any decisive demonstration, nor have I any preference for one to the exclusion of the others. Let us rather observe the manner in which M. Morin develops his system.

Intellectual action propagates motion by vibrations. Inert bodies obey these vibrations communicated first by contact; that which the will has obtained, is in turn, obtained by simple desire, until finally, the instinct, that superior light and power, seizes hold of the direction. Everything is annihilated before instinct; it governs both the involuntary movements of our muscles, and the vibrations which proceed from us, without our being always entirely conscious of them.

We here touch on M. Morin's first grave error. Instinct is perfect, instinct is, in a measure, divine; rendered torpid within us by education and the abandonment of our natural life, it may be roused to action by means of a lively desire, or by stupefying the other faculties, whereupon it immediately manifests its presence by the utterance of true oracles. Thus, the fall of man is denied: the real man, the instinctive man remains good, the surface only is spoiled; let him become himself again, and he will cease to err! I simply state the theory of M.

Morin, I do not discuss it ; this is not a treatise on theology, and I may be permitted to hold as evident, until the contrary is proved, the fundamental corruption of our nature.

Once in possession of our instinctive infallibility, M. Morin makes great headway in the explanation of the phenomena. Why have recourse to spirits, since there is in man a sublime revelation which asks only an opportunity to be produced? Shaking off the yoke of preconceived ideas, let us give ourselves up to the impulsions of instinct. "Therein consist all the mysteries of divination : to silence the voices from the outer world or prejudices, to listen to the interior voice or nature, which teaches only the truth. How does this voice become sensible? In a thousand ways ; it is the science of magic that I will teach you."

We must not believe, however, that reason immediately consents to humiliate itself before instinct. "It will first prefer to fall back on an impious belief, the expedient of pride, and represent itself as in correspondence with superior spirits."

"Let us, then, hasten boldly to inoculate humanity with *faith in itself*, in order to combat the deadly influence of a *belief in spirits*, which arises from a want of *faith in one's self*." (24, 26, 29, 30, 31, 37, 78, 83.)

It is thus, that always advancing, M. Morin establishes his new law, which he names, "the law of the powers of instinct." Faith, understood in the sense he has just indicated, is the great motive power. It has never more energy than when instinct is put in action by the passive condition of the other functions of the soul. Then, man believes strongly and wills strongly. "The principle," says M. Morin, "is the faith which comes from God : the force is the will which comes from us." And elsewhere : "He who still asks himself whether he can, doubts ; he has not faith, and 'tis in vain he wills, he cannot, because he does not believe he can. . . . Reckon up the amount of what you believe, and you will know what you can." (163, 164, 165.)

"Very well!" say you; "faith evidently plays this part in mixed phenomena!" Wait, you have not yet the last word, the true word of the system.

Not satisfied with placing the pretended infallibility of the instinctive man (Rousseau's savage man) in juxtaposition with his observations founded on the power of faith and the will disposing of vibrations, M. Morin asks of these same vibrations, prodigies of superhuman science. It is true that he solders the second error upon the first, and that the wonders of instinct serve him to explain the wonders of revealing vibrations, but the latter are still much greater than the former, and the physical agent here necessarily usurps the part of the intelligent cause.

"It will be admitted," he writes, "that all these *soi-disant* miracles emanate from the natural strength drawn by the human soul from the infinity which is its inheritance." The *force animique*, such is its name, produces the facts, erroneously called supernatural, and which are only the natural expression of the instinct raised to its maximum by the formation of the human chain, by the vibratory conjunction of all men and of all times! Certain young girls affected by disease, and physiologically organized for the rôle of *medium*, will reveal to you the secrets of the tomb! Instead of resuscitating phantoms, instead of believing yourself in the power of spirits, learn how to destroy by confidence in yourself, the illusion that has dominion over you, and ask yourself what it is that can engender within you this faculty for instinctively transcribing ideas. "The infinite force of our immortal soul, a ray from the divine centre, which may be at an immense distance, but never entirely detached from it, puts us in communication with the *past and the future*, but not with the beings or the things of the past and future. The ones have been, consequently they are no longer, they are illusions; the others not yet being, their existence is always an illusion. The *past* and the *future* alone are not illusions, but contained, indeed, in the *present*, which is *Eternity* with a change of name." (14, 15, 86, 110, 111, 157.)

The reader thinks, perhaps, that the statement might be more clear. I assure him it is not my fault. Let us see if the journal of M. Morin (*la Magie*, 37, 44, 46, 50, 52) will not assist us in apprehending the theory of his book :

"The revolution of the tables will enable us to comprehend the revolutions of the Rhombus or magic sieve of the ancients. The Druidical stone, rescued by the progress of light from the appalling superstition which sprinkled it with human blood, may yet move on its base as soon as the men of science, who, at the present day, rack their brains to discover its mechanism, shall have become Christians enough to understand that *the will is a lever when it has faith for the fulcrum*. Magnetized animals will explain the cock of Esculapius, and we shall come to believe that the augurs were not so stupid, perhaps, as we have fancied them, when they watched fowls eating out of golden troughs bearing conventional signs, since a table, that is to say, a bit of wood perfectly inert, may, under the influence of human magnetism, speak to us also by signs. *Oracles will be pronounced quite naturally and with simplicity as reasons are given*; only, the former will proceed from the inmost sentiment, from the inner thought; whereas the latter often result from the prejudices of a false education. Courts of Justice will no longer condemn soothsayers; *they will consult them*."

"You will place your hand on the forehead of your children, and it is they who will teach you. You will breathe on a mirror and the phantoms of your imagination will condense there in movable images. Matter will be vanquished; the senses will extend to the limits of the soul which rests only in God."

M. Morin ranks among the number of miracles which are to be transformed into natural and ordinary acts "penetration into time, that is to say a view of the past and future." We are yet only on the threshold; but let us proceed. "These rational motions of the tables produced by the vibration of your inmost thought, are the first signs of the telegraphic action of the mind establishing the solidarity of souls, which is about to reveal itself to humanity." Here we

have, then, vibrations which seem to establish the contact of all the instincts, annihilating, at once, time and space, putting god-like, instinctive humanity in an attitude to promulgate its revelations and its prophecies !

"If your spirit is infinite, it has no limits either in time or space ; and as the spirits of others are quite as infinite as yours in the past, the present, or the future, at Peking, Paris, or Rome, it follows that *all minds communicate with and, answer each other, like the endless rings of a chain, the two extremities of which are in you.* The invocation of a spirit is merely a point taken on the infinite circumference embraced by, and embracing all of us. . . . To command the spirits, is to bear our own towards a ring of the chain which is everlasting ; it is to resuscitate the past which has ceased to be, or to call up the future which will be, in the present, which is Eternity, under a different name. To command the spirits, is, in short, to interrogate our own infinite soul, and to comprehend the solidarity of all in God." . . .

I am not here called upon to weigh the value of these ideas of solidarity, of humanitarianism, of collective infallibility ; I confine myself to the question in which we are immediately interested. Has M. Morin avoided the rock of the materialists ? has he got rid of intelligent matter ? He has sought to do so by multiplying fantastic creations, infinite souls, humanitarian chains, identifications of the past, the present, the future, and of Eternity. As, however, the denial of an abyss does not suffice to fill it up, the gulf that separates us from the future and the unknown past, none the less subsists ; and the *vibrations* of M. Morin fill the same office as the *od* of Mr. Rogers, or of Judge Edmonds ; they teach us what we did not, what we could not know.

M. Morin, who denies not only the actual prodigies of the spirits, but even the existence of Satan and his angels ; M. Morin, who sees in the devil only a myth, only a personification of the contrast in the ensemble, and of diversity in the union, only a supposition which Jesus Christ, while seeming to adopt, really combated, exclaims in a triumphant tone : spirits, farfadets,

larvæ, ghouls, infinite phantoms of nothing drawn from nothing, populace of vacancy, out of the way ! . . . retire before humanity, which advances in its single night." . . . (32.)

I do not see, in so far as I am concerned, that the superstition of humanity, of solidarity, of instinct, and of revealing vibrations is very superior to the old superstition, from which it borrows everything, even its divinations and the magical virtues of numbers (*Comment l'Esprit vient aux tables*, 62-64) The only difference is, that it connects them with humanitarian solidarity instead of attributing them to demons ; it is the old tradition under a modern mask. And its pretensions are not less exorbitant than formerly ; laying claim to infallibility, it also assumes to found a universal religion. We are then fairly warned ; if we desire to escape from the church of the Middle Ages, we shall fall into the church of the future, which proceeds openly from man, and the excellence of his instinct.

" In grouping themselves by contrasts around a table, men have begun to combine their inspirations, and to return to the path of future truth. To these limited associations will soon succeed affiliations more numerous, as well as the mystical reunion of the ancient temples, until each of these cœnaculums, in place of being still contented with its particular revelations of which to form a faith and a religion, as was the case in antiquity, (because the men dispersed over the earth had only rare communication, one nation with another) will then propose, in availing themselves of the progress of industry which so divinely prepares the universal revelation—will propose I say, to appoint the best understood of the discoveries in each of their circles to unite them again by contrasts in a last chain, a sublime areopagus where humanity, represented entire, will finally receive from nature the last mystery of its law."

This time, M. Morin is perfectly clear. He hastens to tranquilize the minds of those who may fear that humanitarian revelation does not precisely accord with evangelical revelation. " Who tells you that in it, the vacillating faith of each one of us will not find a brilliant confirmation at the end of this new

path, where men, in extending to each other their hand, will no longer fall into error?" He is met by the objection that the manifestations in America tend to an entirely contrary result; but he replies: "When, instead of attributing to spirits awakened from their dreams, the revelations they obtain, the initiated shall know that glory is to be given only to the power of the soul which the Creator has made in his own image, then the same principle of revelation, restored to its natural course, will necessarily conduct them to true and universal religion." (96, 97.)

Let those be reassured who will. They who know that there has everywhere been, in the history of man, something called the *fall*, they who everywhere see in their own heart and in the experience of each day, the irrefragable confirmation of the Biblical account, will slightly mistrust "the universal religion," promulgated by humanity.

We are proceeding in this direction, however, and whether we will or not, this double pretension which we have encountered on the subject of speaking tables, confronts us in reference to every other question; it would carry us backward towards the Middle Ages; it would precipitate us forward (thus is it called) towards the adoration of man.

It is worth our while to pause a moment over the book of M. Morin, in order to establish this curious result, and also to show that whoever places superhuman intelligence in the effect, is compelled to place it equally in the cause, is compelled to invent like the men of science in America, a matter possessing the power of divination, or like M. Morin, a physical force laying bare the treasures of infallible wisdom hidden in humanity.

It is a pity that M. Morin should allow himself to be drawn into such excesses, for he has made a powerful effort in the direction of the true solution. It sometimes seems that he is about to attain it. Many of his pages on faith, on the will, on vibration, will contribute to throw light on the nature of the phenomena we are studying. He has written others, not less striking, on hallucination, and I shall be happy to refer to them again when I come to the explanation I have adopted.

A man of science, whose name has not been published, but whose book has been reproduced in parts by *The Speaking Table* (56 and following pages), has gone further than M. Morin, and we may say of his work, that, if the supernatural could be explained naturally, if the fact of the superhuman intelligence of the responses could be reconciled with the intervention of a simple physical action directed by the human will, if, in short, the problem, as it is stated, were not radically insoluble, it would this time be solved. The substance of the theory of which I speak, is as follows :

Admit, first, that the souls of the dead are not in the tables, but in the place of departed spirits. Admit, next, that the imponderable fluids may occupy space ; and certainly, hypothesis for hypothesis, the latter is worth fully as much as the supposition of an ether invented as an universal filling up. Admit, finally, that the system of undulations is applied to all the fluids, to galvanism and electricity as well as to light and sound.

Thus far, we find nothing in these propositions that we cannot easily grant. Now, let us follow our author in the deductions he draws from these premises. He begs us to observe what takes place in the transmission of telegraphic dispatches : At the two ends of the telegraph are two intelligent beings ; they are distant from each other ; they do not know each other, neither do they leave their places ; their means of communication is a fluid undulation deprived of intelligence ; yet, the thought of the first individual is seized by the second, who, in his turn, charges the fluid undulation with a response, which the material agent transports to its place of destiny without comprehending it. The same thing occurs when souls are evoked, when messages are addressed to them and they reply, putting naturally into these responses a science far exceeding ours.

A table, or any object whatever, is transformed into an electro-bio-dynamic pile, when it is charged with a vital or human nervous fluid. The will may impress on it a vibration

that communicates itself to the ether or to the universal electricity, which certainly encounters in its immense rings the universality of beings, and strikes, without any doubt, the spirit to which your will or thought addresses itself; and as this spirit possesses an intelligence and a free-will like yours, he will send back to you, if he be so disposed, a signal through the same channel, either in disturbing the laws of gravitation, as does the galvanic fluid by magnetization at a distance, indicating letters on a dial like the electric telegraph, producing a spark, a gyration, etc. . . . It is a mistake to believe that the spirit is there, in the table that speaks to you; the clerk in the telegraph office might, with equal reason, believe that his interlocutor is behind his dial. There is neither time nor space for thought; they no longer exist for the spirits, and one of the sublimest inventions of the Creator of the world is to have annihilated for spirit both time and space, a fact which it would have been impossible to admit before the invention of the Electric Telegraph."

The reader will remark with what dextrous care the author here avoids intelligent matter, the presence of the spirits in the tables, and the instinctive revelations of humanity. It will not do, however, to examine his theory too closely. The new system recoils from the difficulty; it does not overcome it, as I shall easily prove.

Let us resume the example of the telegraph. How does the clerk, placed at one end, comprehend the signals that are made from the opposite end? Is it from the single fact, that these fluid undulations were governed by an intelligent being? No. In vain would you place two intelligent beings at the two extremities of your line; in vain would they address to each other, fluid undulations to which their thought had given a certain signification, this signification would never be understood; the undulation would always remain undulation; the material act would always remain a material act, nothing more. The men at the different stations, understand each other only because a previous agreement has attached a meaning to each of the fluid undulations.

Have you made such an agreement with the spirits? I have nothing to say; nothing, except that I do not see in your practice, these combinations of signals that your theory supposes. The spirits sometimes employ them in their responses, but you never employ them in your interrogations, to which you apply no sort of alphabet. How does a fluid undulation, which is constantly the same, vary itself to the eyes of the spirits?—will it designate the one whom you evoke?—will it make him acquainted with the question he has to resolve? It will not suffice that your intention joins itself to the vibration communicated; you thus endow this vibration with intelligence and make shipwreck on the very rock where your predecessors have been lost.

This is not all; had you even adopted an alphabet to your questions, it would have been previously necessary to communicate to the spirits, the conventional equivalents that you establish between certain signals and certain letters or ideas. Have you had these previous communications?

It will be replied, perhaps, that the spirits know more about the matter than we, that they understand a hint, that they hear our words and even read our thoughts. Then, your tendency is no longer towards intelligent matter, it is towards the direct intervention of spirits; you fall from Seylla into Charybdis. What appreciable difference is there between spirits, themselves animating the tables or the *mediums*, and spirits who hear our words, divine our intentions, and fluidically effect the prodigies demanded? Of what use to explain by undulations sent in pursuit of them, that which may be more simply explained by our intellectual relations with the spirits? In regard to the question of knowing whether they reply to us fluidically near by or far off, I venture to guarantee, on the part of the *Spiritualists*, that they will be wonderfully well contented with your action at a distance, and with your intervention of spirits without change of place.

I add, that if we are determined to enter into so extensive a revolt against the teachings of Scripture, if we abandon the souls of the dead to the thousand indiscreet impulses of human

curiosity, it is incomparably more consistent to suppose them accessible to our thoughts than to imagine a vibration of universal electricity, of which the material premonition alone succeeds in fixing the attention.

All the theories, then, have thus far failed. The phenomena which at present occupy the attention of the world, are either included in the circle of facts for which physical agents are adequate to account, and of ideas that exist in the brain of the operators, or they are purely and simply supernatural in the old sense of the word, and proceed directly from spirits, angels, demons or ghosts. Between these two solutions, no one will invent a third.

Yet, such is the necessity that is experienced of attempting a reconciliation, if not real, at least apparent, and in default of anything better, to procure the illusion of a middle term, that men of real merit have wasted their time in giving to the physical solution a somewhat equivocal character. I mention as an example, the author of a learned and remarkable pamphlet, which has appeared in Boston, under the title of *To Daimonion; or, the Spiritual Medium, by Traverse Oldfield*. Under this cognomen is disguised a clergyman, full of faith and talent, who, having first explained the new phenomena in lectures before his congregation, consented to allow his discourses to be published. Those who read them, will there learn many things; they will gladly meet there a return to true good sense, that is to say, the peremptory negation of everything supernatural in the *Spiritualist* prodigies; but, at the same time, they will be struck by the efforts the author makes to conceal an opposition which cannot be too plainly censured, and the hints he throws out, that the belief in the magical supernatural has, almost always, been a belief in the nervous fluid!

It is dangerous thus to make a partial amnesty with old superstitions, and to interpret their authors with so much friendliness. Independent of the fact that historical truth is as

important as all other truths, and that attempts to restore the uncertain past always disturb the human conscience, it is impossible that a certain reciprocity should not establish itself in such a matter ; you pretend that the Pagan philosophers and the Fathers of the Church actually had an idea of fluid action when they affirmed to the reality of magic ! Why should not we suspect that you actually believe in magic, when you affirm to fluid action ?

That would be unjust, I admit, and no one maintains, with stronger convictions than the author of the *Daimonion*, the exclusively natural explanation. Yet, by dint of seeking allies among those who support a contrary opinion, he runs the risk of compromising his own argument. Therein consists, however, the originality of his book ; he indirectly refutes all the champions of intelligent matter, all those who, taking a physical agent, envelop it in the cloak of a supernatural mission ; at the same time, he himself falls a little into the opposite excess, for he takes theories impregnated with the supernatural, and endeavors to discover in them the physical agent. He thus gives us, in some respects, an intermediate theory, which I cannot pass over in silence.

I have said that the author of the *Daimonion* fully adopts, on his own account, the natural explanation. The proof is everywhere in his pamphlet, and particularly in pages 10, 11, 13, 27, 31, 36, 37, 38, 60. Led away by his imperfect doctrine on the subject of testimony, he makes too full an admission of the reality of all cotemporaneous phenomena ; led away by his veneration for the ancients, and by his classic enthusiasm, he stands in too great fear of isolation for his theory, and is too eager to assure to it (how strange !) an almost universal consent. Nevertheless, apart from these two errors, which are only a result of the same too sympathetic tendency applied both to modern times and to antiquity, he does not once desert the cause of good sense and of true science. The true *medium*, in his eyes, is the nervous fluid, and nothing else ; it is this vibration, or if it be preferred, this undulation, communicated by the

will to the universal fluid, a portion of which resides in us ; it is this force, this particular modification of matter, of which it remains to state the precise nature, and to find the positive name. He is not so foolish as to reject, as illusions, the best attested facts of Animal Magnetism, of Turning Tables, or even of the possessions of former times ; but he does not attribute them to Satan or the spirits, he attributes them to his *spiritual medium*. Nor does this *medium* become, in his hands, an intelligent being, who reveals unknown truths ; it never does more than reflect our thought, or awaken within us vague reminiscences.

I admire the science he has displayed in his efforts to rally into his system Plato, Pythagoras, Cicero, the Fathers, the ancient Egyptian, Assyrian, and Greek wisdom, but I prefer the rude good sense which takes things for what they are, and does not discover in the clearest words, the contrary of what they signify. The philosophers and the Fathers were deceived ! Let us dare to utter this blasphemy ; let us even dare to utter it often, for they were deceived in many matters.

Traverse Oldfield is more circumspect (11, 17-19, 60-99). He endeavors to persuade himself that *the soul of the world*, that grand ancient hypothesis, which, with certain modifications, passed from the inhabitants of the Indies to the Greeks, is nothing else than the fluid, than the *spiritual medium* !

This is not the place to enter into an examination of the questions relative to the connection between India and Greece, and the true doctrines held by the thinkers of those two countries. A simple glance at the work of Ritter (*Histoire de la philosophie*, translated by Tissot, vol. 1, pages 108, 111-113, 122-124, 182, 298, 314, 316, 339-341, 356, 358, etc.), will show us what antiquity understood by the soul of the world. With some, it was Brahma, or universal life ; with others, it was water, it was the air ; with others still, it was the numbers and their marvellous properties, odd and even. Here prevailed the idea of nature, all-powerful in itself ; there, appeared that of a personal God ; nowhere, was a glimpse to be caught of the special theory with which we are now occupied.

This is not to say that the nervous fluid may not have performed its functions among the ancients as among the moderns; then, as at the present day, certain apparent prodigies could only be produced by means of it ; but that is not the question. It is not even required to know if the ancient magicians discovered the utility of certain fluid manœuvres, or if the theurgy addicted to these mysteries, did not, in the latter times, occasionally suspect the existence of a species of fluid emanation which it supposed divine. Iamblicus has well described this in his "*Book of Mysteries*:" "The prophetic virtue of the gods, disengaged as it is from all substance, and for that very reason entirely present in all places, suddenly bursts forth in its power, filling all beings, and, at the same time, enlightening them from without. It circulates through all elements, and leaves neither an animal, nor any portion whatever of nature, without impressing upon them, according to their degree of capacity, this indescribable something which emanates from it, and confers the gift of divination. Providence lavishes signs upon us. . . . It miraculously gives a soul to inanimate things, motion to immovable objects, intelligence to those that are deprived of reason."

This passage is surely very remarkable, and fluid action is here clearly hinted at ; but can it be said that the effects described by Iamblicus may be attributed to a natural cause ? On the contrary, he connects them with "the prophetic nature of the gods ;" and he is right, since the question with him is "of the gift of divination." The cause must be worthy of the effect.

I would apply the same remark to those who, unlike Iamblicus, have not even suspected the existence of the physical phenomenon. All have spoken of the action of the gods, all have spoken, clearly spoken, of magic, of supernatural divinations. By what right does any one now undertake to modify their unquestionable ideas, and suppose them strangers to a superstition, against which they neither directly nor indirectly protested. Some of these writers did not believe in magic ! very

well, but did they believe in the fluid? They purely and simply rejected everything, or laughed at everything. In regard to the opinion which admits certain extraordinary facts, and gives to them a natural explanation, we find it impossible to discover the least trace of it in antiquity.

I hardly understand, then, why Mr. Oldfield should have appealed to the testimony of the philosophers of antiquity and the Fathers. This is an alliance that should be left to the partisans of the supernatural apocrypha. M. des Mousseaux is in his proper sphere when he reminds us of the conformity of his belief with that professed, first, by the pagan philosophers, then by the Fathers, and those who succeeded them. I am not astonished that his book (21-29) borrows from Apuleius the substance of the notions of antiquity in regard to spirits: the demons or intermediate divinities of Plato; the enchantments and omens which, according to him, they furnish to magicians and augurs; souls separated from their bodies, or *lémures*,* now protecting, now terrifying.

Behold the *true* truth. In order to extract other truth from the same source, much good-will and ingenious erudition are necessary: one must take an opposite course from that pursued by ordinary translators, who are generally accused of vilifying their author—hence has arisen the well-known proverb, which assimilates translations to treasons; here, on the contrary, the original thought is embellished; it is interpreted in a superior sense, which differs so greatly from the first signification, as to be its express negation. Where the ancient writer has written demon, the translator inserts fluid; where he has spoken of divination and magic charms, the translator substitutes attraction and magnetism.

Does the question, for example, have reference to India and Egypt? If the first teaches that the soul of nature furnishes us secrets for assuming all varieties of form, for changing the laws of nature, and for revealing unknown things, the translator

* Hobgoblins, evil spirits.—TRANS.

supposes that this soul of nature is the substance of the attractive forces which are exercised among us. If the second gives lessons in sorcery to the entire world, he arrives at the conclusion that the priests and magicians were scientific experimentalists and great philosophers, who had proved the existence of fluid action, and who, doubtless, only disguised it under mysterious names, in order to strengthen their own influence.

How unfortunate that such a secret should not have been betrayed by some one, and that a volume like that of Mr. Oldfield should not have been transmitted to us by antiquity ! A revelation of this sort would not have been too much, it will be admitted, to authorize us to interline so many opposite declarations, and to write underneath each word, the contrary of what it seems to express.

When I open Hesiod, I there find the famous chain which unites all beings ; in Plato, I again see the soul of the world ; In Socrates, I meet with divination. But by what right shall I maintain that the chain is the universal fluid—that the soul of the world signifies the material influence which we can exercise or submit to—that divination corresponds to the penetration of the thought and to reminiscences ?

Here we have a more skeptical group—that in which figure Plutarch, Cicero, Galen, Plautus, Cæsar, Juvenal. Are we any more likely to discover in their writings the theory of the *spiritual medium* ? Certainly not. They may sometimes have ridiculed these spirits of divination, and attributed their oracles to excitement or to intoxication ; but that is quite another proposition : it denies the phenomena ; it does not explain them. Moreover, they admit, in general, the reality of various supernatural operations. Cicero demonstrates, in his treatise on divination, that man may enter into relations with spirits, and thus receive the knowledge of things inaccessible in any other way ; Plutarch admits, that the bodies of the dead passing first into plants, and then into animals, it is not astonishing that their souls should appear in the entrails of victims ; Galen does not contest the efficacy of amulets.

Do I presume to teach all that to the author of the *Daimonion*? It would ill become me to do so, for it is he who furnishes me this information. It is probable that his real thought does not go so far as his words; he has merely wished to show that antiquity had some presentiment of fluid action; that underneath its theories it is always possible to find the fundamental features of the *spiritual medium*; in short, that, in spite of their real superstitions, the great thinkers invariably held a language which might easily be rendered reasonable at the present day, by changing three or four words.

That is certain; and the same remark is equally true of the Fathers—of Clement of Alexandria and of Tertullian, who even distinguish between the divine miracles and the prodigies of paganism or magic. But the distinction did not prevent such prodigies from having, in their eyes, an origin entirely supernatural; and there lies the whole gist of the question. Partisans of the supernatural, adversaries of the supernatural—there have been, there will be only these two categories. If you transfer Plato or Tertullian from the first into the second, under pretext that their doctrine becomes similar to yours by substituting fluid in place of the soul of the world, and magnetic influence in place of the demon, I also will transfer into the same category, and by virtue of the same process, the whole of the Middle Ages, both ancient and modern demonologists, M. de Mirville, and *l'Univers*.

Upon the whole, the *Daimonion* is an extraordinary book, one that marks a middle, hesitating position, to which a large part of the world, in such matters, incline. The time devoted to its examination has not been uselessly spent; we have no further terms to keep with the supernatural apocrypha. Henceforth, we shall preserve neither complaisance nor consideration for doctrines, that, in any degree whatever, suppose the intervention of spirits; we shall make it our business to find a natural solution which is so in reality, which demands of the physical agent only such things as it may legitimately furnish—motion communicated to matter, and the servile reflection of ideas from our minds.

In order to establish this natural solution, we must refer to the general principles laid down in the second part of our work. Now or never do they find their application. Let us bear in mind, first, that, as Christians, as admitting the absolute truth of the Scriptures, we are certain of the absolute falsity of *knocking spirits*. Let us also bear in mind that testimony in such matters has never any great value ; the most honest, the most enlightened, the most numerous witnesses are deceived, they deceive themselves, and will deceive each other whenever prodigies are concerned, and wherever certain currents of credulity prevail. Not only do they deceive themselves, but they practise their deception (may I be pardoned the expression), with the utmost sincerity ; they deceive because they exaggerate, because they repeat with confidence that which has been related to them with reservations, because they report their success, while they pass over their failures in silence, because they examine nothing thoroughly, and except everything.

But it is not by means of a single principle, or even by means of two principles, that we shall work our way through so many positive assertions, so many overwhelming facts. The adversaries of the supernatural have too often fallen into the mistake of wishing to discover the universal explanation ; it is like the universal remedy after which medicine has so long sought. Some one hits upon a true and ingenious idea ; he forthwith imagines that it will apply to everything ! Now, let us attempt it here ! If you appeal only to errors of testimony, you will be met by the reply that errors have limits, and that attestations renewed every moment by thousands and hundreds of thousands of witnesses, necessarily answer to something real. If you accuse your opponents of fraud, they will say that the supposition of a perpetual fraud is inadmissible, and that its constant success would be a miracle a hundred times more extraordinary than those upon which you make war. If you rest your argument on fluid action, they will retort that it can account for certain things, but not for everything ; that it can-

not, in any case, procure the knowledge of languages previously ignored, of circumstances of which no one has heard, of the future which nothing has announced. If, in short, you attribute the mischief to hallucination, they will tell you that the facts cited have sometimes an incontestable reality, and that when they find in the gown of Madam N. the watch taken from her husband, or when they see fall on the furniture of an apartment, sugar plums that are afterwards passed from hand to hand, these are material results, the proof of which leaves nothing to desire (*la Table parlante*, 44, 45).

Your situation will be very different if you know how to unite your objections, if you avoid putting into your explanations the uniformity which is not evident in the facts, and advance to meet the cotemporary supernatural, supported at once, by your observations on the errors of testimony, fraud, fluid action, and hallucination. These principles, indeed, all enter into the *spiritualist* prodigies, and you will be the better armed against the adversary, for having continually before your eyes, the unremitting, radical, irreconcilable opposition that exists between the Biblical supernatural and the supernatural in question.

I commence with errors of testimony. A few words will suffice to show that what I have elsewhere said on this subject, here finds its legitimate application.

Let us represent to ourselves a country where marvellous stories have excited the imagination, where a considerable and influential party have an interest in making the most of prodigies ; where, in addition, real facts, too much neglected by science, furnish a solid basis to any fantastic edifice they may please to construct on it ; let us suppose that faith in phenomena becomes a party matter, that it is propagated by numerous journals, that experiments are performed in the midst of large assemblies controlled by the initiated, and to which their enthusiasm gives the tone. Will it be an easy

matter for the criticism of the skeptics mingling with the crowd, to be very exact? will not they themselves often submit to the general excitement, and will not the most insignificant results, obtained after long waiting, and welcomed with transports, often assume, in their eyes, exaggerated proportions?

Tacitus has said: *Sunt mobiles ad superstitionem percussæ semel mentes*. The impetus once given to the spirits, superstitions have a fair game of it. The struggle is, as to who shall believe the most and amplify the best. What right have we to take our stand as infallible witnesses, when it is proved that no other epoch has seen such things, and that the supernatural has never been dispassionately observed? It is certainly more difficult to comprehend how the multitudes of pretended sorcerers and pretended magicians could have, for centuries, affirmed to imaginary acts, the confession of which often conducted them to the stake, than to understand how it is that the American Unitarians believe they see prodigies which place at their disposal an un hoped-for revelation, or the Ultramontane party of the Old World acknowledge the reality of wonders, that come very opportunely to rehabilitate the Middle Ages, and restore to honor a mass of compromised creeds.

I do not doubt their integrity. I only say that the integrity of the *loups-garous*, and *possédées*, was not more doubtful, and that I am not inclined to accuse of premeditated falsehood, the innumerable witnesses of the false miracles which are at the present day abandoned by everybody, the cures of king's evil, trials by red-hot iron, by boiling water, and by floating. I say that they have a fair game against contradictions and denials (there have been both, in Europe and in America), when they are united, when they assume a loud and consequential tone, and when, in addition, their phenomena rest on an unrecognized truth. Yes, there lies the cause, I cannot repeat it too often, of the success of reigning superstitions. While Achilles sulkily withdraws to his tent, Hector carries fire and sword into the Greek camp. Men of science will not hear a word of the action exercised by the nervous

fluid or the force, whatever it may be called, that places itself at the service of our will ; thenceforth, that force is mysterious, superhuman, and offers a firm point of support to the nonsense, which, by itself, could not for an instant have occupied a tenable position.

Archimedes demanded only a lever and a fulcrum, with which to move the world ; superstition asks no more. You abandon into its hands the rotation of inert objects, their obedience to the thought, their elevations without contact, the noises produced, perhaps, by virtue of a fluid commotion ; it has there more than it needs. The residue will spring up of itself, and will cluster spontaneously round the natural fact, thus gratuitously metamorphosed into a marvellous fact. I plainly declare to you, that if I had not begun my investigations by establishing the phenomenon of the tables, I should at this very moment, and in perfect sincerity, have regarded the whole thing as a legend. The house I now occupy, in which nothing marvellous has ever taken place, would have been, in my eyes, the theatre of hundreds of prodigies. What house is there, in which peculiar sounds have not at times been heard ? What house is there, in which the most simple causes do not bring about the most inexplicable results, and furnish food for credulity ? The chief thing is to know if credulity exists, for if it does exist, it will always find pretexts for its indulgence. About eighty years ago, Madame de Serres, my great-grandmother, hearing one night a regular noise over her head, courageously ascended to the garret in quest of the cause ; the noise ceasing at her approach, she returned to her chamber, which she had scarcely reached when it was resumed ; she ascended to the garret a second and a third time, each with similar results. Rousing the domestics, they made a thorough search, and conclusively established the absence of all corporeal beings capable of producing the solemn rumbling for which their departure gave the signal. Here was a capital opportunity for supposing the intervention of spirits. As times go now, such a consequence must naturally have followed, and

this story would have added a new, authentic document to the mass of deceptions that have already thrown so many dwellings into confusion. My great-grandmother was, in her character of heretic, perhaps, less easy to convince ; she was obstinately bent on seeking a natural cause, and finally discovered it in the shape of a cat, that had overturned upon herself a bushel measure. The poor animal dragged her prison across the floor, and thus produced that lugubrious rumbling which had alarmed the household ; whenever she heard any one approaching, she paused in her march, persuaded that they had come to deliver her. How many formidable mysteries are, at bottom, not more extraordinary !

M. Morin told us not long since, of "an old soldier, a revolutionary hero, furiously incredulous, who, at five different times in his life, and always on the night preceding a catastrophe in his family, was warned of it by three distinct blows at the head of his bed." (*Comment l'Esprit vient aux tables*, 22.) Shall we be compelled to believe that there was no illusion in the case, and that he did not unconsciously assist in the accomplishment of the prodigy, whenever circumstances instinctively led him to forebode a misfortune ? Or, indeed, shall we admit everything that is attested by estimable persons ? Shall we believe, since the Palatine says so (*Nouvelles Lettres*, 153), that a bitch has given birth to mice, and that a cat has brought forth dogs ! Let us also believe that the casting of spells forcibly inspired love, delivered bodies to the devil, caused men to pine away or die. . . . although we cannot but be filled with wonder, when we remark that no one, at the present day, succeeds by these means, in influencing either the heart or the health.

Men, say you, are transported through the air, or suspended around the lights of an apartment ; hands without bodies, affix to paper the exact signatures of deceased persons ; *Mediums* prophesy, they reveal in detail, a past of which everybody is ignorant, they speak languages hitherto unknown to them, and of which no one present has ever learned the first word.—

Permit me to declare to you that I do not believe one syllable of all this, although I fully believe in the integrity of those who relate it. Are we, for instance, necessarily obliged to suspect the sincerity of the numerous witnesses who have testified to the prodigies of Angélique Cotter, the electric girl? On a second perusal in M. de Mirville's book (358-367), of these attestations, so exact, and so respectable, I said to myself that never would any of the phenomena of *Spiritualism* be so perfectly demonstrated; whence I had the temerity to conclude that the amateurs of the marvellous might be deceived, notwithstanding their perspicacity, their precautions, and their sincerity.

Everybody knows, indeed, that there was nothing extraordinary about the electric girl, more than the combination of great cunning with apparent stupidity. The convulsive motion of the knee, by means of which she overturned tables, was perceived, an investigation took place, and the contusion occasioned by this motion was established. M. Babinet has lately referred to it in the *Revue des Deux Mondes* (515-517), with some details which no longer permit us to preserve the slightest doubt.

But it is especially to the example of Loudun that I appeal. It contains all that constitutes decided proof. The fact gained some celebrity, it continued several years, its history has been carefully preserved. The same men who look upon the prodigies of the present day as evident, are struck by the evidence of the prodigies effected at Loudun; it is, then, a type chosen by themselves by which we may measure the faith to be bestowed on testimony that regards supernatural matters. By their own admission, the testimony of the present day is not more reliable than that which guaranteed the sincerity of the Ursulines, the justice of Laubardemont, the real action of the demons *Grésil des trônes* and *Charbon d'impureté*. Now, if it be found that the proceedings at Loudun were only an infamous fraud combined with that comparative sincerity which is the result of prejudice, dogmatic interest, and nervous

excitement, we may reasonably draw a conclusion detrimental to cotemporary certificates.

We are not to suppose, moreover, that the reality of these and similar phenomena has not been disputed ; the inconsistencies, of which little has been said, none the less subsist. The prodigy of unknown tongues has been strongly contested ; gross errors, errors in facts, in dates, in places, in the responses of the pretended spirits have frequently been pointed out ; these spirits often reciprocally accuse each other of lies and imposture. It is also of common occurrence that the *mediums* become clairvoyants in respect to their opponents, and accuse them of speaking or writing under the empire of real hallucination ! In short, there have been persons who confessed their own frauds, and who denounced those of which they were victims. All these facts which I obtain from an author whom no one will charge with malevolence (*le Mystère de la danse des tables*, 15, 16, 21, 23 and 24), prove that the modern spirits are not elevated above the condition of their predecessors, and that we may, without scruple, apply to them our principle on the value of testimony.

The suspicion of fraud may also, in a certain measure, attach to these modern spirits. There are many sorts of fraud, self-styled honest, as we shall see by commencing with those sanctified by the end, and finishing with those, the frivolity of which seems to make them innocent. To aid by fraud in the propagation of sound doctrines, that, alas ! is of common occurrence, and equally common is it to see rogues taking advantage of persons whose credulity stands ready to fall into every snare, and who regularly give to each trick of which they are victims, a supernatural interpretation.

I observe, then, that mystifications and lies have probably played their part in the scenes which have been related to us. It is not impossible to counterfeit blows by means of ventriloquism, to break crockery in pieces by means of fulminating

compositions, to move furniture by attaching to it a bit of string or to multiply illusions by resorting to combinations of mirrors, jugglery, and amusing physics in general.

The absurdity consists, not in supposing that the thing may sometimes be accomplished, but in supposing that it is always and everywhere accomplished. This is an untenable position, and I fancy that the *Spiritualists* were not a little pleased when they saw the manner in which they were attacked by M. Babinet in the May number of the *Revue des Deux Mondes*. If there is, indeed, anything more difficult to believe than the intervention of spirits, it is the complicity of the forty thousand, the sixty thousand *mediums*, perhaps, who, at present inhabit the earth. In their number are to be found a great many honorable, eminent men, whose uprightness has never been questioned; yet, here is a man who summons us to regard them as so many ventriloquist liars, seeking to "pocket the dollars!"

It would seem, indeed, as if the men of science had laid a wager to second superstition at any price, now, in refusing to examine the physical phenomena which it appropriates to itself, now, in opposing it with arguments that become weapons against them in the hands of the enemy. It is to be regretted, that when men pretend to enter upon a serious discussion, they should not be acquainted with the points at issue, and should write such things as the following, in face of the speaking and writing mediums who swarm in America: "I am even greatly astonished that the spirits have not been made to speak in the ordinary language of man, and that men should have limited themselves to provoking responses by knocks indicating numbers, letters, affirmations, and negations." (514.) But this results only from thoughtlessness; and an academician who judges from a high stand-point, is quite likely to believe that he has no need to acquaint himself with the facts. To invent an explanatory theory which does not bear examination, is a very grave mistake!

Now, this is unfortunately the case with M. Babinet. Admit-

ting that the knocks heard in various directions cannot be explained by the fraudulent action of the feet, he resorts to ventriloquism. Thus he makes all the *mediums* ventriloquists ! And as such infamous tricks are not performed without an object, all the *mediums* are, of course, bribed ! M. Babinet forgets that he himself has acknowledged that men of considerable eminence figure among the American *mediums*, that the European *mediums* gain no profit from their impostures, and doubtless lie gratis !

What he has especially forgotten, is the nature of the human heart. It is so constituted, that fraud, conceivable in a special case, and with the view of attaining a local, definitive end, can never be the legitimate explanation of any general facts that mark the history of humanity. This is so true, that Mahomet himself could not have sustained his part, if he had not eventually become the subject of a partial hallucination, and if he had not, in a measure, been his own dupe. To make a Mahomet of a Voltaire is impossible ; for a still stronger reason is it impossible that these sixty thousand mediums and these five hundred thousand adepts should practice fraud every day, in all places, for six years in succession.

But the more essential it is to avoid this monstrous accusation, the more important does it become not to omit the accidental intervention of deception and fraud which furnish a necessary element, the absolutely inexplicable marvellous, in the fabrication of the new phenomena. A few idle tales, founded on imposture, are sufficient to amuse the five divisions of the world. To-day they are related in France, to-morrow they will pass over to England, in a month they will fill the journals of America, in four months they will astonish the circles of Calcutta and the gold-seekers of New Holland. Then, in a year, they will return to us from Australia ; we shall quote them as novelties from the newspapers of Sydney or San Francisco. They will, finally, be incorporated into dissertations and into books, whence the reviews and journals will continue to extract them, real wandering Jews of the popular superstition, real

soldiers of the theatre, falling on the stage to rise again behind the scenes.

Such are, I am convinced, the real proportions, such is the real part of fraud. Its importance is great, and it could not be omitted in our analysis, without exposing us to the danger of being confounded in presence of certain facts. I am anxious to say this distinctly, and not less distinctly would I separate my proposition on this point, from that stated by M. Babinet.

A man so distinguished as he, would never have had recourse to the explanation by ventriloquism and dollars, if he had possessed sufficient self-reliance and independence of official traditions imposed by *l'esprit de corps*, to take into serious consideration the mixed phenomena, those in which our will disposes of a fluid or force. He would have understood that there was to be found the scientific solution of the problem, at least of that portion of the problem which, relating to facts in no degree imaginary, especially merits attention.

In regard to myself, knowing as I do, that fluid action raises heavy tables, and communicates considerable motions without contact, I cannot hesitate to believe that many miracles, forming the solid basis of new wonders, simply proceed from this cause. I admit, without difficulty on the one hand, that the formation of the chain is not indispensable to fluid action; on the other hand, that the results obtained by us at Valleyres, are far from being the extreme limit of the possible.

It is probable, then, that elevations of furniture, more astonishing than those witnessed by us, have been effected by operators endowed with more faith and more fluid power. It is also probable that the famous *knockings*, those which seem to be the least contestable of the American phenomena, are produced by the same power: is not the impulsion or physical attraction which forces a table that no one touches, to rise and to overturn, likewise able to produce, in different parts of a room, creakings and other derangements of matter that give rise to

sound? I should deem it little philosophical to deny this *à priori*, although we may have observed nothing similar. I prefer to place the difference to the account of our relative weakness, rather than attribute all the knocks heard elsewhere, either to fraud or to spirits, even rather than suppose universal hallucination connected with nothing real.

Fluid action explains not only these elevations of furniture and these knocks that have been absurdly exaggerated, but which are, doubtless, in a certain degree, not less real, and upon which the material side of *spiritualism* positively rests; it equally explains all that is true of it, in reference to the intellectual side. It would be difficult to believe that everything is illusion in the surprising revelations furnished by the *mediums*; and I can readily imagine that many of them submit to crises similar to those produced by somnambulism or biology, sometimes penetrating the thought of individuals who consult them, sometimes unconsciously reproducing this thought. The hypothesis is all the more plausible, since a rigorous observation would easily bring back the pretended divinations of the *mediums* as well as those of somnambulists, into the well-defined circle of acts that proceed from the internal sense. They divine nothing; they know that which the persons present know or have known.

Everything, consequently, leads us back to this fundamental identity already remarked between Animal Magnetism and the American phenomena. It is difficult to doubt the persistence of the same fluid action which has successively furnished to magic, to magnetism, and to knocking spirits, their respective portions of truth.

Side by side with our elevations of furniture, we naturally find the analogous experiments which magnetizers have for a long time attempted on rigid somnambulists whom they raise, it is said, by the feet, in virtue of the magnetic force, the head serving as a pivot. Side by side with intelligent responses of the pretended spirits, responses furnished by means of an alphabet, the occasionally surprising correctness of which explains

itself by the penetration of the thought,* may be placed the processes employed by certain somnambulists, who also write, letter for letter, that which they read in the minds of their visitors.

This fact, once admitted, the supernatural apocrypha disappears, and a brilliant light is thrown upon all the marvellous acts which the human imagination has used to such advantage. We see divinations resolve themselves into simple previsions, here facilitated by the internal sense as they are elsewhere by phrenology or even by simple experience, by the observation and study of symptoms and physiognomies. We see the enchantments of the modern magicians of India and Egypt resolve themselves into a biological effect which men of science will henceforth refuse to contest ; nor is it necessary to suppose that the visions furnished by the crystal of Cagliostro had any other origin. In short, we see ancient sorcery dwindle away and entirely vanish. It had its inexplicable action on inert bodies, its strange development of the faculties, its penetration of the thought, its previsions, its subjective and biological impressions. Read in a work to which I have often referred (*To Daimonion*, 48-58), the description of the famous Salem witchcraft, you will there meet with everything of the kind : impulsion given to material objects, knocks, noises, clairvoyance, a knowledge of strange tongues by means of intellectual contact or reminiscences. But I would especially call your attention to that portion of the book of M. Morin (*Comment l'Esprit vient aux tables*, 133-135), in which he gives an account of his own experiments, the triumphs of his own magic.

" We should all confess our weaknesses. After having occupied myself for some time with magnetism in the usual way, that is to say, making scrupulous use of the passes which I then believed necessary to the production of the phenomena of somnambulism, second sight, catalepsy, etc. ; the latter multiplying and increasing in proportion as I became accustomed to the

* M. Morin has once established this in a positive manner. See his book (162).

exercise, I soon came to recognize in them a striking analogy to all the facts anciently quoted from the domain of magic, sorcery, and diabolical possessions. . . . I first substituted the intellectual proof for the passes, that is, I impressed the imagination of my subjects by the mystery and strangeness of certain practices of old magic that I had somewhere picked up. I then pronounced the most celebrated names in the litany of the spirits, and employed formulas of evocation consecrated by the martyrology of the sorcerers, by the trials of the Holy Inquisition. Alas ! I produced exactly the same phenomena ; the only difference being that I still increased them and succeeded oftener. Was I then in communication with hell ? Had I signed the fatal compact without knowing it ? Here was my weakness. I trembled. . . . In order to convince my reason of the faith I possessed that the spirits remained entirely strangers to these phenomena, I laid a snare so gross, that it would have been impossible for them to be caught in it, if they had really been present. I give the recipe for the use of adepts. I substituted for the magical practices of the *masters in this science*, the most absurd and insignificant demonstrations, requiring only that they should preserve a mystical vocabulary, and in place of evoking legendary names or reciting the text of fatal formulas, I strung together with the utmost gravity, three or four syllables in order to make a fancy name of them, and then repeated in the most hollow voice I could assume, a few verses from Horace or Virgil. Behold the miracle, or rather the absence of miracle ! The spirits did not fall into the trap ; yet the same magnetic manifestations were produced on the subjects."

Thus we see indeed, that they were magnetic, not magical manifestations. M. Morin preserved throughout, the firm will of the magnetizer, and he magnetized ; fluid action continued to obey him, for it is entirely independent of the demons and formulas of sorcery.

I say : fluid action ; but I do not determine its nature. I prove that it is the same in the phenomena of magnetism and

of magic ; but I do not determine whether it shall be called fluid, vibration, undulation, force, or a particular state of matter. We may accept certain facts without adopting the theory that has been appended to them.

Mesmer represents the universe as submerged in an eminently subtle fluid, which he thinks should be named animal, magnetic fluid, because it can be compared to the fluid of the magnet ; he supposes this fluid to impregnate all bodies, and transmit to them the impression of motion ; he sees it insinuating itself into and circulating through all the fibres of the nervous system, accumulating, when we will it, in buckets, tubs and other auxiliary instruments, and especially in the organs of the magnetizer who transmits it to the magnetized (Calmeil, ii., 439-441). Of what consequence is that to us ? In order to believe in the magnetic force which is evident, we need not necessarily believe in a fluid influence exercised on our nervous system by the planets. Neither is it necessary for us to draw up a formal theory on either, on the cosmical forces or on the vital principle.

It is sufficient to establish that some physical agent, apparently analogous to terrestrial magnetism, light, caloric, or electricity, and which it is natural to range provisionally among the imponderables under the equally provisional name of hematic-nervous fluid, manifests its presence in the operations of magnetism, in those of Turning Tables and in the few real phenomena upon which *Spiritualism* has been established.

Here I pause, trusting that Science will soon enable us to go further, and that she will cease to disdain one of the most magnificent fields of study ever offered to her attention. The material demonstration of the fluid, such as is furnished by our elevations without contact, will, doubtless, finally decide her to look into the subject. The Germans have already taken the first step : the organic ether of the ones, the vital principle of the others, the tellurism, or the siderism of these, the universal fluid of those, its undulations, its vibrations, are all so many hypotheses, not one of which (and I leave aside the marvellous *odyle*, is yet transformed into an article of faith.

I shall continue, then, to speak in this sense of the nervous fluid, and in doing so, I do not fear to commit any grave error, for M. Babinet uses the same language. If he denies the emission of the nervous fluid external to our bodies, and its obedience to the commands of our will, he does not hesitate to acknowledge its presence within us, which is already a point gained. These are the terms in which he states (*Revue des Deux Mondes*, 525) the series of actions by means of which the will produces motion. "The brain, or more correctly speaking, the various parts of the brain, send, through the agency of the nerves (those of sensibility, as well as those of motion), the electric nervous fluid to the muscles, which under the empire of electricity, contract or relax. The tendons, bones and solid parts of the body then serve as cords and levers to transmit and mechanically modify this force produced by the original impulsion of the brain. The reader may follow, in the fine work of Magendie, the functional disturbances of the various faculties in proportion as certain parts of the brain are paralyzed. The anterior part being paralyzed, the animal can no longer move backward, he goes forward. The posterior part being paralyzed, the animal continually moves backward. If other portions of the brain are similarly affected, he cannot move without turning to the right or left, jumping, creeping or rolling on the ground. The magnetizer holds the thread by which the brain transmits all its orders. He may also in many cases supply the deficiencies in nervous communications, by putting wires or any metallic conductors of electricity in place of the nerves."

As no moral or physical law interdicts us from prolonging beyond the epidermis, this "thread by which the brain transmits all its orders;" as nothing hinders me from projecting towards other bodies the electric nervous fluid circulating within me; as my hand, charged with fluid, may act attractively in the same manner, for instance, as though it held a

magnet ; as, in short, a mass of facts attests the reality of such action, I am prepared to admit the more extended application of the important principle, the existence of which, M. Babinet establishes interior to us, and to rank fluid action, aside from fraud and errors of testimony, among the fundamental elements of our natural explanation. I have elsewhere stated that hallucination completes the list of these elements; my readers, therefore, will not be surprised that I should also say a few words concerning it.

"Hallucination!" some one, perhaps, exclaims. You have already spoken of it repeatedly, yet we are not persuaded! How can any one be *hallucinated*? Our inmost sense protests against such a doctrine, and until we ourselves have been convinced by personal experience, we shall find it impossible to comprehend the reality of hallucination in regard to others.

Those who thus express themselves, doubtless comprehend how it was that hundreds of thousands of unfortunate beings formerly believed in sorcerers or *loups-garous*! They comprehend how it was that these people could relate their travels, their words, their deeds, their crimes; how it was that their horrible revels, and their excursions through the forests could have had for them as much objective certainty as the incidents of their ordinary life!

"Yes," they retort, "we comprehend that; for there was no more hallucination then than now; all was real, the excursions to the *sabbat*, the infamous ceremonies and the murders" . . . of children who, notwithstanding, remained wondrously healthy! Let us reason seriously. Our opponents mistrust the theory of hallucination, because it seems to conduct us to absolute pyrrhonism. The Bishop of Mans thus expresses himself in his pamphlet on writing and speaking tables: "It is impossible to call in question all the facts attributed to the intervention of demons: that would be to destroy the very foundations of historical certainty, and throw ourselves into universal pyrrhonism. . . . The facts (relative to the speaking tables) multiply to such a degree, are attested

by so many persons worthy of faith who certainly have no disposition to deceive, and have taken all possible precautions not to be themselves deceived, that we no longer see any way of denying them ; otherwise, we must doubt everything ; for facts clothed with these conditions, are elevated to the rank of historical certainty."

That seems well reasoned. If hallucination be admitted, where will it stop ? You who suppose it in another, will you dare maintain that you alone of all the world, are unaffected by it ? No, my thesis is less impertinent and less dangerous. In the first place, it starts from a fact attested by all physiologists and men of science : there are hallucinations, there are hallucinations independent of insanity, there are collective hallucinations ; all that has been proved in other parts of this work, and it is not necessary to repeat it. In the second place, my thesis does not compromise historical certainty, for it does not leave to the imagination, to chance, or to any one privileged individual, the mission of determining what is and what is not hallucination ; that duty it assigns to reason and experience which never deceive, for hallucinations everywhere meet irrefutable contradictions, the children devoured are still alive, the travelling sorcerers have not left their beds, noises heard by the initiated do not exist for the profane, the person transported to the Batignoles through the air, was seen only by the adepts ; for the prodigies are modeled exactly in conformity with reigning fashions or opinions ; trials by red-hot iron and by floating, are neither of them in use at the present day, vampires no longer show themselves in the villages where intelligence has penetrated. In the third place, my thesis in no degree supposes *Spiritualism* to be a perpetual or universal hallucination ; I make an allowance, a large allowance for errors of testimony, for complaisances, for enthusiasm, for voluntary or involuntary exaggerations. I make a large allowance for mystification and fraud, I make a large allowance, in short, for real physical effects, the consequences of fluid action.

Thus confined within reasonable limits, hallucination possesses no features that cannot be easily conceived. Let us not forget the very curious phenomena of biology ; let us remember that they may be provoked without employing any passes, and let us endeavor to form some idea of the magnetic influence to which the inactive spectators, in a sitting devoted to the prodigies of the spirits, must submit : they wait a long time, they fix their eyes and their attention, the very air they breathe is filled with currents of credulity, the magnetic power of the mediums is exercised over them. Why is not this condition more or less allied to the biological state ? Hallucination, indeed, does not become complete in everybody ; many persons carry away from such assemblies only an impression of the impressions experienced by those around them ; they have seen people who saw, they have heard the exclamations of people who heard. But this is already one fact to be observed, and when everybody exclaims : " See ! hear !" it is difficult not to imagine that, like the turkey in the fable, we also see and hear " something."

In affirming that hallucination is not general, I only repeat the declaration of a witness who is considered reliable. M. Morin, in his book, writes as follows : " I will give the cause of those noises, which, in the end, almost always accompany the presence of these sensitive beings, and which become perceptible, I do not say to all, but to a great number of the spectators."

Such, then, is the true nature, and the true limit of the hallucination of which I speak. It is a *biological* hallucination in which all the members of the assembly do not equally participate. The *mediums* are probably the first to submit to it, while they, at the same time, impose it on the rest of the party ; their energetic will directed towards the apparition of a phantom, a light or a flying object, towards the production of various sounds, eventually calls forth for themselves and others, one of those illusions engendered by biology. Then comes contagion, in its turn, to continue the work thus commenced ; it fastens itself upon those who, as yet,

neither see nor hear ; it subjects them to the common emotion ; and exaggerations form the crowning work of the fantastic edifice erected by hallucination and contagion ; even those who receive the impressions only at second-hand, seem to feel bound not to be left behind in the race ; they relate their story to the first person they happen to meet, they generalize ; a sitting with great results, goes the rounds of the world, reproduced in all the books and journals, lending its prodigies to the thousand sittings, the success of which is equivocal.

Having some curiosity to know if the Americans themselves did not admit hallucination as partially accounting for the new phenomena, I found, upon inquiry, that the evidence of this fact had struck those who do not go so far as to acknowledge the intervention of spirits. Mr. Oldfield (*To Daimonion*, 148) forcibly describes the over-excitement, the nervous disorder, the magnetic sensations, which gradually seize upon the persons who assist in *spiritualist* circles ; he signalizes the moment in which the initiated, so to speak, are forced to see strange images and hear strange harmonies. Mr. Rogers, analyzed by M. des Mousscaux (*Mœurs et Pratiques*, 318), explains the visions of phantoms, by means of hallucination : " You wish, let us suppose, to see appear before your eyes, as a living reality, the spectre of a certain individual. . . . It is sufficient to represent to yourself this individual, in such a way that his form shall be firmly engraved on your mind. As soon as you have accomplished this, lose no time in burning in an apartment a certain combination of narcotics, the formula of which will be dictated to you. After this you have nothing further to do than to fix your eyes on the spirals of smoke which rise from the chafing-dish, where you will perceive, as living, the person whose presence you seek. . . . If two persons, struck by a similar impression, should be connected in the same experiment, they will both see the same object, they will experience entirely indential sensations. This," says the author, " is one of the secrets of black magic. But the spectre is not the result of nervous action ; it has no external existence."

This is not the secret of black magic alone ; it is the secret of the visions of the Egyptian children, related by M. de Laborde, the visions of Americans, with which so many volumes are filled, it is biological magnetism entire. We have not forgotten that the experiments in sorcery, attempted by M. Morin, succeeded as well with verses from Virgil as with regular evocations, provided there was sufficient solemnity in the process, and the formulas were of a nature to facilitate the biologization of the spectators. The same author attests to the important part played by hallucination, and gives decisive proofs of it, especially in regard to sounds. (*Comment l'Esprit vient aux tables*, 94, 116, 119-122, 133-135, 156, 158-162, 165, 167-169.

After speaking of a reunion in which he participated, a reunion slightly Pythagorean, slightly Swedenborgian, believing in the spirits, in the transfusion of souls, in their faculty of roving about immaterially, and yet meddling with the material things of this world, he adds : " Even the chain being broken, the imagination of those who formed it is so over-excited, that they see the spirits in dreams, and when they open their eyes, they still see them. Thus faith in illusion is sanctioned by hallucination."

" They speak," he says elsewhere, " of evocations and apparitions. For the last ten years, I, who do not believe in them, have called them up every day, raising, according to my fancy, phantoms before the eyes of certain persons, or predisposing these same persons to create them for themselves. Is it from beings superior to myself, that I thus compel this servile obedience to my will ? or, is it not rather the reaction of the reflective faculties that I have pointed out in ecstasies, *mediums* and others, which forms these images drawn from my brain by the communication of thought, or from the sources of memory or instinct in theirs ?

" Would you know how these evocations are produced ? Listen : '*I wish to speak to my father,*' says the first questioner. The medium remains silent and meditative, his hands

trembling so as to shake the feet of the table, and after a short time he replies : '*I see him.*' '*Describe his appearance.*' '*He is a venerable man, with grey hair falling about his shoulders. His coat is large. I think it is green, the buttons shine as though of silver. He has,*' etc. Here, provided the memory of the interrogator, awakened by this touching portrait, is pleased to dwell on the details he hears repeated, he may be very certain that the *medium* will not let a single one escape. Even should there be a private mark or scar, he will discover it on the phantom evoked, on condition of its being lodged in the folds of the son's most secret memory. And you hear the latter exclaim with tears in his eyes : '*Great God ! have mercy on me ! It is really my father, I recognize him ! Oh ! miracle !*' What a triumph for the *medium*. Nevertheless, it is easy for him to have a score of triumphs, one after the other, like that, and fortunately, without calling any soul from beyond the tomb. . . . This has, from the beginning of the world, been called divination, and for the last sixty years, it has been known in magnetism under the name of the communication of the thought."

" '*I wish to see Socrates,*' asks a second interrogator ; the same emotion of the medium is transmitted to the table. This confused vibration is produced by tension of the instinct, which prepares to draw again from the hearth-stone of the memory. As it is probable that the questioner, in demanding the shade of Socrates, has an idea of this personage in his mind, it is certain that the shadow or image will appear to him resembling the description given by the *medium*, which is, in itself, only the exact copy of the idea. A new triumph and a new astonishment of the assembly ! But here it often happens, especially when the shade of a well-known person is evoked, that a new phenomenon is produced, which completes the illusion, and gives certainty to the apparition. All at once, another *medium* or visionary, raised up in the assembly, perceives the same shade, another, and again another ; the vision becomes an invasion. Socrates, then, is really there, he has returned upon earth at the demand of whomsoever is daring enough to call up the dead. . . .

Yes, there are ten persons who behold this Grecian sage, robed in the antique style, half-reclining on a bed, one foot placed upon the ground, about to carry the cup of hemlock to his lips. How can any one deny the truth of this vision? Neither do I deny it. If there is a communication of thought between two individuals, it may also exist between ten. I know of no diseases more rapidly epidemic than those of the mind; *hallucination* is like *fear*, ask physicians if it be not so! And as it is always the same thought that is communicated, it is also the same figure that is reflected.

"I will mention, apropos to this, quite a curious experiment made by me in order to convince myself. . . . One evening, then, while in company with about a dozen persons, I traced on the floor a magic circle, marked all over with cabalistic figures, and placed in its centre a globe of water, upon which floated a bit of camphor, its surface on fire (this is one of the thousand methods, besides that of the tables, employed in the evocation of phantoms). Thinking to please my audience, I asked for the shade of Sardanapalus on his funeral pile; it was a sort of *tableau vivant*, with plastic attitudes. Four persons out of the twelve submitted to the hallucination. As they occupied different parts of the circle formed around the blazing globe, I bethought myself to inquire of them how they saw Sardanapalus. They all four saw him full in the face! Hence, I concluded that the image was only a reflection from the imagination of all these seers, and not Sardanapalus."

Let us pass to the hallucinations of hearing. M. Morin has, on this point, made the most serious and conclusive experiments.

"Accident conducted to me a young girl about eighteen years of age, and presenting all the fatally distinctive characteristics of the most powerful *mediums*. . . . Having caused her an almost instantaneous vision into the crystal (after the manner of Cagliostro), I laid a violin, perfectly in tune, on a sonorous table, where I also placed my hand, and directed the young girl to put hers opposite me. At the end of about

three minutes, the violin began to emit a sound which seemed to my ears, and to those of the two spectators of the experiment, as though the wind were passing over it. But in front of me stood the young girl with fixed, staring eyes, not even winking the lids, while tears fell in large drops down her cheeks. 'What sweet music!' she exclaimed. 'How is it possible for you to play the violin like that?' Then, all at once, as if struck by a sudden impression, she said: 'It is not you, it is I who play. Do you know why it appears so sweet to me? It is my death I am singing.' . . . I was thus satisfied that the noise heard by me had no apparent material cause, and I proved, in addition, that a soul, doubtless more sensitive than mine, could become so exalted as to perceive a harmony where I distinguished only a sound." . . .

Another time, four or five persons gathering around a table which they firmly believed occupied by spirits, begged M. Morin to join their circle. Far from immediately seeking to extinguish their faith, in which he did not partake, he readily complied. His report is as follows: "After having conversed in the usual form with the spirits, who gave me a kind reception notwithstanding my incredulity, of which they could not be ignorant, I placed an empty decanter under the table, conjuring them to enter therein and to manifest their presence by a noise. In less than two minutes we all distinctly heard a rubbing, as of a dry finger upon the glass. Attributing this noise to the manifestation of the vibration communicated by the table to the floor, and thence to the decanter, I determined to make the latter adhere more firmly to the floor by filling it half full with water, in order to augment the noise, if possible, and to render it more acute by diminishing the vacant space. But I was anxious to carry out this idea by myself, without the assistance of the others, and here is my success. I caused it to be spelled out by the table itself, to the circle which contained a *medium* or somnambulist sufficiently lucid to communicate with my thought. The spirits demanded water in the decanter, in order to make themselves better heard! Their wishes were imme-

diately granted, and after five more minutes of waiting, a feeble but prolonged sound, like that of the harmonia, struck upon our attentive ears. *The actors in the experiment shuddered.* I chose this moment to explain to them the theory of vibration, which furnished a natural cause for these extraordinary effects. My explanations did not, it is true, annihilate their belief in the spirits, but it insinuated doubt into their minds. *Now, let us begin again,* said I. Faith was no longer there; the decanter remained silent, and even the table ceased to give its responses. The main-spring of the experiment was destroyed."

If the analogy with the *rappings*, knockings, and aerial concerts of America does not seem evident to the reader, I would further call his attention to the following pages in the book of M. Morin: "A lady, a *medium* from America, recently arrived at Paris, was introduced into various societies where the religious principle prevailed. This illuminated person, laying her hand on a table surrounded by its usual circle, expresses her intention to produce the noise of a storm so that all may hear it; and in proportion as her hand removes from the table, approaches or touches it, the assistants distinctly hear the rain dropping feebly, falling heavily, or pouring down with a hissing noise. This is not yet all: she commands the spirits (for it is in virtue of them that this modern sibyl acts), to beat against the window-panes with their fingers doubtless, or with their wings; when all hear a prolonged rumbling, feeble at first, but gradually increasing." . . .

The experiments of M. Morin with the decanter, and especially with the violin, show their suitableness for collecting and manifesting the vibrations really emanating from the will of the operators. This is the point where hallucination is consolidated into fluid action, and here it is important to pause, in order to see clearly that the various explanatory principles adhere to and mutually support each other, that hallucination is not isolated, and does nothing more than develop real proportions in excess. Let us again listen to the observations of M. Morin in reference to this subject.

"I have described how, after long experiments made upon tables in the same place, the ears of persons dwelling there, come to perceive strange sounds, sometimes during the day, but oftener during the night. Is it pure illusion, or is it a material fact? I answer, both; the phenomenon proceeds from both; that is to say, the soul being put, by over-excitement, in a state of most exquisite sensibility, perceives first, that of which it could not otherwise take cognizance, and in its turn, amplifying on this perception derived from an unusual physical circumstance, it draws from its own depths the power of augmenting this new germ delivered to its elaboration." . . .

M. Morin has not been slow to conceive the theory of an organic vibration yet unknown, communicating itself by contact, or from a distance, according to harmonic relations. "Our men of science," says he, "who attribute the communication of sound at a distance to the circular series of the zones of the agitated air, can they explain why these zones, possessing a force evidently equal to the extremity of each ray, do not in the same degree agitate all the chords of an instrument, and choose among sonorous bodies at a distance, those precisely whose intonation accords with its emission, in order to make them vibrate without inducing any motion in the others? Must we not somewhere seek the reason of this mysterious sympathy, caused, without doubt, by the physical motion, but which should be attributed to sympathetic reaction, and not to direct propagation?" . . .

. . . . "Vibration, insensible in an object, may become very sensible if it communicates itself by contact; it may be compared to a tuning fork, which, almost silent if isolated, gives a musical note when struck upon a sonorous body. Vibration has not even need of contact, in order to communicate with objects more or less distant; it is a physical fact of which I have already spoken, and for which we may account by producing a sound in an apartment where a piano, a harp, or even a violin is placed; and the important remark to be made, when the sound or vibration communicates itself at a

distance is, that the instrument renders by preference, and, indeed, only such notes as are in unison, in harmony, or in opposition to this emission. . . . The actions of the soul, producing an organic vibration in relation with themselves, communicate it by contact to any objects whatever, that render a similar, or an accordant vibration. This constitutes the language of the Tables, the details of which you know.—The same vibrations may also be communicated at a distance, and to the real action responds the sympathetic reaction of all hollow and sonorous bodies that surround the individual. Hence, the principle of the hearing of strange sounds.—Now then, why are they not heard always and by everybody? Because they demand an activity of the faculties that is only developed by an over-excitement of the soul.”

If you add to that, the hallucinations which spring up in favor of the physical phenomena just described, if you recall to mind the instance of the young girl, who, hearing a sound, transforms it into music, you will be in possession of a key to many of the prodigies in which we are summoned to find an irrefragable proof of the presence of spirits.

And let no one pretend, that in similar circumstances, he could preserve himself free from hallucinations! Even apart from the effects of vibration, or of fluid action, apart from magnetism or biology, I could, in less than a week, by placing certain nervous persons in extraordinary circumstances, inducing them to read ghost stories, compelling them to walk alone at night, cause them, with a little assistance, to hear mysterious voices, and see their own shadow following them behind in the darkness.

Yet, this ordeal is nothing compared to that submitted to by the members of the *spiritual* circles.

We are, at present, in full possession of the four principles, by means of which the natural explanation of the actual fact may be given; having stated them in general terms during the

course of this study, I now show in what manner they are specially applicable to the problem before us. Let us conclude the demonstration in taking, one by one, the most remarkable prodigies of the spirits, and applying to each, the test of the principle whereby we propose to explain it, that is to say, error of testimony, fluid action, fraud, hallucination.

I first set aside as unworthy of all examination, certain facts, bearing no evidence of the marvellous, but the coolness with which they are presented to the unreflecting wonder of the public.

The work of Mr. Rogers tells us of a table on which was seated an experimenter (Mr. Wells), and which, without being touched by any person whatever, first shook him with singular energy, then elevating itself on two feet, maintained its equilibrium for the space of thirty seconds. This circumstance gives us nothing that cannot be explained by simple muscular action, insensible, perhaps, to the experimenter seated on the table. We ourselves have not ventured to place in the list of motions without contact, those accomplished by the table when it bears a living being.

La Table parlante (14) relates to us with the utmost gravity, an experiment in which a round table, to whose foot is attached a pencil, describes long, horizontal lines on paper, and appears to trace characters in the Chinese tongue, which, however, it is impossible clearly to distinguish. I demand that the matter be referred to M. Stanislas Julien. He will ascertain, perhaps, that the table has thus promulgated the most sublime oracles, . . . at least, let him not ascertain that it has simply obeyed a material impulsion, which imposed on it straight lines, and which was unable to prevent tremblings.

I would make the same remark of the lucky accidents by which *mediums* are sometimes created. When these things are confined within the limits of the natural coincidences or divinations that may be explained by sagacity, there is, certainly, no cause to proclaim a miracle.

That a house which has always possessed a bad reputation, and in consequence, been abandoned to the spirits, should be found to have been two hundred years ago, the theatre of some horrid crime, will astonish only the most simple minds. It often happens that the precise remembrance of facts gradually vanishes, and is as gradually replaced by a sort of vague tradition which suffices to insure, in certain habitations, the periodical apparition of ghosts, until the discovery of some old register reveals the real cause of the disturbance experienced by several successive generations.

That this disturbance should now be translated into *spiritual* revelations is simple enough, it will be admitted. It is still more simple that known personages should be evoked with success, and that they should be made to hold a language in perfect harmony with their character. In reference to those *mediums* who thus speak, or who write under the pretended direction of spirits, attributing speeches to Mirabeau, verses to Racine or Lord Byron, I find only one thing to wonder at: it is the complacent credulity of a public that consents to be astonished.

If there had been nothing else in the new phenomena, the time I have occupied in this lengthy argument, establishing grave, critical principles, would be wasted. The perplexity would have been only temporary; we might have left those who find pleasure in such amusements, to their melancholy sport, and passed on our way without giving ourselves any concern. But here are facts presenting more difficulties.

I commence with those which seem only to be explained by errors of testimony.

Not satisfied with ordinary knocks, the Americans sometimes tell us of noises so violent as to be heard at a distance of one or two miles! Where is the proof of such a phenomenon? It certainly should be easy to furnish. A noise so loud as to be heard by persons two miles distant, has tremendous intensity for those placed in much closer proximity; in every house of the neighborhood, without exception, it should cause people to

leap from their chairs, rouse the sleeping children, send the whole population out of doors to inquire after the explosion ; in short, the event should be known instantaneously, at all places within reach of the sound. I do not add that the glass windows of the apartment where the noise is produced, should break ; that is a matter of course. I am content to ask how it is that any one dares speak to us of noises heard two miles distant, and yet does not vouchsafe to join to this assertion, the results of an inquiry very easy and very inevitable in such a case, of an inquiry which was, doubtless, very minute, which could not have failed to be made, provided the assertion were not a specimen of the monstrous errors to which testimony is abandoned.

This is, assuredly, not the only instance of the kind. We read in the American books and journals, of men raised and suspended in the air, and thus transported from one end of a chamber to the other, over the heads of the persons therein assembled ; of hands without bodies, which are seen or felt, or which, without being seen, write the signature of deceased persons ; of pens, which move, unguided, across the paper ! Here again, I have the right to ask for proof, and to be astonished that it is not very abundant and very categorical. What is more easy to establish, than the transportation of a man through the air ? But these wonders are effected with closed doors, and the precise circumstances under which they are brought about, are not put before the eyes of the public ; they are related with loud clamor and great excitement, but very few persons have the good fortune to contemplate them directly. They have even some trouble in passing from the New World to the Old, for it is in vain I seek an account of a single aerial voyage among the numerous reports of the grand European facts developed since our attention has been turned to speaking tables.

It is to assertions like these, that we must distinctly oppose the principle drawn from errors of testimony in supernatural matters. When Judge Edmonds represents the odic fluid as seizing a pen, dipping it into the ink, guiding it over a sheet of

paper, and calmly tracing thereon sentences in Hebrew, in Sanscrit, in languages of which the persons present have always been ignorant, I am content to answer that I do not believe the first word of his statement, because such a prodigy, if it had been really effected, would be surrounded with both proofs and guarantees, which, in this case, are entirely wanting. We are not even told if the pen in question was or was not placed in conditions of absolute isolation ! No precaution was taken to prevent illusion or fraud ! Indeed, if the respect merited by the witnesses, is to compel us to accept a declaration from them, under conditions similar to these, we shall no longer have the right to reject, or even to discuss, ten thousand miracles not less attested by no less worthy witnesses.

Such are the assertions to which the principle of errors of testimony applies. Already suspected because of their marvellous character, and the disposition which makes us lose our self-possession as well as our faculties of observation whenever we step on this ground, they are also suspected because of the complete absence of guarantees in the operation and precision in the relation. Such statements, made in reference to simple natural facts, and to simple physical experiments, would be considered as of no value ; indeed, physical experiments themselves are worthy of faith only when proper precautions have been taken in their performance, and when the description of them enables the reader to estimate exactly the processes and the results.

Here, we have nothing of the kind, and the *spiritualist* narrations become explicit only in that which concerns the revelations of the *mediums*. It really appears that the countenance, the voice, the figure, the gestures, the opinions of the dead person whose soul is evoked, are often represented with remarkable fidelity. But it also appears that errors abound, errors of time, of place, of facts. It is, besides, very easy to understand that by means of the penetration of the thought, the *medium* can seize the image, such as it exists in the mind of the interrogator.

In regard to predictions, while waiting for a series of them to be published, bearing a certain date, and thus preparing us to satisfy ourselves of their accomplishment, I shall take the liberty to suppose that they are all limited to natural foresight, aided sometimes by monitions of the internal sense.

It is by means of this sense, that *mediums*, like somnambulists, have presentiments of crises, indicate their treatment, form plausible conjectures respecting the future. It is thus they reply, even to mental questions addressed them.

We here enter fully into the application of the second principle : fluid action, I have said, accounts for numerous phenomena, which many persons are disposed to attribute to the spirits. Of this, I shall give a few examples, at the same time entreating the reader to remember that my reservations on the subject of testimony apply to all the stories, without exception, and that those which comport with the explanation borrowed from the nervous fluid, are not more sheltered than other exaggerations or errors.

What deduction should be made from the statements of the Americans, which tell us of loud knocks, harsh and creaking noises, rumbling walls, resounding floors? I do not know. What I do know is, that it is not necessary to attribute to the intervention of spirits these and similar phenomena, for which a natural cause may exist. The physical agent that raises a table, untouched by any human being, is fully capable of producing a sound. If the sound be produced, it is not difficult to understand that it may obey the thought, beat a march, follow the rhythm of airs which are sung, imitate the noise of the shuttle, the saw, the sea, or the rain, that it may, in one word, do what the table itself does when it executes at will a waltz or a minuet.

Between fluid action and motion communicated to different articles of furniture, the relation is still more evident. They who have assisted at the experiments of the Turning Tables, will find no difficulty in comprehending that at the command of *mediums* who dispose, perhaps, of a superior power, inert

bodies are disturbed, change their place, take and preserve an inclined position. Mr. Rogers speaks of a table that advances on the experimenters with so much force, that they struggle in vain against the invisible power by which it is animated ; he adds that, although it is pressed upon by the hands of all the members of a circle, it is raised in the air, where it floats about several seconds. I cannot be astonished at such results. As many as twenty times, when the table was very animated, we ourselves tested the vigor of the fluid which propelled it, and I am persuaded that if we had then employed a light, round table, we might easily have effected an elevation, thus procuring for ourselves the illusion of a suspension *several seconds in duration*.

This observation applies to a portion of the curious facts related by M. Benezet, in his book entitled, *les Tables tournantes et le Panthéisme*.

His round table undertook to search for some money which had been concealed in a corner of the apartment, and it finally adopted the right direction, although the eyes of the operators had been bandaged ! What is that to say ? Was this poor table guided by a spirit ? No, it obeyed, as always, the fluid impulsions communicated to it by the human will, a will, probably enlightened by certain indications, and perhaps, also, by the penetration of the thought, for several persons were in the apartment who knew where the money had been concealed.

The table declares itself a spirit ; it announces that it is the soul of one of M. Benezet's relations ; for the purpose of convincing him, it spells his name, letter after letter : B-c-n-e-z-e-t ; then it commits the blunder of saying that it belongs to the maternal branch, forgetting that this branch bears another name ! Responses which are so many echoes of the thoughts that naturally spring up in the minds of the operators, echoes of their conjectures and of their stupidities. Fluid action still suffices.

It suffices to explain the success, and also the errors of the

round table, when summoned to reproduce a figure which has been written on a bit of paper, without being communicated to any of the members of the chain. As nothing less is in question than the penetration of the thought, it is natural that this experiment should not always succeed.

The penetration of the thought gives the cue to many pretended divinations. The table will indicate the time of day, my age, the number of pieces of money in my purse ; on one condition, however, that I am acquainted with this number. When no one is acquainted with it, either in the chain or among the spectators, error is certain, or at least, there are no other chances of success than those furnished by coincidences, or the quite simple calculation of probability. If the table of M. Benezet gives accurate information in regard to certain letters shut up in a trunk, it must not be forgotten that they have been read by one of the witnesses of the experiment.

In short, the same round table delivers itself up to violent exercises which excite the most lively surprise, and which, yet, do not go beyond the limits of the known or conceivable effects of fluid action : " I have seen," says M. Benezet, " this round table when under the pressure of hands, elevate itself so as no longer to touch the earth ! In the first days of the new phenomenon, it could not raise its feet from the ground without leaning against the wall, or against some one of us. I have repeatedly seen it climb by small jerks, the length of my breast, and pause there some instants to fall over with a great crash. Since then, I have seen it leap, as it were, from beneath our fingers, seeking to reach certain objects which we held at a distance above it. One evening, the windows being open on account of the heat, a moth flew into the room while we were in conversation with the spirit. ' Catch the moth,' said one of the party. The table commenced to frisk about, now to the right, now to the left, exactly following the movements of the moth, and sometimes leaping up to reach it. . . . It even sustained itself in the air two or three minutes at a time, separating itself from the hand, then again clinging to it, and

giving little taps on our fingers as if by way of caress." Aside from this last fact, which must be reduced to its true proportions, but which, nevertheless, indicates with certainty the part of fluid action, the rest is so elementary that simple muscular pressure exercised in a moment of enthusiasm and lively excitement, might succeed in accomplishing it. Yes, I am sure that a round table may be raised from the ground by leaning it against a wall, it may be made to climb, by little jerks, against the breast of the operator, with the exception, perhaps, of letting it afterwards fall with a grand crash ; it may be raised and made to leap about in pursuit of a moth by contracting all the fingers whose moisture causes them to adhere to the table.

On another occasion, this phenomenon was produced with still more brilliancy. The spirit had just been interrogated. He had given his description, horns, a pitchfork with two prongs ; he had, even, rather presumptuously engaged to show himself under a visible form. All haste was made to remove the candles in order to assist this apparition, who could not carry out his arrangements in a strong light. "Immediately," says M. Benezet, "the table entered into a real paroxysm of rage, swaying itself to and fro in every direction, and knocking vigorously on the floor. Then it raised itself in the air, flew several times around the apartment without touching the ground, and distributed kicks to the right and left. As it was possible, in the darkness, for any of the party to sustain the table and give it an impetus, I approached it at different times, in order to judge of the reality of its motions for myself, and I sincerely declare that it was only necessary to touch it to understand that the impulsion was given with one hand only. For myself, I was thoroughly convinced. A young man, a stranger at the house, but whom I knew sufficiently well to rely upon his word, his age and good sense, moreover, excluding all idea of hallucination or of fear, affirmed to me that the table had pushed him into a corner of the room, and had pressed his neck tightly against the wall, without, however, doing him

any injury. In this situation, he assured himself, as he passed the three feet of the table in review, that no one supported it, and that Mr. and Mrs. L—— had each only one hand upon it."

If I have copied this story from M. Benezet, it is not that I vouch for all that may have occurred at his house during this nocturnal scene ; I only affirm that, supposing things to be as he relates them, I see nothing there which does not enter into the natural explanation: after having given responses that were the exact reflection of the thoughts of the assistants, the table abandoned itself under their fingers, to the most violent evolutions ; fluid impulsion or attraction frequently facilitated its complete elevation. I cannot be greatly surprised at that.

The American Spiritualists, in their petition to Congress, mention other facts which will excite no more astonishment in the mind of the reader accustomed to meet analogous phenomena wherever the action of the nervous fluid powerfully manifests itself. It often happens that the functions of the body are suspended, that sensibility ceases, that respiration is interrupted, that the limbs become cold and rigid. The annals of sorcery, of possession, and without going so far back, those of magnetism, are filled with similar incidents. Henceforth, I am not embarrassed at these things, neither at the extraordinary clairvoyance with which *mediums* are endowed, nor at the variety of knowledge they acquire by the penetration of the thought. We there recognize the well established effects of the fluid or physical agent, whatever it may be called, with which we meet in the cloisters of the Middle Ages, among the magicians of India and of Egypt, in the midst of the Cévenol prophets, the convulsionaries of Saint Médard, and the adepts of Magnetism.

So much for the fluid ; let us now pass to fraud. If it be absurd to regard fraud as the universal explanation, it would be no less absurd, not to assign to it an important part in the work. Side by side with the numerous *mediums* justly entitled to con-

sideration, are to be found charlatans, who seek to derive profit from *Spiritualism*. And this is not all: side by side with sincere *mediums* and charlatans, are to be found persons with a taste for mystery, the trace of whose hand it is easy to perceive in certain details, and who appear to have singularly aided (in France especially), the pranks played by the demons. I shall point out a few facts which may be imputed to fraud, in America first, then in England, and, finally, in our own land.

I would remark, in the first place, that the source itself of the spiritual manifestations does not seem to me entirely pure. Without bringing against the Misses Fox an accusation of dishonesty, which would probably be unjust, I cannot help suspecting in them, something of that inventive genius which quite often exists among the most upright young girls, and occasionally impels them to improve on the simple phenomenon. A genealogy of the *knockings* of the Fox family has been made, in which the noises heard by the Weckman family, who previously occupied the same house at Hydesville, are mentioned; but these noises, it is said, enter into the well-known category of knocks struck on doors by children, who forthwith take to their heels. The Misses Fox, fully impressed with the remembrance of that very common accident, finally worked themselves up to such a state, perhaps, that their fluid power caused the production of different sounds, corresponding to their will. This is possible; but I regret that the self-styled spirit should have forged for his *début*, the story of the travelling pedlar, Charles Rayn, killed and buried in the house; it being quite certain, indeed, that all the searches since undertaken, have not led to the discovery of any dead body. I regret, especially, that the same spirit should have shown so prompt and so decided a taste for publicity and for meetings. As it was the secret thought of the Misses Fox which thus betrayed itself, this trait of character can add but little to the concern caused me by their disposition to make the most of the thing.

Then come the knocks which, by means of the alphabet,

direct them "to give to the facts more notoriety." They discuss the difficulties and reply to the objection drawn from the fear of ridicule : "So much the better ! Your triumph will be only the more brilliant." The knocks insist upon the necessity of hiring a large hall ; they promise to perform prodigies in it, and they keep their word. I repeat, I do not like this *début* ; I find it too *American*. Perhaps I am wrong, however ; it is natural that the Misses Fox should be of their country, and that they should participate in the defects of a national character, the great and substantial qualities of which I admire as much as any one. Be that as it may, it remains certain that their discovery was real, although they misapprehended and perverted it. Various phenomena, and among others, the elevations without contact, have since appeared, which prove that their imagination was not alone in play. Let us estimate as we will, either as great or small, the part of enthusiasm, of exaggeration, the effect of attendant circumstances, of the systematic views which have appropriated the new phenomenon to themselves, we cannot prevent it from resting on a positive fact, discovered, or rather recognized by the Misses Fox, for it has, in all ages, marked the history of the brilliant explosions that demonstrate its existence.

Sincerity imposes on me the duty of acknowledging that there are some probable traces of contrivance, if not of fraud, even in the very origin of these prodigies. Later developments show me that there is cause for more than simple suspicion ; it is impossible not to feel that charlatanism and party spirit have too often played important parts in the matter ; some of the wonders can have been invented only by them. The advocates of Spiritualism, no longer content with knocks, more or less resounding, attempt to show on the wood, impressions such as might be produced by collision with a hard substance ! No longer content with motion fluidically communicated to inert matter, they imagine that they are visited by invisible hands, which trace characters on sheets of paper ! No longer content with the penetration of the thought, they pretend to recognize

the writing of deceased persons, their signature, and to receive communications in reference to the most secret details of their life !

Thus, a vast field is opened to fraud and to illusion. The essential point with the "*Spirits*" was to be once successful with a man of importance, the rest would soon follow. Among a people so disposed to infatuation as the Americans, who, with great independence on certain subjects are also complete slaves to prevailing modes, and follow, with docility, the footsteps of their *lions*, it was only necessary to procure one or two persons whose character and standing in the world would render them suitable agents for giving the impetus. Thus was the thing managed :—Mr. Simons, a very worthy magistrate, has just lost his son ; he receives a letter which a spirit appears to write before his eyes, unassisted by any hand, and which confounds him by a perfect imitation of the writing, by the incorrect style, and by some habitual faults in his child's orthography.—Judge Edmonds is one of the most respectable men in the United States ; decisive manifestations are multiplied around him ; an invisible voice announces to him that he will become a *medium*, and indeed, he now ranks at the head of the American Spiritualists.

It was well worth their trouble to procure information regarding the orthography of young Simons ; and the family of Judge Edmonds ; for in attacking persons of such importance to the new doctrine, they assured the complaisant credulity of thousands. How many fathers will recognize the writings of their sons, because Mr. Simons recognized that of his ?

"Et bûcherons de perdre leur cognée."

Many persons would have believed themselves dishonored if they had not followed in the train of such superior men. This feeling has contributed more than is generally imagined, to the triumph of the spirits ; and another circumstance that has no less contributed to the same result, is the perfect confidence

which the American people feel in the power of truth ; firmly persuaded that error is eventually overthrown, they not only allow it free scope for development, which is just, but they allow it to develop without serious opposition, which is dangerous. We also admit that truth will be the strongest ; but when ? how ? there is the question. The list of lies that have endured for ages, is long. In the consciousness of their strength, the Anglo-Saxons of the New World are not concerned about so small a matter ; *spiritualism* creates no more fear among them than the Mormons, and even they who detest these two inventions, rarely believe it their duty to combat them with vigor and perseverance. There have been, in the United States, some protestations against the spirits, especially against their anti-Christian revelations ; but there has been no attempt at any thorough study of the subject. Before such a study, before an energetic investigation in which it was the duty of Christians to take the initiative, they would have seen all the facts disappear that exceed the limits of fluid action : men suspended in the air, superhuman and icy hands, letters written by pens abandoned to their own control, revelations furnished in regard to dead ancestors, phantoms installed in houses, and carpets ripped up from the floors. I am induced to suppose that the American prodigies are sometimes the result of knavery on the part of the *mediums*, from the fact that their knavery has been really proved in England, and that it has been prejudicial not only to the propagation of Speaking Tables, but to that of Turning Tables, innocent as they are of any misdeeds. It will be sufficient for me to refer to the experiments of Mr. Lewes, as they are related in the *Quarterly Review*.

A lady, whose name I prefer not to mention, figured at the head of the best accredited *mediums* in London ; people came from all parts to consult her. By means of a needle and a dial, she replied to mental questions from the audience ; letter after letter, the name you thought of, was formed under your eyes, the solution you demanded was furnished. Yet it has been satisfactorily proved that the lady in question was not

even one of those lucid *mediums* whom the penetrations of the thought enables to accomplish pretended miracles. Her success was founded solely on the observation of physiognomies ; she thus divined the letters on which she was to pause.—Mr. Lewes suspected the trick ; in consequence of which, he amused himself by writing his questions in advance, communicating them to various persons, and then endeavoring to throw an expression into his countenance calculated to mislead Miss —. The result was that the needle on that day, with one exception, uttered only nonsense. Mr. Lewes's last question was correctly answered : " Is Miss ——— an impostor ? " The letters y-e-s. were successively pointed out on the dial.

It is proper to add that the test applied by Mr. Lewes was many times renewed with equal success. Very impressionable persons, whose thought externally betrayed itself, always received appropriate answers ; those who could control their features, regularly tempted the spirit to utter falsehoods.

I do not know to how large an extent fraud, properly so styled, has been practised in France by salaried *mediums*. The existence of charlatans and dupes is a fact neither very new nor very interesting to study. I prefer to domicile myself under the roof of an honorable family, and observe what is taking place among them. We shall surely meet no charlatans there, no interested motives leading them to profit by the prodigies, and yet we perceive, at the first glance, that all is not of good alloy ; the instant superstitious are in play, there springs up in the most honest and intelligent minds, a sort of involuntary complaisance for the supernatural, a disposition to exaggerate, to accept without serious examination, a determination, a necessity to justify that which has already been seen, by seeing much more, an enthusiasm, in one word, which manifests itself in pious frauds. And if, unfortunately, there should be found in the house a domestic, a friend who is in the vein for jesting, who makes no scruple of serving people according to their taste, and thus procuring emotions and good stories for the neighborhood, scenes absolutely incredible are witnessed.

This reflection was suggested to my mind in reading the statement of M. Benezet ; the portion already quoted clearly comports with the physical explanation ; that to which I am now about to refer, gives strong evidence, I think, of the agency of persons addicted to practical jokes.

Persuaded he was dealing with demons, M. Benezet adopted the only course he could pursue consistent with such a conviction ; he decided that neither he nor any of his family should henceforth take part in the experiments. "Mr. and Madame L—— to whom I mentioned my impressions, made," says he, "a similar resolution. Three days passed thus."

But knocks on the partitions, under the table, knocks everywhere, soon attracted their attention. "They were seated one evening towards eleven o'clock, around their small table, occupied with their books. Madame L—— had placed some holy water within reach, hoping thus to preserve herself from all nocturnal terrors. After remaining there about two hours, the same knocks were again heard, and as they seemed especially to come from under the chair of Madame L——, she dipped her fingers in the holy water, and sprinkled it on the spot whence the sound proceeded. Her hand was instantly seized and bitten above the second joint of the thumb, and she could with difficulty withdraw it. Her husband did not at first comprehend the cause of the cries she uttered, and great was his astonishment to see on her red and swollen flesh, the print of two rows of teeth."

Madame L—— had not entirely recovered from her emotion, when she uttered new cries, and fell into a swoon. Her right shoulder had been struck. Other blows and bites were afterwards given, the traces of which remained visible the next day. Taking refuge in the house of M. Benezet, where they hoped to escape these persecutions, Mr. and Madame L—— were so unfortunate as to import thither the system of nocturnal noises, which sometimes prevented all sleep. But they were only at the commencement of their tribulations.

"The following Sunday was signalized by a manifestation

of another sort. On the afternoon of that day, Mr. and Madame L—— were seated in their chamber, and the heat being very intense, they dropped asleep in their chairs. When Madame L—— awoke, she could not find the comb that had fastened up her hair. In vain both she and her husband sought for it in every corner of the apartment, in all the drawers; after abandoning their search, they saw it lying on the arm-chair, which they had uselessly turned up in every direction. The next day, Monday, was marked by numerous and varied accidents. The night previous, Mr. L——, according to custom, had deposited his watch on a table at the side of his bed. He looked at it in the morning on rising, and then made his toilet; when ready to leave his chamber, he went to the table for his watch, but could not find it. After a thorough search, the watch was at length found in the bed, under the mattress. On returning home, Mr. L—— placed it on the table before which he seated himself at work; at eight o'clock he prepared to go out, but . . . the watch at which he had just looked for the purpose of ascertaining the hour, was no longer there. He called his wife to inform her of this new incident. All at once she uttered a cry, she felt something cold moving about under her dress; it was the watch that had slid down her back, and paused at her waist, . . . whence, it moved up under the arm. Having securely fastened it in his watch-pocket, Mr. L—— went back to the table to get two books he had left there. Alas! they, in their turn, had disappeared. One of the books fell from the folds of a dress which he happened to hit in passing; the other was not found until evening, and then, on one of the shelves of the book-case."

Thus far, we might suspect that Mr. or Madame L——, plunged by their emotions into a sort of waking somnambulism, are themselves the involuntary authors of the tricks at which they are afterwards astonished, a case precisely similar in every respect, to that of the somnambulist fisherman, who, every night set at liberty the fish he had caught during the

day, and was each morning extremely vexed at their disappearance. But here come some jokes of an equivocal taste, which bear on their face strong evidence of their origin.

I pass over the incident of the cup in which was planted a carrot ; it belongs to a class of details I am not anxious to reproduce. Let us turn to those frolics of the pretended spirits that have endured the longest, and created the most noise.

“At the end of several hours, they found in the same place (that where the cup had been), a large horn of sugar-plums, which they brought immediately to show me. These were of all forms and colors. I noticed berries, peas, beans, acorns, nuts, etc. . . . Mr. and Madame L—— accepted with alacrity a place at my table, until these manifestations should cease. While at dinner, we very naturally spoke of the paper of sugar-plums before us, but which no one dared to touch. . . . Various persons, and in particular two ecclesiastics, who came to see the sugar-plums while we were yet at dinner, advised Madame L—— to visit the confectioners of the city for the purpose of ascertaining if they had any similar. The proposition was accepted.”

You believe that they really proceeded to an inquiry, so natural, so necessary, one which would, in all probability, lead to the discovery of the author of these adventures ! No, indeed ! Scarcely had they set out, than Madame L—— complained of the extraordinary weight the horn of sugar-plums had acquired in her pocket. On arriving at the confectioners the pocket was empty, and the investigation was abandoned !

“The same evening,” says M. Benezet, “Mr. and Madame L——, returning to their apartment, saw sugar-plums on a table, then on chairs, on the bed, on the floor, and as they picked them up, they kept finding others in the very place from which they had taken these. This is not all ; one of them remarked that there were no berries in the horn as in the morning, and immediately, they saw a handful of berries

on the table. 'There are no beans,' said the other; beans appeared on the bed. When they descended the stairs, they found them on all the steps, and some fell on the ground."

Here, M. Benezet observes, with his usual sincerity, that those persons who had the courage to taste the *bonbons*, found them delicious, he likewise acknowledges, that precisely similar ones were made in the city where all this happened; consequently, the devil, if it were he who thus lavished the sugar-plums, had spared himself the expense of manufacture. He had stolen the goods from the confectioner, all prepared to his hand! But let us proceed.

"The sport with the sugar-plums continued several days, but at quite long intervals, and in small quantities. Some fell even in my house, on the head of my mother, and on that of my wife. One day that Mr. and Madame L—— were with my mother, my wife, and several of my children in the chamber I had appropriated to their use, a *bonbon* all at once appeared on the table; its form was that of a berry. It was agreed that no one should touch it, for they were weary of the kind attentions of the spirit, and wished to try the effect of contempt in causing them to cease. After a few moments the berry disappeared, to the great satisfaction of the whole party. They thought no more about it, when it was again seen, not falling, but slowly descending from the top of the table. A young child who was present, ran to pick it up, but immediately threw it away, exclaiming, 'It is dirty!' They examined it; it was sticky, as though it had just left the mouth of some person."

I pause, for I fear to fatigue the reader in relating all that occurred: in telling of the hat of Mr. L—— which passed slowly into a neighboring chamber, where it was found tied round with a ribbon, and ornamented with goose feathers; of the shoes, which, in their turn, appear and disappear; the potatoes, the onions, and even the kitchen-knives, which fall round about him; his wife sewed into the bed-clothes, her hands fastened together with sewing silk; his own coat

decorated behind with a knot of ribbons. Most decidedly, the spirit played a gross farce.

I have related this history in some detail, because the spirits have done nothing more curious with us, and also because we here touch the origin of many facts which do not decidedly enter into the natural explanation. It shows us in what manner mystification, fraud, or the mania to produce a sensation, engrafts itself on the true foundation of fluid phenomena. It also shows us to what point is carried the forgetfulness of the most simple precautions and the most simple criticism, as soon as the supernatural comes in question. The abandonment of the inquiry relative to the *bonbons* is a fact hardly to be credited. We meet with the same hasty credulity in all the details ; thus, Mr. L—— being one day bombarded with rusty coppers, and having even seen pieces of one or two francs fall in front of him three or four times, (we have already remarked that his spirit is economical, and that, upon the whole, it is sparing of its *bonbons*, considering they are stolen), he picked up one of these pieces, and gave it to a beggar as he was passing out. "When he returned," adds M. Benezet, "a piece fell at his feet ; *it was the same*." The same ? How do you know ? Had it been marked ? Do not franc pieces resemble each other ?

But I will not extend an examination which is surely superfluous. Anecdotes of a similar character to the one above related, abound, and will abound more and more, provided a belief in the supernatural apocrypha continues to spread. Read, for example, a letter written the 6th of April last, by M. l'Abbé D——, of the diocese of Versailles. He gravely relates the following :

M. Ch——, the cow-keeper at Vaugirard, having lost his daughter, a noise was heard every night in the chamber of the deceased, similar to that made by a bag of nuts when it is emptied on the floor. Next, Madame R——, who resided in the establishment as housekeeper, heard, one morning, about eight o'clock, a sound like the roaring of a blacksmith's bellows.

At the same instant, she was enveloped in scalding suds, and struck on the back. A spot, circular in its form, and as large as a five-franc piece, remained on her garments. Awhile after that, a great tumult occurred in the court. The four hundred fowls took fright, and several of them fell into the well. This disorder extended to the neighboring grocer. Another time, Madame R—— is the victim of various tricks : her work is taken out of her hands, the chandelier is overturned, it remains suspended with the base in the air, and so on.

You are, perhaps, astonished not to see or hear anything of M. Ch——, the master of this house so strangely and perseveringly made the theatre of such disturbances. Here is the answer : M. Ch—— *has seen nothing himself*, in consequence of being necessarily absent from his house a great portion of the day on business, (and probably because he is not curious). “Moreover, he has the best opinion of the virtue, the sincerity, and the calmness of Madame R—— ; and he believes her incapable of inventing these stories.” (*La Table parlante*, 34.)

Let us not believe that our times have a monopoly of these wonders ; the spirits have not waited so long, merely for the purpose of knocking on partitions or deranging furniture. Everybody has heard of the famous adventure at Saint Maur, which, in the reign of Louis XIV., made so much noise in Paris and at Court. I quote some of the details from father Lebrun. (*Histoire des pratiques superstitieuses*, iv. 382–393.)

“M. de S——, to whom the adventure happened, is a young man. . . . He repeatedly heard, after getting into bed, loud knocks on his door ; but his servant, who opened it immediately, could find no person there. His bed-curtains were also drawn, although there was no one in the chamber but himself. . . . He was suddenly awakened by a shock, such as might be given by a boat when it strikes against the arch of a bridge. This so agitated him, that he called his domestics ; and, when they had brought the light, he was strangely surprised to see his bed more than four feet out of its place, by which he perceived that the shock felt by him had been caused by the hitting of his bed

against the wall. His people, having replaced it, saw, with as much astonishment as fear, all the curtains open at the same time, and the bed run towards the chimney. . . . These proceedings were twice repeated in presence of his people, who held the bed-posts, in order to prevent its moving. At length, being obliged to relinquish the struggle, he went to walk until dinner, after which, throwing himself down on the bed for repose, it twice changed its place, whereupon he sent for a man who lodged in the same house, as much for his company as to make him a witness to so surprising a fact. The shock that occurred in presence of this man was so violent, that the left foot at the head of the bed, was broken. . . . The report of these occurrences was immediately noised abroad in every direction, and, having come to the ears of a very great prince who had just arrived at Saint Maur, his highness was curious to unravel it."

This was no easy matter. M. de S. had entered into direct relations with the spirit. The latter, less brutal henceforth, contented himself with rocking the gentleman during the night, and thus facilitating his sleep. He made, indeed, a little noise in the kitchen, and could not resist the temptation of drawing the bolt when M. de S. was in his study; but there was no great harm in that.

More serious consequences had nearly resulted from the interviews with the spirit. One day, M. de S. received a command to do a certain thing, the spirit giving him fourteen days for its execution. He became so frightened, that he fainted. The spirit did not again allude to the matter; but, at the moment designated, knocks made themselves heard on the walls, and a terrible shock came against the window. These were the leave-takings of the spirit; he appeared no more; but this, however, did not prevent the curious from flocking to Saint Maur for a long time afterward.

Father Lebrun shows himself very skeptical in regard to the prodigy, and uses no ceremony in pointing his suspicions at M. de S. himself. "Let us represent to ourselves," he writes, "a

bedstead with rollers attached, and upon which a person is lying, whose imagination is aroused, or who wishes to enjoy the pleasure of frightening the domestics, or works himself up to a state of excitement, by complaining that he is tormented : is it surprising that this bedstead should be seen to move, especially if the floor of the chamber is polished ? ‘ But,’ it is said, ‘ there are witnesses who have even made useless efforts to prevent the motion.’ Who are these witnesses ? Two of them are young men in the employ of the patient, so frightened as to tremble from head to foot, and incapacitated, by their terror, to examine the secret cause of the motion ; the other witness, who may be regarded as the most important, has since declared to several persons, that he would give ten pistoles if he had not asserted that he had seen the bed move of itself.”

Our author has no difficulty in accounting for the voice (heard by M. de S. alone), and the blows always struck in his vicinity. He shows, that, after having commenced, perhaps by a joke, he has been impelled to continue, in order to make good his words. He further relates the judgment pronounced on these adventures by M. de S., the father—a man of distinguished merit : “ When, at Paris, he learned the circumstances from his wife, who was at Saint Maur, he told several persons of his conviction that the spirits at work in the matter, were those of his son and his wife.”

Now, either I am vastly deceived, or I have already succeeded in restricting the domain of the supernatural in the new phenomena ; between errors of testimony, fluid action, and the various forms of fraud, the marvellous constantly diminishes. There is still, however, some remaining, and certain musical sounds, certain visions, or certain touches, attested by a great number of individuals, cannot be fully denied or attributed to charlatanism. It is here, we must remember, hallucination comes in, and particularly the decisive observations of M. Morin. If he has succeeded without magic and without the assistance of any spirit, in making the images with which their minds were preoccupied, appear to the eyes of several spectators at once,

it is not difficult to understand that analogous effects may have been obtained in the United States.

The petition which the *spiritualists* last year addressed to Congress, speaks of harsh voices, detonations, harmonious sounds, produced sometimes by the assistance of instruments, sometimes without instruments of any sort. In one of the sittings destined to effect the first conversion, that of Judge Edmonds, celestial music played its part. "This evening," writes Mr. Spicer (*sights and sounds*), "closed delightfully, for various musical instruments, placed in contiguous chambers, were made to play, first separately, then altogether, either on the earth or in the air; thus, giving us an admirable concert, during which the measure was beaten, as though by the hand of the most skillful leader of an orchestra (*chef d'orchestre*)."

On the same day, the room in which they were sitting having been darkened, lights were seen to gush forth from different corners of the apartment. Under other circumstances, transparent human forms have made themselves visible, pens have been seen to rise up, dip themselves into the ink, and move across the paper; men have been transported through or suspended in the air; the *od* has been observed methodically to fulfill its functions at the expense of the furniture.

Their experience has not been limited to seeing; they have felt. Here is an extract from the book of Mr. Rogers, furnished us by M. des Mousseaux (*Mœurs et Pratiques*, 314-316):

"During the years 1849 and 1850, some of the most respectable houses of New York were possessed by a singular power, which appeared to reserve and appropriate to itself entire pieces of furniture. The invisible agent prevented all persons whatever, from touching certain objects which he seemed to have consecrated. The instant any individual was rash enough to attempt it, a creaking noise was heard, accompanied by a sort of light, and the mysterious power struck him vigorously; it seemed to him as though he were pommelled by invisible fists. From time to time, this agent seized hold of various members of the family, and drew them towards each other in the atti-

tude of persons about to fight. They all immediately received blows that none were seen to give. The women could no longer embrace each other without experiencing the sensation as of a kiss of fire, without imagining they felt their lips touched by the lips of a spirit. As for the poor little children, not one of them dared give to their mother the tender adieu of the night. In one word, the mysterious agent seemed to display a most remarkably malicious spirit. If, for example, the mistress of the establishment failed to pay proper respect to the rules he had established, if she chose to transmit orders to her domestics by means of a metallic tube communicating with the lower story, she was sure to receive on her face a blow so violent as to make her stagger, and immediately, a sort of mocking light played across her features."

Behold a law of *taboo* rigorously maintained ! I shall not be so indiscreet as to ask if these slaps in the face, "which made her stagger," if these blows of the fist, with which she was pommelled, produced any appreciable, physical effects, if they broke any noses, or caused any black eyes, things they were in the habit of doing in my time, at the College of Louis le Grand. I am content to establish, that the persons referred to were in such a condition, that the hallucination must have sprung from themselves. When an entire family is engaged in a struggle with the supernatural, when each individual lives in a state of expectation and apprehension, when certain interdictions pass for having been promulgated, it is most difficult for them to embrace each other or approach a metallic tube, without imagining they experience something extraordinary. The nervous state that gives birth to such predispositions, demands only a trivial pretext, out of which to create monsters ; it converts the slightest noise into thunder, the least touch into a shock. Attempt to hold an assembly of credulous people, under the prolonged impression of marvelous and terrible stories ; no matter what sort of an evening it may be, let silence afterwards reign, let a vague fear pervade the audience, and you will then see what proportions the smallest noise will assume !

The ground is prepared for hallucinations, yet those here

related, are as nothing to those which formerly affected sorcerers, *possédées, loups-garous, &c.* I am almost tempted to say, that it is not worth while to occupy ourselves with such trifles.

Children, who bring into these ravings more credulity than older persons, approach nearest to the beau-ideal of ancient sorcery. Look at the statements made by M. Benezet, to which I must again refer : there, children only, enjoy the privilege of complete hallucination ; they, only, contemplate certain apparitions. The evening on which the spirit promised to show himself as an old aunt, no one perceived him under this form, except one of the children, who directed his attention to the side opposite the round table. He saw an old lady in a corner. He was about to exclaim : "There is the sorceress !" but he checked himself, fearing it was only his grandmother, who might have entered through the door of the balcony ; not wishing to offend her by such a remark, he went first to assure himself that she was still in the same place where he had seen her a few minutes previous ; when he returned, the old woman was no longer there." Some days afterwards, as they were in the height of their prodigies, two of the sons of M. Benezet repaired to the little seminary. "They saw an old woman leaning from the window of the abandoned apartment ; this apparition showed itself a second time ; the third day it ceased."

This was the very least that might be expected from these poor children, breathing, as they did, night and day, such an atmosphere. Their visions, in which no other person participated, gave us an opportunity to trace, in some measure, the gradual formation of hallucinations.

A new feature, closely approximating to hallucinations, characterizes the experience of the family of M. Benezet : the sounds, the lights, the spectres, the shocks, exist only for the adepts. Never, to my knowledge, have the sudden lights produced in the *Spiritual* circles attracted the attention of passers-by in the street ; never have their harmonies or their thunders charmed or frightened the neighborhood. Assertions to the contrary should be submitted to an inquiry as simple as severe ;

the result is easy to foresee, since, when we are told of noises that have been heard, so they say, at a distance of two miles, we do not see it added that all persons travelling in that region, that everybody within the limits of a circle, the radius of which was two miles in extent, were disturbed, at the same instant, by the sound of this formidable explosion.

This recalls to my mind analogous observations, to which some former proceedings in sorcery have given rise. Mr. Oldfield (*To Daimonion*, 56) has analyzed, in this respect, the works of Mather and other authors who have undertaken to describe the Salem witchcraft. The accused, he says, saw spectres that were invisible to ordinary eyes ; they also saw and felt stones of great dimensions, the blows from which wounded them ; yet, neither the stones nor the marks of the blows were afterwards to be discovered ; they smelt odors that existed only for them.

Hallucination, then, was what it is to-day, and I assure those who reject it, that without it, they will find the impossibility of explaining some hundreds of thousands of magicians and sorcerers, whose sensations, very certain to themselves, corresponded to nothing real.

Does any one pretend to object to my system, that it is accommodating, and that it is easy to get out of a difficulty, when we can, at pleasure, suppress the embarrassing facts which do not consent to enter into the natural explanation furnished by fluid action ? Is it found amiss that, by means of errors in testimony, fraud or hallucination, I overthrow a large number of allegations ? But no one will have a right to complain that, in all this, I have acted in an arbitrary spirit, unsupported by proofs and strong indications. The reader can judge for himself ; I have made him follow, step by step, the birth and the development of hallucinations ; I have pointed out to him the signs of mystification and fraud. Is not this enough ? well, then, let us add a few more words.

We are told of terrible knocks, by which the spirits manifest their presence in circles formed of the incredulous (*Le Mystère*

de la danse des tables, 13). We everywhere hear of the generous distribution of slaps and blows with the fists, which continually signalize their displeasure. Now, here we are at Valleyres, in the most favorable conditions for being knocked about by the spirits, since we ridicule, and at the same time, it is said, hold relations with them. Whence comes it that we escape the punishment our impertinence deserves? Whence comes it that I, in particular, have not been mercilessly beaten while engaged in writing these two large volumes against the spirits? This is the very time to make phantoms appear, to set hands without bodies or invisible hands at work. And let no one object that we would be beaten if we were less incredulous; for it is precisely the incredulous who are beaten by the spirits on the other side of the Atlantic. When not beaten, they are at least frightened by some unlooked-for enchantment, by explosions, lights, thunder, by dances of heavy pieces of furniture, or the transportation of men through the air. It must be admitted, however, that in pursuing such conduct, the spirits give proof of intelligence, while they compromise their reputation by not molesting the skeptics who turn their prodigies into ridicule, and refuse to recognize their good offices in the rotation of the tables and in the elevations without contact.

Petitions bearing a large number of signatures, have been addressed by the American *Spiritualists* to the Senate and the House of Representatives. By this bold step, which also proves the sincerity of a majority of the *mediums*, they have been clever enough further to increase the publicity of their grand facts, and to strengthen the belief in the spirits, without actually incurring any danger of the solemn investigation they solicit. It would have been well, in my opinion, if Congress had granted their petition, subject, however, to the stipulation that the inquiry should be conducted under conditions similar to those I am now about to suggest, and indeed, the only ones that can assure security against errors. With a brief reference to these conditions, I shall close my exposition of the complete insufficiency of the evidence as yet presented to us.

It is easy to preserve such an investigation from all chances of fraud or biological hallucination.

The spirits, I venture to guarantee, will produce no more of those noises which are heard at the distance of two miles, when they shall be forewarned that the means of establishing the precise moment of the explosion have been organized throughout every portion of the populous districts affected by them. They will give us no more blows which leave their impression on the wood where they fall, when they shall become acquainted with the fact that they will be considered genuine, only when received by a certain board, bearing the stamp affixed by the commissioners appointed, and who do not lose sight of it for an instant. They will no longer choose to write under a drawer, when the piece of paper placed there, shall be stamped with a private mark, impossible for them to anticipate. The same precaution of a private mark over the pen that is to write, as well as the paper employed, will cause the spirits to dispense with the experiment in which this pen is seen to rise, dip itself into the ink, and trace characters on the paper.

If the question regards the revelation of things unknown to all the persons present, let the *mediums* be invited simply to reproduce the contents of a page, enclosed in the portfolio of one of the commissioners, which he has extracted, at random and without reading it, from some book in his library. If the question relates to making men fly, let this favor be demanded for one of the commissioners.

In regard to the writing and the signature of the dead, let them not accept the first comer from the spiritual world; but let them indicate to the spirit some person whose letter has been taken at hap-hazard, and without looking at it, from old archives. In regard to music, let them demand the execution of that which, taken in the same way from the first score at hand, figures in the pocket of the commissioners.

The spirits who know everything, who divine, who teach unknown languages, who are acquainted with the secrets of families, who reply to mental questions, who, in short, every

day reveal a thousand things which no one previously suspected, are fully able to submit to such tests. If they refuse (and they will refuse), we shall know what conclusions to draw.

It is also a matter of course, that agents should be placed outside of the house to watch if the windows are or are not illuminated when the lights are said to be produced; if the sounds of the concert really reach their ears the instant the music commences in the interior.

The commissioners being, no more than others protected from the possibility of biological hallucinations, everything should be prepared in advance, or submitted to a mode of verification that in no way depends on personal impressions. I recommend, in particular, that of which we have here made use, in order to demonstrate the illusion of persons who believed such acts to be supernatural. The book closed, its page indicated without opening it, is a specific, the effects of which have, until now, been infallible: I am convinced that its efficacy would be as great in America as on the Old Continent.

Spirits have the complaisance to place themselves at the disposition of persons who wish to interrogate them; they are in the habit of solving questions not expressed. It would ill become them, therefore, to fall back on their dignity, and refuse to reply when the commissioners present them with a book, and politely ask them to quote the contents of page 153, 492, or any other page of which they may happen to think. Now, I pledge you my word, this quotation will never be made. I pledge you my word that if, addressing yourself to the same spirits who excel in descriptions, you ask them to describe the personage who figures in a certain verse, on page 215 of the historical dictionary placed in your hand, the spirits will wander from the point; they will be unable to indicate either the name, as yet unknown, of every person concerning whom the revelation is solicited, the place of his birth, or the circumstances of his life related in the dictionary.

Will it be objected that the spirits may be ignorant of what

is contained in my book ! I answer that they actually pretend to know (*Table parlante*, 10), cautiously confining themselves, however, to the designation of the first letter on a page opened at random, whereas, I ask of them the entire page. But you are familiar with the saying of Mme. du Deffant : "*Il n'y a que le premier pas qui coûte.*"* The spirit who knows the first letter, will know all the others ; but in exacting of him to proceed to the end, we remove the chances of easy divination furnished by the frequent return of certain letters.

The spirits are prepared, then, to read the page indicated. Do they not read sealed letters, letters locked up in a trunk ! Do they not count the money in our purse ! Here, doubtless, their partisans resort to the plea that they sometimes commit mistakes, and even tell lies. This is a prudent, and by no means a useless precaution, for we are assured that often, in a word of four letters, the table does not indicate a single one correctly. But we shall also force this last intrenchment. The chances of error, however numerous they may in an emergency be made, are not so great that the spirits do not tell the truth, at least one time in ten. If such were the case, no one would consult the *mediums*. We will adopt this, or any other proportion of error you may see fit. I will give you successively, the numbers taken at random of ten or twenty pages of my book, and provided a single one is accurately reproduced, I will make the *amende honorable* to the spirits.

We will apply the same rule to their divinations. They are deceived ! They utter lies ! very well ; provided that out of ten, twenty ephemerides, there is one which describes in advance, day by day, hour by hour, for a month in succession, the degrees of the thermometer, of the barometer, of the hygrometer, the quantity of rain, the direction of the winds, and the notable events in a specified locality, I will confess myself vanquished. Besides, the best things should not be abused ; to declare themselves fallible and liars, is all well

* The difficulty is in the outset.—*Trans.*

enough ; but it is an act of modesty quite likely to compromise the position of spirits. I advise them to submit to a few mortifications rather than diminish beyond measure, the value of their revelations and their prophecies.

I have no need to insist further. Everybody will comprehend in what way these various experiments, hitherto performed and accepted with inconceivable carelessness, may be made to assume a serious aspect : the knowledge of strange tongues, the displacement of enormous pieces of furniture, all these things, in short, are easy to prove within certain limits, and to a certain degree.

And let it be remarked, that beyond this proof, we have no right to affirm anything ; errors of testimony, fraud, hallucinations, all add to the natural effects of fluid action whatever is wanting to constitute them veritable prodigies. I have shown in what way ; it will not be necessary for me to return to it. I would ask, then, of the partisans of the spirits, that, in place of publishing long petitions, and laying them before Congress, they simply consent to make these same spirits recite correctly, the contents of a page indicated at random, from a book brought by an opponent, and which has remained unopened either by him or any other person present. So long as they shall refuse to accept this test, in which we leave to them still the chance of reading through an opaque body, so long it will be very evident to my mind that they delight in their illusions. The principle of tests has in all ages been accepted by the spirits ; it has been formally proclaimed by those of our own times ; they have, then, not the slightest pretext for avoiding the necessity to which every discovery must submit, to which Animal Magnetism victoriously submitted, when engaged in its five years' struggle with the commissioners of the Faculty of Medicine. These spirits who know the most hidden circumstances of our past and of our future, who are acquainted with all languages, who reply to mental questions, who reproduce the gestures, the writing, and even the orthography of our deceased relatives, these spirits, who sometimes venture to read

the first letter of a page, should not plead their ignorance when the decisive moment appears.

“But,” it is said, “the spirits will, perhaps, not recoil before the test !” This is inadmissible, for they have hitherto recoiled. The simple idea above mentioned, has immediately and everywhere entered the minds of everybody ; they, who have put it in execution have obtained (I speak from experience), the most significant results; they have given to the false supernatural a blow so severe that it has not since ventured to hold up its head in their presence ; they who have not put it in execution have, doubtless, had their reasons. Nor have we any cause for uneasiness ; if the test had anywhere been successful, the thousand trumpeters of spiritualist renown would long since have informed us of it ; books, journals and reviews would have related these experiments, with full particulars.

It is to be regretted that the superhuman science of the agent, will not consent to manifest itself under conditions that alone, would absolutely exclude the possibility of incorrect testimony, fraud, or hallucination. But I do not stop here, I wish my demonstration to be complete, and all who read my work to be thoroughly convinced ; I shall, therefore, present a few other considerations which seem to me to possess a certain value.

I am first struck by the processes employed by the new revelation ; it would have been impossible for it to take an easier method. It began with knocks corresponding to an alphabet; there, at least, was a very interesting fluid phenomenon. But soon wearied of practising serious things, it had recourse to easier paths. The spirits of the tables are charged, be it understood, with themselves regulating these successive ameliorations which were to end in speaking and writing *mediums*, their most sublime manifestation. Already the little board armed with a pencil, lent itself to everything ; the needles that turn and indicate letters on a dial, were not less complainant. Yet there was still an intermediate agent between the

thought of man and the expression of that thought ; it was necessary to succeed in making the man himself speak, and in this relation, the invention of *mediums* is truly admirable.

The *medium* chosen by other *mediums*, formed in circles of the initiated, the depositary of the common thought, is free from everything miraculous. He has nothing further to do than to fall into a condition more or less nervous, and then to reply to questions either by rapping with the hand, making signs with the head, indicating letters on an alphabet, writing under the dictation of spirits, or speaking in virtue of their inspiration.

Thus, the processes have constantly been simplified ; in the first place, raps corresponding to an alphabet ; then dials, tables moving on a pivot, each provided with a needle which pauses opposite the letters printed on a stationary circle ; and lastly, the *mediums*, properly so called, waking somnambulists, whose hands are said to be directed in whatever they write, and whose mouths are said to be directed in whatever they utter ;— behold a logical series of transformations pervaded by the false supernatural, incapable of real prodigies, falling back more and more upon the only fact in which it excels, the only fact of importance to it, on the fact of revelation, and of revelation by a mode as easy and as rapid as possible.

At the present time the *bagatelles* of the door are passed, having abandoned the zone of physical phenomena, we are on the high road to overstep also the zone of miraculous acts ; the true connoisseurs disdain the transportation of furniture, the sudden lights, and the aerial harmonies ; they give us no more of these things than is absolutely necessary to confound the profane ; they themselves, cling almost exclusively to the revelations. After concentrating itself in the *mediums*, *Spiritualism* further concentrates itself in their words and especially in their writings. We comprehend, however, that words and writings can very well be explained without the aid of miracle ; I add, without insincerity. The most sincere men may write entire volumes, the ideas of which emanate from their own minds, in

the conviction that their hand, as docile as that of an automaton, has all the time obeyed a supernatural impulsion.

M. Louisy, who may, assuredly, be ranked among the number of these sincere men, repeatedly proclaims in his book (*Lumière !* 37, 72, 73), the superiority of the process followed by the *writing mediums* over that of the poor creatures who are still reduced to the necessity of spelling by the assistance of the round table.

"There are," says he, "two methods of putting one's self in relation with the spiritual world, two very simple methods, one of which is the complement of the other : through the agency of objects, an *indirect relation* ; through the agency of man, a *direct relation*. By the first agent, the relation is indirect, since objects are necessary to obtain it ; it is, however, gross, uncertain, and exposes the questioner to errors or contradictions. Nevertheless, it is a necessary *début* in order to arrive at complete communication. By the second agent, the relation is direct, since the spirit, as soon as it is called, dictates its responses to the man, or avails itself of the hand of the man in writing. This relation is immediate and perfect ; there is neither obscurity nor error, nor delay in the manner in which it is established. But its use has not been given to every body."

"This is the crown of the work, the greatest experiment of all : after the material agent, the physical agent. The discovery, revealed by rotation, sanctioned by the language of objects, is about to complete itself and suddenly assumes immense proportions. The veil is rent, the truth is displayed before us. The spirit, hitherto reduced to humble but necessary manifestations, has no longer need of inanimate interpreters ; he himself speaks. But the spirit, soul without body, intelligence, disencumbered of terrestrial shackles, has no other intelligible voice to men, than the interior thought, which gushes up either by way of encouragement or remorse, from the very depths of the human conscience. What new agent will the spirit choose ? How establish this direct relation, so ardently desired ? How

fill up the abyss that separates the creature from the Creator, draw nearer to Heaven, and make the earth forgotten? Here commences the sphere of the *medium*."

Henceforth, these gentlemen mend their pen, place themselves at their desk, ink the paper, send it to the printer, correct the proofs, affix their signature—and all is said! the oracle has spoken! the prodigy is accomplished! There could not be a less expensive way of becoming a prophet.

We still meet with some *mediums* who consent to make their operations complicated; but this complication, intended as a support to the marvellous, is more apparent than real.

When the shade of Lord Byron translates into English verse, the French piece that is presented him, the spirit asks *half an hour* in which to make its version. This fact was mentioned in the *Revue Britannique* last year.

M. Morin tells us of certain circles in which a conventional order, differing from that of the alphabet, is given to letters. (*La magie*, 53-55.) The speaking-table (for it is still employed) indicates the letter by two numbers separated by a pause—the number of the horizontal column first, that of the vertical column next; one rap followed at a distance of two, will signify *f*; three raps followed at a distance of five, will signify *x*. Any person can construct a similar index. Now, it is said, the persons who are at the table do not translate; they are probably ignorant of the value of these conventional signs, which are successively collected by a secretary, and their equivalents not established until afterwards. Here is the illusion: the arrangement is so simple that it becomes, at the end of a few moments, as familiar to every one of the operators as the alphabet itself; they know then what they are doing, even in unconsciously determining the number and order of the blows; they operate with conventional signs as with letters, and it is always their thought which is reflected in the motions of the table.

Elsewhere, a strange coloring is assured to the experiments by obtaining phrases consisting of only twelve words. That

seems very difficult, and yet it is not. Our intellect accustoms itself, with astonishing ease, instinctively to throw its thoughts into a uniform mould, to regulate the number of words in which they shall be clothed. Let us not forget, moreover, that the operators follow, word by word, the oracle of the table, and arrange themselves, unconsciously perhaps, so as to lengthen or contract the phrase, and thus conform to the programme.

While speaking of the circles that react against the simplifying motion, and impose an awkwardness on the new revelations in order to preserve their prestige, I would also mention, in conformity with M. Morin, those circles in which the table is required to indicate, in advance, the number of words, or even letters, that compose the phrase. But we soon acquire extreme facility in making calculations of this sort ; and the prodigy in question is really a small matter in comparison with the act of reading a book or a score of music in which we scarcely glance at the characters and the notes. In short, nothing in this experiment, or in the preceding, prevents the operators from taking away or adding words in order to make the number tally with the number proclaimed in the beginning.

As regards the responses in old French, I shall, I trust, be excused from dwelling on them, as well as from entering upon an explanation exonerating the tables from all charge of personal archæological researches. This feat lies at the door of certain erudite members of the chain ; no one doubts it, and M. Morin least of all.

A review of the processes confirms our opinion on the subject of the supernatural ; a review of the interests concealed behind the *spiritualist* phenomena will not be of a nature to destroy this impression.

The interests, I have said ; and, indeed, that which contributes more than anything else, perhaps, to render testimony in supernatural matters suspected, is the fact that the supernatural is rarely disinterested ; it always makes its appearance

in behalf of some doctrine, in support of some party that has need of it. While an honest experiment is connected only with the investigations of its author, and must consequently be judged by itself, and for its intrinsic value, prodigies are in strict relation with the creeds which claim to profit by them. Thence, a sort of relative insincerity, a disposition to receive without sufficient examination, to extol, to embellish. We have already remarked that the establishment of religious orders has always been preceded, accompanied, and followed by miracles. The present phenomenon is not without its analogy to them.

What is it that is taking place in Europe and America? Among us, a considerable party seizes with avidity the opportunity now furnished it, to restore to honor the most compromised portions of its religious belief, and to rehabilitate the most disreputable period of its history. The seed thus falls into a ground well prepared; the wonders from beyond the sea are welcomed; in touching the shores of our Old World, they meet with a whole army of writers, priests and journalists, eager to take them under their patronage, to interpret them according to their views, to defend them against all opposition. They lived poorly on their first sorceries—those of Cideville, of transcendent magnetism, the ecstasies of Cahagnet; but here falls an unlooked-for manna: magic is restored in all its former glory; possessions, witchcraft, infection by contact or by formulas, the *sabbat*—all the devilish machinations of the Middle Ages, are about to escape from the discredit under which they have hitherto hung their heads! The affair is in good hands, and will be skillfully managed, as a matter of course.

But it is especially important that the origin of the present movement should be studied in the countries that have given it birth; it is there we must direct our inquiry regarding the existence of any considerable interest explanatory of the rapid progress of *Spiritualism*. In order to resolve this problem, it is sufficient to glance at the revelations of the *mediums*; they are all enrolled in the service of the same doctrine; they preach it, they develop it, they give it the quasi-religious sanction which

it has hitherto lacked, they attribute it to souls separated from their bodies, and bringing back to earth intelligence from another world. Why should we henceforth doubt that the recent wonders have found in America, as in Europe—in America first—in America especially—the powerful and devoted protection of a party?

This party, by universal consent, is the Unitarian party—that which, separating not alone from Protestantism, but from entire Christianity, rejecting the divinity of Jesus Christ, the expiation by his blood, and the authority of the Scriptures, has arranged a sort of religious philosophy, or philosophical religion, the irremediable weakness of which not even the genius of a Channing has for a single instant been able to disguise. In vain is such a system covered with purple rags; its nakedness is always visible; a human revelation, or that which amounts to the same thing, a selection made by man from the Divine Revelation, will always fail of authority; in vain will it be called a religion, a church—names do not change the nature of things; that which is from below, remains below; that which is human, remains human. Thus do we see that, notwithstanding the favor with which all deists are regarded who take a different view of existence from Voltaire, and who, without Christianity, wish to preserve the name of Christians, Unitarianism is incapable of giving signs of life. Where are its Evangelists, its missionaries? It is condemned to vegetate in Boston, and in a few other large cities, offering a point of rally to intermediate opinions, which, in the fullness of their wisdom, pretend to pass judgment on the Bible, and at the same time reject gross incredulity. There, neither its irreproachable moral principle, nor the intelligence, and sometimes even the virtue of many of its members—neither the celebrity obtained by their writings, nor the importance of their social or political position—nothing can give to Unitarianism that which it lacks, and which it could only possess in renouncing itself.

And this is precisely what many of its adherents have thought they found in *Spiritualism*; they have there perceived

the means of procuring for it a superhuman sanction, a special revelation, and of passing, if not into the number of Christian sects (that is impossible), at least into the number of religions. The American Spirits are occupied with only one thing, with transforming into religion the religious philosophy of the Unitarians. In the midst of anathemas from all the churches, they imperturbably attack the importance and the truth of dogmas, they deny the Fall and the Atonement, Hell and Salvation. Then, after having reduced the Gospel to powder, they proclaim a humanitarian religion, a religion of progress, of the good man, of the man-king, of the man-God ; they preach universal salvation, generally grafted on a strange metempsychosis. Especially do they everywhere spread the chief doctrine of Unitarianism : Scripture is wrong whenever it seems to be in contradiction with human reason ; the latter is the true, the sovereign judge, it is the positive, and consequently, the only revelation.

Thus, to believe only in ourselves and ghosts, this is the sum and substance of the doctrine which the American *mediums* vie with each other in promulgating. That which Unitarianism has ordinarily indicated with circumspection, that which it has not always avowed to itself, the *mediums* proclaim on the house-tops ; that which Unitarianism has with difficulty accredited, because devoid of all authority, the *mediums* propagate with success, for they speak in the name of souls. Thus, the evil gains ground, and I should be seriously concerned for the United States, if this of all countries in the world, perhaps, were not the one in which a faith in the Saviour, and a belief in the infallibility of the Scriptures have thrown the deepest roots, in which they have exercised the most extensive influence. The Unitarians will meet their match, and the revelation of the spirits will be shattered to pieces against the revelation of the Holy Spirit. Thanks be to God, in opposition to the *spiritualist* movement, there is a Christian movement, the tendency of which is to efface the miserable traditions of churches, and to overpower all feeble, secondary

differences in the great unity of Christ's disciples. The Church, victorious over sectarian tendencies, will easily triumph over the fashionable superstition.

Meanwhile, this fashion makes its victims. The new revelations respond too well to the natural instincts of the heart, they court too cunningly, the socialist disposition of some, and the anti-Christian repugnances of others, not to have great success. Quite naturally, and without acting in concert, the Unitarian party, favored by them, generally favors them in turn. Among the important *mediums*, a great number are declared Unitarians. They bring to the service of these woeful errors, the influence, often considerable, attached to the elevated position they occupy, or the public career they have led.

This, then, is the capital point ; a point of which it is essential not to lose sight, if we would grasp the true character of *Spiritualism*, and estimate the prodigies at their just value, if we would make a due allowance for enthusiasm and errors of testimony, in place of maintaining the impossible thesis which imputes them all to fraud. The Unitarian party (the Unitarian tendency, if you prefer it), is at the foundation of the *spiritualist* revelation. This fact is forcibly set forth in the documents ; M. de Richemond (*le Mystère de la danse des tables*, 18, 19), has remarked it with his usual perspicacity :

"The truth is," says he, "that although a certain number style themselves Christians, the evident end of these *spiritual manifestations*, an end, which, moreover, the majority frankly avow, is to annihilate all Christian sects, while they treat almost with indifference, the dogmas of shameful superstitions. On their ruins, as well as on the ruins of the whole of society as it at present exists, for they would make a clean sweep of all our institutions, religious, political and social, they would elevate the only worship based on truth and reason, the only worship worthy of Divinity, that is to say, a sort of Deism or Pantheism, to which they, nevertheless, preserve the name of Christianity. Thus far, moreover, they admit the principles

of evangelical morality, they venerate Jesus Christ as the best and most enlightened of men, as having been sent and inspired of God to save the world. But they neither believe in His Divinity, in original sin, in the existence of the devil, nor especially in the perpetuity of punishment, a dogma which they all unite in opposing."

The Unitarian system could not be better defined. Is it not a remarkable dispensation that systems of this sort should always be condemned to pass into *Illuminism*? Philosophies that pretend to create for themselves religions, are eventually made to feel the impracticability of their enterprise, that an abyss separates them from the end in view, and then, cost what it may, they try to throw a bridge over the chasm. What bridge can they throw, if it be not a special revelation to them, one which must still appear divine. Therein is a providential atonement to human pride.

The Unitarians would occupy a position in relation to Christianity (dying, if we may trust to their report !) which the Neoplatonicians formerly occupied in relation to Paganism. Like them, they have recourse to an eclectic method, choosing something from all the theories, and endeavoring to give to the sacred doctrine a *reasonable* signification, compelling themselves to preserve the name after having transformed the substance, in short, devoting themselves to the mission of saving it, in spite of itself. Like the Neoplatonicians, they laboriously construct a philosophy which represents itself as a religion ; like them, and it must indeed be so, they finally end in visions, in ecstasies, in theurgic mysticism. The Unitarians are the Alexandrians of the Christian Church, with this difference, that the Christian Church is younger than ever, while the Pagan fables have fallen never to rise again. So also, the Alexandrians of the nineteenth century will not leave their trace in a history, upon the whole, as brilliant as that of their predecessors. They cannot pretend, moreover, that the world has not progressed since the days of Plotinus, Porphyry, and Proclus ; they are, therefore, forced to propagate their reve-

lations by other methods. Instead of contemplations, they have *mediums*; instead of miracles, they have ghostly gossip; instead of placing their superstitions at the service of mysteries, they place them at the service of rationalism; instead of dissolving dogmas in allegory, they dissolve them in indifferentism; instead of engendering the Illuminism which loses itself in the clouds, they engender that which draws its nourishment from the earth, and covenants with utilitarian or socialist tendencies.

The Deist philosophy with religious pretensions, has had among us only a short career: it has given birth to Saint Simonianism, and that is all we can say of it; since that celebrated experiment, our Deists have been content to remain philosophers, without the ambition to make themselves a sect. In the United States, where the Gospel exercises a much deeper influence, the school of which I speak has succeeded in longer maintaining an appearance of Christianity; but the crisis has at length arrived, and the prophecies of the *mediums* seem destined to make, on the other side of the Atlantic, the slightly embellished pendant to the doctrines here promulgated by Father Enfantin.*

There is, then, in schools with a double set of principles, an irresistible tendency to pervert both. They are sterile as philosophies, for they still appeal, with more or less urgency, to the creeds with which they do not desire to break; they are powerless as religions, for they cannot elevate their disciples above their own level, nor can the oracles of man ever be an authority for man; in short, they foolishly founder on the inevitable rock of puerile superstitions and revelations in private houses. The moment is coming when naked incredulity will no longer suffice to maintain a religion; even at this very day, recourse is had to incredulity tacked on to ecstasies and visions.

* The founder of Saint Simonianism.—*Trans.*

Such is the phenomenon produced in the United States, and which explains, in a great measure, as we have just seen, the otherwise inexplicable success of speaking tables and *mediums*. But in order to give all due energy to the disgust with which such a fact should inspire us, let us have the courage to take one step more: we have estimated the processes and the principal cause of the movement, let us likewise estimate its contents.

First, what is the nature of the beings whom the *mediums* are reputed to address? Among us, opinions are divided; some, whose views are expressed by Messrs. de Mirville and Des Mousseaux, maintain that we have dealings with devils; some and they are the most numerous, perhaps, believe that souls of the dead animate the speaking tables; while very many others will not take the trouble to solve the problem, but admit, pell-mell, angels, devils and ghosts. In America, the almost universal opinion of the Spiritualists is declared in favor of the latter, and, indeed, this is a matter of course, since the negation of Satan is one of the Unitarian doctrines.

I shall not here revive a discussion already exhausted in the second part of this work. Everything in the Bible protests against the part they would attribute either to angels, to demons, or to souls. If there existed angelic or diabolical revelations, even though mingled with errors, they would constitute a fact so considerable, an element so essential in our means of information concerning things of another sphere, that the Scriptures would continually speak of them, in order to awaken our attention, or put us on our guard.

Is there anything more irreconcilable with the contents of the Holy books, than these angels who cease to be messengers, in order to become revealers at the command of our evocations, these demons, who come to animate our furniture the moment we form the chain, these elect and these damned ones, delivered up to our caprices, these good and evil spirits, obeying the same material processes!

I would only return to this single objection. The reader is

aware that I have presented ten, each more decisive than the other. The idea of evoking the souls of the dead, an idea as old as the world, and found among the Protestants themselves at a period when, just separated from the Roman Church, they still preserved the trace of many of its traditions, this idea constitutes the true basis of the present epidemic. Wherever we go, we meet only the souls of the dead ; we assemble together in the evening, to converse with this or that spirit ; the programme of the spectacle is often communicated in advance, and the adepts are unwilling to be absent whenever piquant adventures are announced. I cannot express the extent to which my sentiments are outraged by this impious sport. I know, doubtless, that souls are not thus abandoned to our discretion ; the Bible leaves me no cause for anxiety on this point ; nevertheless, I cannot help feeling deeply pained, when I think that hundreds of thousands of human beings are gravely occupied with such abominations. How is any limit to be put to evil curiosity, to sacrilegious questions, to usurpations of a domain with which we have no right to meddle ? One demands the day and the hour of his death ; another inquires concerning the eternal welfare of his friend or enemy ; a third seeks to gain light on impenetrable mysteries, or solicits directions on the proper conduct to pursue in reference to religious questions or the affairs of this life ! To-day, they evoke one of the damned, to-morrow, an elect, the day after, a prophet, an apostle ; Jesus Christ himself, perhaps ! Yes, all that has occurred. That the soul should become corrupted, that faith should be weakened, that respect for everything holy should vanish, that the most fundamental notions of the true and false should be confounded by such occupations, that the intellect should be perverted, the heart hardened and unfitted for terrestrial duties as well as for simple and childlike submission to the Word of God, is doubtless not necessary for me to prove.

If, passing from souls to demons, we place ourselves on the ground assumed by M. de Mirville and his friends, we shall not be less dismayed as we behold to what odious consequences we are

immediately led. The restoration of the devils of the Middle Ages is also accompanied by a foretaste of the abominable infamies which then polluted all imaginations. Already certain significant omissions figure in the statements published; the language of the demons is so unchaste, the communications they address to the women who consult them are of such a nature, that they dare not tell the whole.

There can be nothing more incoherent, moreover, than the information which is given us on the nature of these spirits. As the greater number persist in presenting themselves in the quality of souls, their partisans get over the difficulty by making them confess that this is a disguise in fashion among them! At all events, the fashion is of recent date, for in the good times of sorcery there was not the least confusion between devils and ghosts; there was rarely any between evil and good spirits. But at the present day, it is disputed as to whether the spirits of the speaking tables are all bad. The very Catholic editor of the *Table parlante* (51, 52) attacks M. des Mousseaux on this point. "Does not our honorable correspondent," he says, "go too far in affirming that the spirit who answers through the tables, is always bad? If he is right, it then follows that all contrary facts must be denied, and, in particular, those mentioned in the first number of this work! We know that the spirit of evil assumes all disguises, even that of sanctified souls; but is this a reason for believing that the dead cannot enter into communication with the living?"

It is not for me to take part in this intestine war. It suffices for me to remark, that the spirits who reveal so many other things, should offer rather clearer explanations concerning their own nature. Determined to conform in every respect to the thoughts of their interrogators, they are ghosts in America, demons in Europe, or rather demons or ghosts, according to the preferences of those who control them. I seem to hear the answer of *Maitre Jacques* to his master: "Is it your pig, sir, or your cook to whom you wish to speak?"

We must acknowledge, however, that this preliminary

question once settled, demons and ghosts leave nothing to be desired. The demons present themselves in grand official costume, horns and pitchfork ; and these are not, in general, vulgar demons. M. des Mousseaux, who presents us with complete reports of the interrogatories submitted to by his demons, gives us the following dialogue : " Was it thou who tempted the first woman ?" " Yes." " Thou, or thy race ?" " I." " Art thou in the form of a serpent ?" " Yes." . . . " Art thou of the number of devils who entered into the bodies of swine ?" " Yes." " Of those who tormented Mary Magdalene ?" " Yes." (*Mœurs et Pratiques*, 300, 301.)

When any one is not satisfied with his demon, or finds him too insignificant a personage, the fellow is sent back to hell to seek a devil of higher rank. He requires only " three minutes" in which to perform this commission. (298.)

In respect to the ghosts, they are as illustrious as we could desire. There is a pleasure in thus entering into intimate and daily relations with men of genius ! and all the more, that their celebrity does not render them proud. Not only do they obey the first sign of the first comer ; not only do they answer the most absurd questions, and consent to reveal, when duly required, their profoundest and most secret thoughts, but they condescend to the quite vulgar functions of familiar spirits : they operate in stocks, the *Nords*,* and the *Orléans*,* they arrange marriages ; stocks are bought, marriages take place in obedience to their advice, and no one finds himself the better for it.

But this is still nothing. Let us leave the personality of the spirits and pass to their revelations ; in them, is most fully displayed the moral impossibility of the supernatural act in which they would make us believe.

And first, the very fact of direct revelation, of a revelation

* Railroad stocks.—TRANS.

brought to men by the spirits, is of such enormity, that every Christian will reject it at the outset, however little he may reflect. What! Is it possible there can be a direct revelation at the service of man, regarding which written revelation is silent? Is it in our power to interrogate devils, angels, or dead persons respecting things which are explained as well as those which are not explained by the Bible? Judge what would, in this case, be the part reserved to Scripture. Instead of referring to the Bible for the teachings of Christ, how much more profitable shall I find it to interrogate, at my ease, the twelve apostles, the seventy disciples, Pilate, Caiphas, the good and the bad thief, Mary Magdalene, the two sisters, John the Baptist, and who knows? perhaps Jesus Christ himself! If Scripture sets forth dogmas, I shall no longer pause with such imperfect communications; I shall put precise questions to the dead, who will henceforth know what to depend on; I shall ask them to give me an accurate description of hell, a correct definition of Paradise; I shall invite them to explain in minute detail, the mysteries of the Trinity and the Incarnation; I shall seek of them the interpretation of passages that embarrass me, as well as the refutation of passages that displease me.

Who does not see that in the presence of a direct revelation, the Biblical revelation is thrown into the shade, and with it the power of prayer and the assistance of the Holy Spirit? Aside, even, from the piquancy of the evocations; aside from the interest of explanations, which always adapt themselves to our doubts and our present necessities; aside from the charm of a theology which tells us only what we wish to hear, and which tells us aloud what we have whispered in its ear, it is evident that direct revelation will outweigh the Bible by the completeness of the details, by the very human perfection of its formulas, by the abundance of its definitions and descriptions; after the example of the traditions and the apocrypha, it will leave very far behind it, the divine sobriety of the inspired writings. Then, what an attraction for our slothful and cow-

ardly souls, thirsty for direction, dreading before everything else being brought into the presence of God, anxious to be discharged from all responsibility, to be able to consult the spirits, spirits full of deference for our slightest fancies !

And let no one seek to console himself under pretext that the influence of these revelations is weakened by the knowledge of their origin. I grant that those who regard this origin as exclusively diabolical will be less exposed than others; yet, it is difficult not to think that we should learn many things by conversing with the demon; the experience of all ages proves that the information obtained by him is, in no wise, to be considered doubtful or unimportant. We have seen at Loudun, the part attributed to him by the Roman Church, in the exposition of dogmas and in the refutation of the Protestants.

It will not do to say, then, that the revelations of the spirits cannot be injurious to the men who look upon them as so many demons. But, be that as it may, it is only a feeble exception to the general fact; the immense majority of evocators believe they address the souls of the dead. What should prevent them from supposing that the latter, in quitting this earth, have acquired an accurate knowledge of things, of which it is hardly possible for the living to obtain a mere glimpse? Why should they not place implicit confidence in the secrets revealed to them from beyond the tomb? Let us be sincere: if we were really placed in the presence of a soul, that, released from this earth, had contemplated the mysteries of another life, none of us would discard, as vain words, the admonitions of such messengers; in vain might they warn us, as do the speaking tables, of their fallibility and their limited knowledge; the intelligence furnished by them would take its place among the firmest of our convictions; we should instinctively and incessantly return to it, and the declarations of the prophets or the apostles would often grow dim when confronted with those of the ghosts.

Spiritualism, then, has already given a fatal blow to faith. The single idea of a direct revelation has made sad work with

many consciences, independently of the contents of this revelation, of which I must now say one word.

Let us leave out of the question, the confirmation it gives in certain circles to all the impure, degrading, sanguinary follies of the Middle Ages. When we hear of the operations of these demons, such good theologians, so orthodox in spite of their forced confessions of lies and hatred towards the Christian Church, we cannot help regretting that there does not, in reality, exist so convenient a method of judging controversies. But the method is decidedly less sure than convenient, and the doctrines promulgated by our Ultramontane *mediums* cannot be compared with those of the Gospel. Without touching the great subjects in which the contradiction is radical and constant, I am struck at finding in the responses of the Modern spirits, information respecting the names of the devils, for example, which reminds me, line for line, of the most ridiculous nonsense of the ancient possessions.*

Such is their revelation to the Catholics ; to the Unitarians, to the various shades of socialists, it has a newer character, which it is worth our while to point out.

The Unitarian revelation, we have seen, commenced with being only rationalistic ; it has ended in becoming Pythagorean. It first expunges from the Gospel everything displeasing to it ; it next adds thereon, a system of indefinite progress, by means of metempsychosis. It leads us into successive spheres, inhabited by souls, and makes us witnesses of scenes that would not be out of place in the Paradise of Mahomet : concerts, balls, assemblies, newspapers ; likewise, public lectures, evident and

* What I here assert, in respect to the names of the devils, I might also affirm of their description. The only innovation consists in certain informal affectations, which did not occur to the minds of the ancient sorcerers. Demons, then, accepted their ugliness and gloried in it ; none of them would have made any such pretensions as are spoken of in the book of M. Benezet : "One day, as I held a pen and a bit of paper in my hand, preparatory to writing their responses, I amused myself by caricaturing the features of a very ugly, hideous devil ; showing it to the table, I said : 'Here is your portrait,' whereupon it approached me. 'What do you want?' said I. It did not rap, in indication that it wished to speak ; but it began scratching on the paper in my hand. . . . A moment after, it wrote : '*I am very handsome.*'"

inevitable omissions of the Arabian prophet. It is the mission of the American prophets to fill up that hiatus. By the side of this, I repeat, they take pains to discredit the popular Christianity, "a garment too narrow for humanity in progress;" nor do they forget to reconstruct, for progressive humanity, a social organization, founded on the most radical principles. I must again refer to the remarkable analysis of M. de Richemond, who most vividly describes what is exacted by this religion of the future, this "ideal Christianity," the only one which can be adapted to "divine humanity."

"In their system," he writes, "men, before attaining heaven, continue to be instructed and perfected in the six successive, spiritual spheres, where they enjoy a happiness entirely sensual, and of which they give us the most enchanting descriptions. There, apart from the time for study, which is spent, under the direction of professors, in instructing themselves in the knowledge of God, in disentangling themselves from all religious prejudices brought with them from the earth, in learning languages, sciences, and the arts, the existence of the spirits is passed in conversation, walking, feasts, festivals, balls, etc. Scarcely is a material desire conceived, than the desired object is formed and presented to them spontaneously; nor do the ladies neglect their toilet! There, parents meet again the children taken from them in the cradle; but they must have some difficulty in recognizing them, for these children have continued to grow after their death, and they even go to school; therefore, when a *medium*, influenced by one of these children, commits an error in orthography, he excuses himself on the ground that the infant spirit directing his hand, is not yet sufficiently advanced in its studies!" (*Le Mystère de la danse des tables*, 18, 19.)

There are, doubtless, many shades of distinction; the revelation of one Unitarian, is not, literally, that of another; the different hues of deism and pantheism are, by turns, reflected in these religions of human fabrication, which agree, however, in certain fundamental traits, those which form the very basis of the rationalistic tendency. I will say as much of the materialist

and socialist tendencies. The faithful mirror of the oracles of *mediums* servilely reproduces their diversities. Sometimes, it gives us the soul of world, renewed from the Greeks and the Indies, but modernized and more materialized than ever, under the scientific name of *odie fluid*; sometimes, it gives us an honest disciple of Fourier, who prophetically describes the future destiny of the universe, and moves in the midst of planetary virtues and aromal influences.

We are familiar with the strange book of M. Hennequin; Robert Owen has just published another, which bears for its title: "The Future of the Human Race, or the great, glorious, and pacific revolution, announced and accomplished through the agency of the souls of a body of women and men, remarkable for their intelligence and their probity." Mr. Owen is particularly in correspondence with his late Royal Highness, the Duke of Kent, the father of Queen Victoria; other illustrious personages, long since dead, have written him some curious letters. In respect to the partisans of the *od*, they are not less well served by their intelligent fluids, than others by their correspondents beyond the tomb; the doctrine, infallibly established by the *od* itself, is thus formally stated by M. des Mousseaux (361), who has studied it with care.

"The *od* is omnipotence, and the *od* proceeds from nature. This power flows from man and returns to him. He draws it from the common reservoir, and this reservoir is the earth. He is filled with it, he is consolidated with it; with this indefinite force he makes a body by the aid of which he can cause the earth to tremble, even as the soul agitates, disturbs, and causes the frail edifice of the body to tremble. And these two similar forces, united and riveted to each other like chain-shot, or, more properly speaking, this force which proceeds at the same time from man and from the globe, what would it be then? Listen! According to the logic of our antagonists, it would positively be only the soul of the earth; an intelligent soul, which, in their pantheistic system, would be to the entire universe what the soul of man is to our planet; that is to say, a

proportional part of one whole, of one homogeneous whole. The soul of the world would be, then, in the full and last analysis, only that of humanity, that is to say, an intelligent, fluid, imponderable matter, binding itself to a thousand varieties of combinations and forms, and incessantly modified by the universal law of change. It would be the one and only being, the one and only God of this world."

From the midst of these melancholy delusions, it is impossible not to distinguish favorably the book published by Paul Louisy, entitled : *Lumière ! Esprits et Tables tournantes. Révélations médiamniques*. It is marked by a tone of candor and an aspiration, often elevated, which only the more clearly display the fearful peril run by a man who abandons himself to pretended inspirations. From the moment he accepts the principle of direct revelation, from the moment he begins to worship his own thoughts transformed into oracles, it is impossible for him to pause ; henceforth, if any one still speaks of God, this God is only a name, a supreme illusion, a vain homage rendered to the very truth trampled under foot ; the bonds of objective authority are snapped asunder, the anchor breaks away, the bark flies at the mercy of the tempest and the current.

M. Louisy (75 and following, 91) writes under the dictation of *mediums*, an entire history of the creation, a theology, an inspired psychology : " The soul represents God, matter is only his work. . . . Defiled by terrestrial contact, souls will only recover their native perfection in heaven. God has created them in couples, the one male, the other female, of an essence entirely similar. These sister souls continually seek each other." . . .

Then follow details, not less authentic, respecting the various classes of spirits, the different globes and their inhabitants. " The innumerable planetary systems have been, from the commencement, disposed by the Creator on an immense scale of perfectibility. The souls by whom they are inhabited, are subject on all points to corporeal transformation. They have all

commenced their journey on the same earth, placed, so to speak, one third of the way. Each one of their existences glides away in a new world, unless they are punished and obliged to descend in the scale. . . . If any one descends in the scale of worlds, he plunges deeper and deeper into obscurity, until he falls into the darkness beneath which there is nothing ; the level of intelligence sinks, the human form is degraded, life is shortened. In ascending, on the contrary, what a magnificent spectacle ! Man becomes better and more beautiful, life lengthens, the body weighs less upon the soul." . . .

One of the privileges of the superior systems is, "that sleep is unnecessary there." But in order for that to be the case, we must have progressed beyond the earth and the moon, which are very low in the scale ; we must have attained Saturn, Vesta, Mercury, Jupiter, or other planets still more advanced, known and unknown.

The souls themselves have given this information to M. Louisy, this and a great deal more. He closes his book with these solemn words : "Behold in what ardent struggles the world is already engaged around the cradle of the discovery ! Friends and enemies all have a presentiment that the future belongs to it, and that it will change the face of the world. What, then, shall be its name ? Shall it be called religion, or new science ? Will the birth that is preparing, be attended with difficulty ? Let the men of earnest minds bring to the subject a meditative and inquiring spirit, let them associate themselves together in the good work. God has revealed himself to them a second time, as at the commencement of the Christian era. Let them, then, open their understanding, let them strengthen their courage : the question is of Eternal Life."

The question is of Eternal Life ! God has revealed himself a second time ! The man who admits that, cannot pause half-way. Listen still further to M. Louisy :

"Souls disengaged from bodies, spirits in the universal har-

mony, serve as a natural link between the creature and the Creator. All accompany us, all watch over us, all admonish us. All, spirits from above or from below, rewarded or punished, have for their only mission, that of guiding man to his highest happiness in the ways of justice and love. They are our real guardian angels, our conscience, for there are no evil spirits." (8.)

"Between spirit and man, what is there? Death, that is to say, a liberation from created matter, bad and perishable." . . . (10.)

"Most frequently, they are our friends, our relatives, those who have loved us. . . . In the dwelling of their host, these invisible witnesses have a privileged place: some choose a piece of furniture, others, a cup, a trinket, a chest, a box. These occupy the hair or the garments." (15, 16.)

The responses of the tables and *mediums* are neither the fact of mechanical movement, nor the fact of magnetism, nor the fact of a new physical agent nor of an unknown fluid. "Still less are they the fact of a demon which does not exist, nor of any other malevolent power. In the spiritual creation, evil is unknown, because God is supreme goodness. Evil is matter." (17.)

"All these spirits, divine emanations, were created good; they have lived in the body here or elsewhere; they will thus continue to live millions of ages, perhaps, until they shall have arrived at eternal felicity." (35.)

"As for the devil, let him resign himself to be laid aside among *Mother Goose's stories*, and to become again, what he always was, the most silly and most pernicious fable that could have been invented to terrify poor human creatures." (54.)

What a road have we already traversed! No devil, no evil, evil is matter, redemption is effected by means of purification and metempsychosis! The spirits take up their abode, like good relations, as near as possible to the object of their affections, in boxes, furniture, and household utensils. This residence, moreover, is neither obligatory nor permanent.

There are moments of the day when the spirits go out for an airing ; we should not consult them, either in the afternoon or after eleven o'clock at night. "At eleven o'clock, the spirits, in general, take their departure, and do not return until morning ; one or two of them remain near man during his sleep. . . . Upon arriving in presence of the man whom God assigns as his host, the spirit must again submit, although indirectly, to material aggregation . . . it marks and chooses its place, as it were, at the domestic fireside ; here, it is a candle, a clock, a table . . . there, it is a portfolio, a glass, a fountain . . . almost everywhere, it is hair and garments. All objects serve its purpose. When the host leaves his house, the spirit accompanies him ; it resides in the heart, the head, in the entire person. The heart is the place of its predilection." (44.)

"The number of spirits attached to man, varies according to the number of his qualities and imperfections. . . . If man becomes better, he loses an imperfection and gains a quality ; if he becomes worse, he loses a quality and acquires a fault. This amounts to saying that he loses or gains a punished or recompensed spirit, as the case may be." (66.)

Thus the risk is incurred of imbuing the mediums with a spirit of self-love. But let us pass on. I analyze, I do not criticise. I analyze, merely, because it seems to me that among all the proofs of the absurdity of *Spiritualism*, not one is equal to the simple exposition of its revelations. Desirous of presenting a sample of them to the reader, I surely can find nothing more remarkable than what is contained in the conscientious and honest work of M. Louisy.

This revealed *Spiritualism* is terribly material ! "What takes place in the rotation of the tables ? A fact of spiritual attraction. The chain formed, wills are manifested, souls unite and disengage a portion of themselves ; if the sympathetic emanation is sufficient, the spirit submits to it and determines the motion." (40.)

"The spirit that occupies the object chosen for the experi-

ment, submits to the influence of intelligent attraction, and becomes sole master to determine the rotation. If the object is unoccupied, the spirit or spirits of a neighboring object (if they are among the spirits present), submit to the experiment. . . . The relation is established with the spirits as soon as the object is put in motion." (47.)

But the rotation is only the first step ; revelation is the true end of our relations with souls. How is this effected ? They begin with pencils attached to books or to small bits of board, and strange to say, it is necessary for the spirits to practise before they can thus write legibly. "At the outset," says M. Louisy, "each new spirit that I called, was obliged to go through with a sort of apprenticeship. The lines were nothing less than straight, the letters were intermingled, the accents were wanting, and punctuation was unknown. But there must be a beginning to everything." (64.)

After the pencil, comes the *medium*, the human revealer, the revealer *par excellence* ; all other intermediate agents appear worthless by the side of this. "This is the crown of the work, the grand experiment. After the material agent, the spiritual agent. . . . The *medium*, as the name sufficiently indicates, is a human, intermediate agent." (72.)

A transient incarnation of the spirit, the *medium* writes or speaks without premeditation, and because he is under the yoke of a superior will. The phenomenon we remark in the *possédées* or convulsionaries is also manifested in him : "He possesses a sort of double personality ; he has two intelligent souls ; both have various, contradictory thoughts on the same subject." (74.)

The invasion of this strange soul, at first disturbs the *medium* ; he shudders, the blood rushes with violence back to the heart, the nerves contract, he experiences pain, or rather an insupportable discomfort. "If the crisis is violent, a nervous attack sets in ; the *medium* screams, rolls on the ground, weeps and sobs, momentarily loses his sight and hearing, is assailed by hallucinations. . . . This crisis lasts a quarter of an

hour, twenty minutes at most. Very decided at first, it diminishes with succeeding experiments, and soon entirely disappears." (88.)

Nothing can be more original than the theory of *mediums*, or to express myself with more accuracy, than the dogma revealed in regard to them. The spirits by whom they are animated, are punished souls, souls that are descending in the scale of worlds ; and here follows the reason :

"The soul that ascends is less highly endowed than the soul that descends. . . . The soul preserves in the new birth, the degree of perfection it attained in the world it has just left. . . . The ascending or recompensed soul represents, then, the inferior world where its last transformation is accomplished. . . . The descending or punished soul is, *per contra*, the type of a superior world. . . . The majority of our great men are fallen souls, who aspire to reascend. . . . At the same time that the fallen soul rises again before men, throwing around it a purer light, it receives from God a last compensation : the faculty of corresponding with the spirits. . . . It becomes a *medium*." (83.)

There are seven classes of *mediums* on our planet. The first has, at this moment, only three representatives : an Italian peasant, a citizen of the United States, and an Indian nabob. Neither is the second class very numerous ; Paris numbers only two or three of these *mediums*.

A good *medium* is the virtuous man, *par excellence* ; he must possess love, faith, temperance. In regard to the physical conditions, M. Louisy affirms that the bilious and lymphatic are negative ; they are miserable, ascending souls ; while the fallen souls may be recognized by their impressionable, lively, nervous temperament, by their enthusiastic character—passionate, gay, or melancholy by turns. Yet there are no rules without exceptions ; we see some *mediums* with a bilious complexion, some recompensed souls, who, painfully reascending, receive this sort of encouragement in their efforts to return to good. (86.)

Such a compensation was really due to the ascending souls ; to have fallen was not the only requisite, it seems to me, and since the *mediums* are virtuous men, *par excellence*, I am not sorry that they should not all have merited by their faults, the sublime communications with which they are honored. The moral superiority of the *mediums*, moreover, is a capital point, and M. Louisy continually returns to it ; in order to form a good chain, he recommends, first of all, the selection of honest people, and he adds ; “The degree of individual perfection is the touch-stone of the phenomenon of turning objects. The richer the chain is in virtues the more we are assured of prompt success.” (41.)

This is flattering enough for persons who succeed in their experiments, and we may well afford to carry our heads high at Valleyres, for the elevations without contact render our virtues evident. I hope that henceforth, the world will apply the touch-stone that has just been discovered. In the election of a deputy, in the choice of a magistrate, in the selection of a husband, the method is as sure as expeditious. The candidates or the claimants need only be required to make a table turn !

The psychology revealed by these *mediums* is not the least curious portion of M. Louisy's book. “Man has two souls. Let no one here find fault. I do not give this as my own idea. . . . I simply state as well as I can, one of the laws of creation, as the spirits have taught it to me.” (20.)

To that, indeed, there is no reply. We are, then, endowed with a superior soul which thinks and commands, an inferior soul which acts and obeys. The second, let us render this justice to M. Louisy, is little else in his book than the vital principle ; and man, according to his theory, according to that of many others, is a compound of soul, life, and matter.

In respect to the soul, properly so called, it resembles a gas, a fluid, a luminous, transparent vapor. “It ordinarily assumes the human form, especially the features of the face, which it retains, even after death, and until the new transformation on

another earth. . . . The soul is white—of a dazzling whiteness, like snow in the noon-day sun ; it reflects blue or rose-color, according to its spiritual sex ; blue for the female, rose for the male soul." (25)

We have already seen that the revelation presented by M. Louisy, saps the very foundations of the Christian revelation. "Man is not fallen. . . . Hell does not exist. . . . All worlds are inhabited, or destined to be inhabited (with the exception of the suns), and arranged in an immense scale of perfectibility. . . . All created souls traverse in turn, ascending or descending, this painful calvary. . . . All, without exception, will arrive, after a pilgrimage more or less long, to the happiness predicted by Christ, the first of the just ; they will see God face to face." (9.)

The devil does not exist. Evil, which is matter, will finally be destroyed. In reference to Christ himself, the following paragraph indicates the only part that could be reserved to him in a system where the real Fall is denied, and where redemption is effected by means of metempsychosis : "One man only, after his death, has ascended direct to Heaven ; that man is Jesus Christ ! Son of Joseph and Mary, he was worthy to be called the Son of God. After him, but in an inferior degree, comes the Christ of the ancient humanity, Socrates. The list of the elect of the earth stops there." (81.)

Next, M. Louisy, developing his thought, gives us a list of the celebrated men who have ascended or descended into other worlds : Voltaire, Mahomet, Alexander, Cæsar, Louis XIV., Philip II., Sextus V., Loyola, Luther, Bossuet, Robespierre, have descended ; Cato, Charlemagne, Henry IV., Louis XVI., Galileo, Columbus, Guttemberg, Watt, Washington, Calvin, Fénelon, have ascended. "Among all women, Mary, the mother of Jesus, has alone attained the highest place. But Heaven ! of all the human creatures who have passed from our earth during the last six thousand years, only one has reached it, and by a difficult path : voluntary expiation, absolute development." (82.)

This is the new faith of the human species which is thus revealed ! Alas ! it is only too true that these ideas have a greater number of real partisans than evangelical truth. The effect of *Spiritualism* is to propagate them, to make them still more common. This is "the true faith which is to regenerate the world. . . . This discovery elevates itself to the proportions of science and religion combined. . . . To-day, it is still an isolated fact ; to-morrow, it will be an instrument of civilization—the universal gospel."—"The mariner's compass, printing, steam, and all the imposing train of useful inventions—what are these in comparison with eternity unveiled ?" (6, 12.)

Let us take heed ; the publication of a work like this is a sign not to be disregarded. M. Louisy is neither a superstitious man nor a charlatan ; he does not speak to us of the five souls of the earth, nor does he believe, any more than we do, in phantoms, in the magic mirror, or in divinations. He is simply a man who looks seriously upon our relations with souls, who, unconsciously and with perfect sincerity, thus transforms into revelation the system of indefinite progress and salvation, by metempsychosis. This system, already popular, responding as it does to the secret aspirations of the corrupt heart, will lose nothing in being circulated throughout Europe and America, under the sanction of the new prophets.

Their oracles, it is true, are never anything more than the reflection of their own thoughts. If they, in general, resemble each other in certain traits, it is in consequence of the reigning theories ; they are diversified, moreover, as much as these theories themselves, and the particular opinion of each *medium* is to be met with in the dogmas he promulgates in the name of the spirits.

Herein consists, perhaps, the most peremptory disavowal of *Spiritualist* pretensions. In vain do they put to the test either angels, demons, or the souls of the dead ; it remains quite too evident that the pretended revelations have their living, very

living authors—authors of flesh and bones. The paternity cannot for an instant be doubted. Notwithstanding certain apparent exceptions, which are, indeed, explained by the real capacity of some *medium* or member of the chain, I am justified in affirming that, in the main, the lucubrations of the spirits are horribly stupid. The table-authors will assist in judging the speaking-tables ; and, were it not for the well-known savor of forbidden fruit—were it not for the piquancy of the apparitions and dogmatic revelations, these literary compositions of celebrated authors would soon vanish in a burst of Homeric laughter.

Either I am greatly deceived, or the *mediums* begin to have a perception of this. They venture less and less each day on such slippery ground ; Gluck comes no more to write operas ; Racine and Corneille give us no more tragedies, Molière composes no more scenes to be compared to the *Misanthrope* ; as for Homer, Demosthenes, and Virgil, I do not think any one has attempted to make them speak either in prose or verse. They prefer to call up Washington, who babbles political commonplaces ; and especially do they prefer to arrange, with the assistance of philosophers or anonymous theologians, the thousandth edition of the Unitarian theory.

It seems that Christopher Columbus still appears quite often, and complains that his name has not been given to America. Shakspeare is more modest, and assures us that national infatuation has overrated him. If such be the ideas of the *mediums*, I am sorry for them ; but I should be still more sorry if, in presence of such brilliant proofs, public opinion could hesitate. How can it help seeing that there, is to be found the entire solution of the problem ? Either we are in the midst of the supernatural, and the illustrious dead or the demons who take their place, are able to impress their stamp on works dictated by them, or the pretended dictations exceed in nothing the thought of the *mediums*, which may be recognized by the characteristic shades that betray it. Now, the state of things is precisely as follows : interrogated by the Unitarians, the

spirits proclaim Unitarianism; interrogated by the Catholics, they speak of purgatory, of masses for the saints; interrogated by the Protestants, they appeal to the authority of the Scriptures. They would be Voltairians with our old deists, Rabbins with the Jews. With the disciples of Fourier, they contemplate the soul obedient to the action of the aroinal cord of the earth, and describe the loves of the planets. With the champions of sorcery, they attest the virtue of magic mirrors, the efficacy of charms and compacts, the reality of the *sabbat*. Let us cite a few examples.

We know the character of the attacks directed by the Unitarian *mediums* against the fundamental doctrines of Christianity; our incredulous and ignorant *mediums*, who have not even taken the trouble to invent a system whose philosophical or theological studies have been pursued at the Jockey Club, also rise up in opposition to the Christian dogmas, but in their own way—a way very easily recognized. Each individual *medium* impresses on the revelation of which he is the organ, the precise coloring of his prejudices, of his system, of his ignorance. But nothing is more curious than to confront these revelations of learned Unitarianism or vulgar deism, with those proclaimed with not less confidence and sincerity by our Mahometan, Catholic, or Protestant *mediums*.

In regard to the Mahometans, I extract the following passage from the book of M. Morin (124): "I had occasion, one day, to evoke directly, before the eyes of a young Egyptian, the shade of his grandfather. He was a virtuous old man, I am willing to believe, and he showed himself very well satisfied with his sojourn in the other world. Yet, the account he gave of his happiness to his son, who repeated his language, word for word, would unquestionably have shocked a Christian mind. For my own part, I confess that I should not have felt flattered if he had thus expressed himself before my wife or daughter."

"Do you believe," adds M. Morin, "that the Dervishes, the Bonzes and the Brahmas, who also evoke manes, find a paradise similar to that of the Christians? There is, indeed, one experi-

ment I would recommend to the Americans: let them choose a *medium* from among the savages of the Rocky Mountains . . . the shade he evokes, will relate what fine battles take place on the prairies of the Great Spirit; he will tell you of the abundance of scalps, how they capture the enemy alive, and how they dance round the post of torture."

Among Catholics attached to their religion, we every day meet with instances in which the table acknowledges that it is put in motion by demons, and is stopped in its course by contact with a crucifix. If, in place of demons, souls of the dead present themselves, they demand prayers or masses to take them out of purgatory. M. des Mousseaux relates an account of various sittings at which he was present. The details are significant; we may be sure that the spirits would have spoken very differently in a Protestant house.

"Do you like what I have in my hand?" is a question put to one of them.—"No!" (they were medals of the Holy Virgin.)—"Do you like the society of Saint Vincent de Paul?"—"No."—"Do you believe in the real presence of the Eucharist?"—"Yes."—"Do you believe in purgatory?"—"Yes." . . . M. the archpriest orders him purely and simply to remain quiet without answering any further questions, but in vain. Some one places a chaplet on the table.—"Does this chaplet trouble you?"—"Yes."—"Is a scapulary or any consecrated object a sign of protection against you?"—"Yes." (*Mœurs et pratiques*, 292, 300, 302.)

La Table parlante (13, 15, 34, 37, 40, 42, 46) also relates experiments directed by very Catholic persons. The spirits, of course, hold the language they themselves would have held. The soul of a Chinese is in purgatory, he loves the Pope, he loves God also, our Lord Jesus Christ, the Blessed Virgin, and those who wear the scapulary; it is a soul that produces commotion in a whole household, until it has been appeased by masses offered in its behalf. Elsewhere the following dialogue takes place:—"Are you a spirit?"—"Yes."—"An angel?"—"No."—"A demon?"—"No."—"A man?"—"Yes."—"Are

you in hell ?"—"No."—"In purgatory ?"—"Yes."—"Do you suffer ?"—"Yes."—"Do you come to demand our prayers ?"—"Yes."—"Do you wish us to recite the dominical prayer in your behalf ?"—"Yes." Each one of us prayed for the spirit. "Has this prayer been sufficient to deliver you ?"—"No."—"Has it relieved you ?"—"Yes."

We next meet with a soul that is happy in Heaven, and has need of nothing, then with a soul that declares it is in purgatory in order to expiate a mortal sin and asks our prayers.

But here come the demons ; they are pursued with holy water : "While the round table was in the height of its exercises, running, leaping, &c., one of the persons present obtained some holy water, and poured it over the table. It immediately entered into terrible convulsions, manifesting its annoyance by loud, angry knocks and vigorous shakings. It finally overturned, and in this situation it thumped its head against the floor, as if to shake off the Holy Water." The same devil, or at least a devil dwelling in the same round table, on one occasion gave its description : "Who are you ?"—"The Devil."—"What devil ?"—"Astaroth."—"Have you horns ?"—"Yes."—"How many ?"—"Two."—"Have you a tail ?"—"No."—"Have you a pitchfork ?"—"Yes."—"How many prongs has it ?"—"Two."—"What do you intend to do with it ?"—"Use it as a spit ?" (*pour ambroché.*) "Whom do you wish to put on the spit ?" (*embrocher*)—"Everybody, if I can."

This Astaroth has not learned his humanities, and his orthography might be improved ; I would also find fault with him for having renounced the tail, while he preserves the horns and pitchfork. Yet he was regarded as very formidable, and the provision of holy water was kept within reach of the victims tormented by his tricks. It appears, however, that he bravely submitted to the sprinkling without quitting possession, and that they obtained but little respite except when they had recourse to "some medals, bearing the portrait of Saint Benoit, which were successfully employed against all sorts of witchcraft."

Let us now observe the conduct of the spirits among the

Protestants. The metamorphosis is as complete as possible. They, doubtless, preserve their profession of orthodox faith on the subject of the Trinity, the divinity of Jesus Christ, the fall of man, the condemnation of the wicked, all the dogmas, in short, which the same spirits disavow and vigorously combat when domesticated among the Unitarians ; but they have no longer any respect either for holy water, scapularies, or medals, bearing the portrait of Saint Benoit. Read the very curious pamphlet of the Rev. Mr. Godfrey (*Table Turning*), you will see, that here, it is the Bible, which placed on the table arrests its rotation. Another minister of the Church of England, Mr. Gillson, asks of his table : "How many years will the Pontificate continue to endure ?" The table raps ten blows. It rapped precisely the same number when he asked it to fix the period that should elapse before the binding of Satan. It designated France, Spain, and Italy as the principal seats of the empire of Satan.

Are not these answers all portraits, exact daguerreotypes of the thoughts of the two clergymen ? Is it not evident that he, who uttered the question directed the response, although he did not suspect it ? If I wished to ascertain Mr. Godfrey's views on different questions, I should discover them, even in their minutest shades, by perusing the revelations of his Speaking Table. It would teach me that, in the eyes of Mr. Godfrey, epileptics are *possédés* ; that he believes in the material nature of the torments of hell ; that his mind is decided in regard to the eternal fate of those of his parishioners who are so wicked as to frequent Dissenting Chapels. It happens, indeed, that one of the condemned souls who manœuvres his table by order of the devil, and with the permission of God, is that of a man whose funeral he himself had conducted eleven years before, and who had often attended the Wesleyan Church.

I have no wish to quote other details : the rich man of the parable met in hell by this same soul ! God, compelling him to reply, in spite of Satan, because the questioner is a member

of the clergy !—Whatever may be Mr. Godfrey's clerical and Anglican prejudices, I would call the reader's attention to only one single point, the perfect conformity of the revelations he obtains with his personal ideas. I say his ideas, and not his convictions, for I prefer to believe that if he were really convinced of the presence of a condemned soul, he could not interrogate it with so much freedom and coolness. I shall always suspect these things to be rather the work of the imagination, than a complete persuasion in the minds of Christians, who calmly enjoy their cup of tea, after having questioned one of the damned on his misery without consolation, his relations with Satan and the flames of hell.

Thus, as we have just established, the spirits are only echoes, they return to every one his own language. And this is true, not only of fundamental differences, but also of the most delicate diversities ; the spirit of a young girl will not speak like that of an old soldier ; still further, if two sisters are *mediums*, the oracles of the elder may be distinguished from those of the younger, the character of each is *naively* depicted in its revelation.

I have already referred to learned phrases, imitations of old French, that could only come from an erudite *medium*. I have also quoted faults in orthography, which betray the ignorance or inattention of the *mediums*. M. des Mousseaux (294, 295) furnishes other valuable information on this point. He states to himself this objection : "That spirit which you have the generosity to attribute to the table, is nothing else than your own spirit, replying to your own questions ; the act is accomplished by the operation of a fluid which escapes from you, which moves the table without your knowledge, and governs it in obedience to your sentiments. For if the *medium* falls under the empire of a strange spirit, if this spirit makes use of it as a docile instrument, if the individual who manœuvres the table is, in one word, not the mere translator of his own thought, how account for the fact that the spirit, in the dictation of its responses, so often employs an orthography similar to that of the *medium* ? If I express myself in such

positive terms, it is that the experimenters often meet with *mediums* whose literary education leaves much to be desired ; it is, that when these *mediums* make the table spell, the responses it dictates under their fingers, often bear testimony to their own incorrect notions of orthography. For example, some one asks : 'What o'clock is it?'—*Il ait trois eur*,* replies the table."

Is any one interested to know how M. des Mousseaux extricates himself from a difficulty so fairly stated ? "An evil spirit," he says, "is not compelled by any law to pass his time in making a display of science and superiority ! Moreover, having to conceal his infernal nature, is it strange that he skulks about under the awkwardness of forms !"

I do not know ; but I should be better satisfied, if this awkwardness of the *mediums* did not coincide with the point beyond which their studies have remained incomplete. I should like it better, if the spirits did not have a perfect orthography with scholars, an elegant style with those who speak well, skeptical opinions with skeptics, Catholic opinions with Catholics, Protestant opinions with Protestants. When coincidences are produced with so much obstinacy, they give rise to unpleasant suspicions.

What will these suspicions amount to, if the science of the spirit is always, and in everything, proportioned to that of the *medium* ; if my son, evoked at New York, only replies to me on condition that I address him in English, and absolutely ceases to comprehend me the moment I employ our native tongue ! What will they amount to, if the spirits, after making mistakes, repair their error the moment any one gives the signal ! (*Mœurs et Pratiques*, 303.) What will they amount to, in short, if it be demonstrated that the spirits progress, and that their cleverness increases with that of the *mediums* !

It is the book of M. Morin (83) which establishes this last fact : "It is to be remarked, first of all," he says, "that this

* *Il est trois heures*, is the correct expression—the English being—It is three o'clock.—TRANS.

species of lucidness of the speaking tables, is only developed after numerous experiments, and under the influence of certain persons whose presence is necessary to the chain. According to logic, therefore, the progress of the new phenomena should be attached to these individuals, and not to the tables, and if there be possession or occupation by the spirits, we should discover it in them, and not in our innocent furniture."

The evidence now seems complete, and we ask under what pretext the partisans of the spirits can refuse to yield the question. Yet they still rely upon three pretexts instead of one! first, the super-intelligence of the tables and *mediums*, next, the correlation between the *spiritualist* prodigies and the heresy reigning in the countries where they are discovered, and lastly, the grand fact of Cideville, whose reality being demonstrated, guarantees that of analogous facts which have succeeded it. Let us, in closing, briefly review them.

In respect to the pretext of super-intelligence, it would be much better to demonstrate than to suppose it, and utter axioms in relation to this gratuitous hypothesis, the only fault of which is, that like the proverbs strung out by Sancho Panza, they are applicable to nothing.

"A fluid," do they gravely exclaim, "a fluid can only be passive, it is incapable of adding anything whatever to that which is already in the mind of the operators." Doubtless, but prove to us that everything in acts of soecery, of possession, and of *Spiritualism*, does not originate in that mind.

"As an effect," writes the Bishop of Mans in his charge, "as an effect cannot exist without a cause, and as nothing can be in the effect which is not in the cause, there must always be a proportion between the cause and the effect. A purely material effect implies a material cause, and nothing more; but an effect in which we see manifest signs of intelligence, necessarily supposes an intelligent cause." This is wonderful!

but they forget to prove that here, the effects are more intelligent than the causes, or, more correctly speaking, that the apparent intelligence of the tables is not a faithful counterproof of the intelligence of the operators and the *mediums*.

I know of no one but M. des Mousseaux, who has attempted to furnish this proof, and who has opposed something more than positive assertions to an objection so important. He has cited facts that call for examination ; but we shall see that they all may be explained by the interpretation we have adopted.

"Some," says he, "are willing to accord to the tables only a sort of Bæotian fluid,* and this is what they claim of the spirits. . . . The tables speak, converse, and conduct dialogues with us ; they sometimes soliloquize. . . . Alas ! among persons who manœuvre the table, and to whom we know it transmits responses, how many of them have we not remarked, whose spirit is literally so dense, that the most porous wood cannot, without miracle, open a passage to it ! . . . When my spirit seems to speak to me from the midst of the table, I have then lost the consciousness of its action, since I have no perception, either of what it experiences or thinks in its additional domicile, since I am even ignorant of the moment when I may expect the favor of its eloquence, of what it will say to me, and whether it will condescend to speak or work. Better than that : experience has proved that the table informs me of things which I cannot know, and which, sometimes, surpass the measure of my faculties." (240-243.)

This is precisely what should be demonstrated instead of affirmed. I have elsewhere shown how the fluid action which develops faculties within us, which awakens reminiscences, and calls into action the internal sense with its penetration of the thought, how this action explains the pretended revelation of facts ignored by all parties present. Many things are accomplished by us without our consciousness, and I cannot but be

* Fluid of stupidity—TRANS.

surprised that M. des Mousseaux should have forgotten a psychological phenomenon so well known. And as regards the contrast he perceives between the ingenious sallies of certain tables, and the stupidity of certain operators, we may be permitted to suspect that he is too charitable towards the former, and not charitable enough towards the latter.

Now, when I open his book, and read the account of the sittings there recorded, from page 291 to page 304, I ask myself how the author has succeeded in discovering these marks of super-intelligence, which, fully sensible that there lies the question, he is so anxious to establish. The spirit employs extraordinary words : Betymno, Aiku, Efomedeh, Nemitoeif ; in regard to this last term, he says it is several words incorporated in one, and from the Hebrew. Is that very spiritual ? Is there any great cause for astonishment in the fact that with a chain composed of an arch-priest, two vicars, an almoner, and an old pupil of the polytechnic school, the table should have known how to translate the word *oak* into Latin, and answer : *quercus* ? The only extraordinary part of the performance is, that it should have recalled to the mind of the almoner, his Christian name, André, "of which he was not thinking." But no one is ever so ignorant of his Christian name as to know nothing about it, and I imagine that, by an act of unconscious reminiscence, the almoner at that moment, found in some remote corner of his brain, a baptismal name, too long neglected.

Indeed, it is in virtue of such experiments that we are summoned to believe in the intelligence of the tables, rather than to regard their oracles as reflections ? I have read all the anecdotes related in the book of M. de Mirville, in the *Table parlante*, and in various English and American pamphlets ; I have inquired into the wonders of the somnambulists, the divinations and strange tongues of the ancient possessions, yet I nowhere find anything that exceeds the real knowledge of the *pos-sédés*, the somnambulists, the *mediums*, or of the persons with whom they may be in intellectual communication.

Let us, therefore, cease to quote the intelligence of the spirits. The arguments offered by their partisans in regard to it, are utterly incredible : now, they prove this intelligence by means of the attacks which Spiritualism directs against the Christian dogmas, forgetting, on the one hand, that the opinions of the unbelieving *mediums* explain such an accordance, on the other, that among the believing *mediums* the spirits hold the most orthodox language ; now, they point out the admirable efficacy of exorcisms, forgetting that independently of their supposed effect on the devils, they have a very certain effect on the operators ; now, they triumph over the rotations obtained without forming the chain, which seem to indicate an intelligent action quite foreign to the fluids, forgetting, also, that the relations of the fluids with the will are never absolutely subordinate to such and such material processes.

We here conclude our remarks on the first pretext ; let us pass to the second. The presence of the spirits is not manifested by the super-intelligence of the tables or *mediums* ; is it shown by the frequency of the phenomena in Protestant countries, and by their rarity in Catholic countries ? Is any one justified in saying that they are the work of the devil, since they are effected only where the Roman Church is unable to oppose to them its masses and anathemas ?

The argument is strange ; but it must be met with refutation, rather than with anger. I shall not, then, dwell upon the impious materialism of this theory of *l'Univers*, which seems to attribute to each mass, a radiation extending to a certain distance, and which shows us the knocking spirits in America availing themselves of the intervals between these radiations, because of the too small number of masses. M. des Mousseaux (287) follows in the same track when he says : " In the meetings composed of persons accustomed to carry lightly the yoke of religious authority, or to live in the same absence of Catholicism as do the greater part of the United States of North America, the

spirits give themselves more elbow room than in countries where the Roman faith prevails."

Let us see if the facts correspond to the theory.

England is a Protestant country like the United States, and it contains whole counties where the masses must have left as many gaps as in certain of the United States ; yet *Spiritualism* has had no great success in England, and upon the whole, its progress has been much more rapid in Catholic countries like France. This example is sufficient ; but it would be easy to point out many others, and without going further, that of the Canton of Vaud, the theatre of our experiments ; it is wholly deprived of masses, and in general, a stranger to the revelations of the spirits.

Why should this be ? Because the two great agents of the new prodigies are there equally wanting: Unitarianism, by which they are propagated in the New World, and Ultramontan-ism, which sustains them in Europe. Far from being convinced that the proposition of M. des Mousseaux is justified by the facts, we find, on the contrary, that Protestantism and *Spiritualism* everywhere, reciprocally exclude each other ; we find that there is but little faith in the spirits, except on condition of being no longer Protestant, and of having repudiated, like Deists and Unitarians, the rule of faith which constitutes Protestantism. Among Protestant or reformed nations, infidels alone, or nearly so, accept the speaking tables ; among Catholic nations, they have no firmer supporters than the resolute champions of the traditional belief.

Doubtless, M. de Mirville, the editors of *l'Univers*, and their friends, anathematize the speaking tables, while they maintain their existence ; doubtless, the charges of the bishops who rally to their party, only point out the reality of these Satanic wonders to invite the faithful to stand aloof from them ; but prohibitions thus conceived, have little chance of success, and, moreover, the Protestant churches, it will be acknowledged, have not remained behindhand in the theological war in which the new revelations have engaged. M. des Mousseaux, him-

self, has admitted this : "Hitherto," says he (367), "in places where Protestantism prevails, it has detested this intelligent matter, this mysterious and hypocritical power, this god with a thousand faces ; from its high places, by the mouths of its thousand sects, has it sent forth its curses ; it has shown a wisdom worthy of all praise. The example has not kept us waiting ! And should we, children of Catholicism, hesitate an instant longer ? Should we hesitate to increase, by the unspeakable omnipotence of our unity, the anathema with which we may repel the advances of the enemy, or render powerless his menaces !"

The last pretext of our opponents is furnished them by an adventure which has been worked up to the best advantage, and seems to contain the justification of the American miracles that have followed in its footsteps. I refer to the story of the parsonage at Cideville.

There, all the prodigies are found united : the knocks as in America, a shepherd sorcerer as in the Middle Ages, witnesses as numerous and as honorable as in the ancient works of magic, a book written *ex-professo*, and not less skillfully, not less honestly, than the treatises of Mather or Bodin. If, then, I demonstrate that the incidents stated as having occurred at Cideville, are absolutely deprived of all reality, I deprive my antagonists of their last resort ; they have no longer any excuse for saying : "In vain do you deny it, that which has been seen at Cideville subsists, such facts have more force than all your reasoning !"

What is it that has occurred at Cideville ? Two classes of phenomena. One of these, produced at the rectory, in the centre of an enormous circle of credulity, leaves behind it no visible trace by which it may be seriously verified ; the effects of the other, extending beyond the enclosure of the parsonage, or surviving the crisis, do not entirely evade our examination.

I shall pass over, in silence, those of the first class. That furniture and dogs should be made to dance, that desks should

have leaped in and out of windows, that blows should have shaken the walls, that phantoms should have been seen to glide about, that invisible hands should have made themselves felt, tremendous slaps distributed among the guests, answers given to difficult questions, that these things should have taken place, in no way troubles me ; they all enter into the explanations twenty times repeated, and which I do not care to begin again. I leave to the reader to decide according to his fancy, what portions may be assigned to errors of testimony, to exaggerations and illusions born of general excitement, to hallucinations, properly so-called, to fraud and a mischievous spirit, to fluid action in short, which was very probably in play, and which seems to have been connected with the persons of the two children brought up by the Curé. As for me, I shall concentrate my study upon two facts, which are alone worthy of any argument, because they alone can be estimated in their essential circumstances. I allude to the typhoon and wounds fluidically received by the shepherd.

“A sort of water-spout, or violent wind-squall, burst over the unfortunate parsonage.” This is M. de Mirville’s expression, and we must congratulate ourselves on the imprudence that his very sincerity causes him to commit in the insertion of such details. A sort of water-spout, a violent wind-squall, or typhoon, as M. des Mousseaux calls it ! A water-spout bursts over the parsonage, sparing the surrounding houses ! Here we have a phenomenon that, all witchcraft aside, should certainly have attracted the attention of the learned and the unlearned throughout every portion of the country, within a hundred leagues of the spot where it occurred ; indeed, its fame should have spread over the entire world. Of course, they proceeded to an investigation, especially as its elements were so easy to collect. Water-spouts leave behind them incontestable marks of their passage. Here is a parsonage, with its windows broken, its chimneys destroyed, its tiles strewed on the ground ; and here are houses unharmed by the scourge. Here is the garden of the Curé, where the trees have been torn up by their

roots, and here is a neighboring garden, where not a leaf nor a plant has suffered the slightest injury.

Certainly, the occurrence of a fact so extraordinary would have created a sensation so great that no power on earth could have been sufficient to prevent governments and academies from inquiring into the matter. Still further, the fact would necessarily, in a measure, have proved itself, and the prodigy would, with the greatest ease, have attained tremendous publicity.

If it has not attained this publicity, it is, allow me to declare, because the fact has existed only in your imagination ; it is, because there has been no water-spout for any one in particular more than for everybody, it is because the parsonage has had neither trees torn up, nor chimneys blown down by any special hurricane, to the influence of which other trees and chimneys of the parish have not submitted ; yes, throughout the parish, and even in the home of the sorcerer, the author of this grand disaster, who, doubtless, sacrificed his cabin in order to do harm to the Curé, this tornado must have been felt ! This typhoon reminds me, in every respect, of the noises heard in America, two miles distant, and which struck no ear in their transit. Let us pass to the wounds.

They were, I have already said, the fluid consequence of thrusts made at the phantom with very long points. It had been pierced during the evening ; "the next day," says M. de Mirville (331), "in the afternoon, some one knocks at the door of the parsonage ; it opens, and Thorel presents himself. His attitude is humble, his language embarrassed, and he endeavors to conceal with his hat, bloody spots, from which the skin had been rubbed off, on different parts of his countenance." M. de Mirville elsewhere relates (383), with a view of corroborating this important part of his story, the tragical history of another Curé of *la Seine Inférieure*, who fired pistol shots at the seven sorcerers of his parish ; now, "the next day the sorcerers, notwithstanding they had not left their houses, all kept their beds, with bullet holes in their legs."

Here, again, I congratulate myself that the enthusiastic credulity of M. de Mirville should have furnished us means of criticism not to be obtained from the first narrative. The *bullet holes* will be more easy to verify than the bloody spots from which the skin had been rubbed off.

And to commence with that, whence comes the enormous difference that exists between the wounds of the seven sorcerers and those of Thorel? Thrusts from those "very long points" ought to have produced deep wounds. I should not lay any stress upon this, but would attribute the strangeness of the result to a mode of attack too indirect to be very efficacious, if I did not see that the pistols, which reached the sorcerers no more directly, since the latter remained at home while the affair was taking place, nevertheless produced holes in the legs. This renders me suspicious, I confess, in regard to the excoriations of the skin at Cideville, not a usual consequence of thrusts with points.

Another circumstance astonishes me. The seven sorcerers were all wounded in the leg; the shepherd Thorel, on the contrary, appears to have been struck only in the face. Did they issue at Cideville, the command of Cæsar at Pharsalia, which profoundly annoyed the young beaux of Pompey's army? Something similar must really have been the case.

But here is something still more strange. If the troops ranged under the orders of the Curé of Cideville were at liberty to direct the blows wherever they heard the noise, the phantom had also a right to defend himself in his own way. He undertook, we have seen, to administer boxes on the ear, and blows with the fist; he made use of a certain black hand, which descending the chimney, applied itself upon the faces of the children, or upon the mayor's thigh, when he was in the exercise of the duties of his office; in short, he understood how to put tables, chairs, and doubtless, persons also, in motion. Why did he not take his antagonists and toss them all up together? Why did he not hurl desks and chairs at their heads? Why did he not distribute among them multitudes of thumps? Indeed,

it is scarcely worth our while to invent sorcerers if we make them more stupid than sensible.

And this is not all. The excoriations of the skin of Thorel will be allowed to pass without further question ; to this I consent, provided you show me by the documents, the consequences that necessarily followed the serious wounds of the seven sorcerers. Since the latter received holes when they might have contented themselves with bruises, a circumstance so brilliant should be purchased by some satisfaction given to our curiosity. We always pay for our glory.

M. de Mirville realizes this ; therefore his eagerness to inform us that the seven sorcerers *kept their beds*. Kept their beds ! I have no difficulty in believing him ; of course, they would keep their beds. Will you have the kindness to tell me how many weeks, how many months they remained there ? Of the seven wounded men, how many had their legs amputated ? We must have a serious answer to this question, which is a serious question, as all the military surgeons will tell you. There were seven men you say, their legs pierced with bullets, and yet not an amputation ! This would decidedly seem like a miracle, a miracle in favor of sorcerers, or of the shepherd gentry in general. Shall we have to deplore such a scandal ? I trust that it is not so, and that at least one or two shepherds with wooden legs may be counted in the parish in question.

It is true that we get rid of one difficulty only to fall into another. The seven sorcerers most likely had seven families ; seven heads of families, keeping their bed, limping, having balls extracted, wounds bandaged, resorting finally perhaps to amputation, surely is not that enough to make a sensation in a small community ? Would not a sensation of this sort, in conjunction with serious wounds and spilled blood, rouse the anxiety of the mayor and attract the attention of the public prosecutor ? In what sort of a country do we live, then, if so enormous a fact can be allowed to take place without governmental and judicial investigations.

Now, there is not the least trace of such investigations. The

seven or the fourteen legs have passed *incognito* like the terrible typhoon ! Similar events are related as having taken place in some parsonages of Normandy ; things have been seen, heard, done, the skin has been rubbed off the face, arms or legs have been broken, magic whirlwinds have been seen to burst over the house of the Curé ; but it is useless to ask anything further ! Catastrophes of this sort leave no more traces at the present day than formerly, than when sorcerers devoured children by hundreds at the *sabbat*.

Yet these things, alas ! will leave certain traces behind them. First, recorded in a large book they are copied into the journals, and thus stand a fair chance to make the tour of the world. Is the sincerity of the author to be considered a sufficient excuse in such a case ? Is he not bound to respect the public so far as to refrain from supplying it with facts which cannot resist a moment's examination ? With this question I am content to bring my argument to a close.

The parsonage of Cideville has been so celebrated that this chapter would have been incomplete without some allusion to it, as our history of ancient sorcery would have been incomplete without an account of Loudun. In respect to facts analogous to those of Cideville, and which usually accompany it as a necessary appendage, I abandon them to the sagacity of the reader, and to the application of the general principles laid down in this work. We shall not concern ourselves with the seeress of Prévost, nor the mill of Willington, nor with numerous other stories.*

Everything has its limits, and I fear that my demonstration, far from seeming incomplete, may be thought superabundant. I prefer, however, to sin on this side ; the world has, for a long time, been protesting against the supernatural apocrypha, has

* See the book of M. de Mirville (350 to 254) See that of M. des Mousseaux (322 to 25) etc.

met it with indignation, with ridicule, with exclamations of horror, occasionally venturing a few isolated, insufficient arguments; my object has been to grapple with my adversary, hand to hand, to strip him of his weapons, even to the very last. Not an argument, or rather, not a pretext, must be left to *Spiritualism*.

It is for this reason that, after having rejected the intermediate explanations which maintain the theory of the spirits while seeming to deny it, after having stated, in detail, my own explanation, founded at once on fluid action, errors of testimony, fraud and hallucination, after having shown that it is really adapted to the facts, I have pointed out, one by one, the symptoms of the error against which I take my stand: the modes of proceeding that favor the illusion, the Unitarian party, and the Ultramontane party interested in making the most of it; the colossal absurdity of the revelations, the incessant variation of their contents, which harmonize only in being faithful reflections of the particular thoughts of the *mediums*. In presence of such a result, there was no place, either for diabolical magic, odylie magic, or the magic of vibrations; yet, our opponents still endeavored to bolster up their system by a pretended super-intelligence, a self-styled relation between the *Spiritualist* phenomena and the empire of Protestant creeds; they relied, especially, as a last stronghold, upon the brilliant notoriety of the scenes at Cideville. It thus became my duty to pursue the enemy even there.

And now, let me be careful not to assume a triumphant tone, knowing, as I do, the power of actual manifestations. Relative to them, it is, by no means, sufficient to be in the right. Faith in the spirits will, doubtless, not take possession of our modern society, but the doctrines preached in consequence of this theory, will leave deep traces. It is not in vain that the two tendencies hostile to the Gospel, Unitarianism, on the one hand, and the religion of the Middle Ages on the other, will have circulated their doctrines throughout the New World.

And, aside even from the doctrines, aside from the religious materialism and declared revolt, how are we to tell the extent of the evil produced? Souls haunted by visions of the supernatural apocrypha, are disturbed and weakened, lose their intelligence and their energy. In the midst of these hundred thousand evocations, these hundred thousand revelations of which they are daily witnesses, the believers in the spirits become morally corrupted, they become lunatics or invalids. Who could respire with impunity an atmosphere so vitiated? From every direction do we hear of nervous affections, convulsions, mental alienation, suicides. It is by thousands, and among the *mediums* especially, that these cases of intellectual disturbance, or even of imbecility and acts of despair are produced. Dissension springs up among families, and the corruption of the mind and the heart makes rapid progress.

This, then, is an affair of no small importance; the interests at stake are of such an order that my earnestness should cause no surprise. *Spiritualism*, it has been said, is either a great sin or a great folly! I maintain that it is both. It happens oftener than we imagine, that our follies are likewise sins

CHAPTER V.

CONCLUSION.

OF the two vast questions to which this book is devoted, the second alone has led me into extended developments. It was necessarily thus. However important may be the position occupied by the positive part, it here evidently yields to the negative part ; it is less essential to establish the fact that a new law is discovered, and that fluid action is henceforth placed beyond a doubt by the elevation of inert bodies without contact, than to prove the absurdity of the supernatural apocrypha, under its ancient and modern forms.

Moreover, the two parts cling together, and mutually support each other ; without the knowledge of fluid action and the various phenomena to which it gives birth, the wonders of magic, of magnetism, and of the spirits, will still remain in a great measure inexplicable. Either science must consent to take one step, or superstition will take ten. The problem has long presented these two alternatives.

Before laying down the pen, I would once more remind the reader of the extreme importance of the question. Let us commence with the end—that is to say, with that branch of our subject which has just occupied so much of our attention.

There is no use in deceiving ourselves : we are in presence of a manifestation, the import of which cannot be misunderstood. Independently of the important position occupied by

American *Spiritualism* as the organ of the Unitarians, it has with us assumed particular gravity since its open adoption by the Ultramontane party. This party does not conceal its projects; menacing our civilization and our liberties, it accepts with ardor and with remarkable unanimity, the opportunity now offered it to restore its traditions and its Middle Ages.

It is, in fact, a general call to arms. The work of M. de Mirville is nothing less than a manifesto. I might desire to see in it the expression of a conviction strictly individual; but, indeed, that is not possible. This rapid success, this solemn unity of opinion, this faithful reproduction of M. de Mirville's propositions by the journals and writers of the party, this solidarity established between them and the whole of Catholicism, this deferential tone in which they appeal from it to the master—*ipse dixit*, everything indicates it to be a book which is essentially an act, and which has the value of a collective thought.

This being the state of things, I could not help feeling that a duty was imposed upon me. I was bound to pick up the gauntlet;* and, as I am not in the habit of carrying my colors in my pocket, it naturally follows that I should unroll this Protestant banner in opposition to that of the Ultramontanes. The reader can compare the two and decide between them. Although my book may not be in any respect a controversial book—although it proposes to treat questions in themselves, and not in a polemical point of view, it is certain that the Protestant doctrine is here stated—a doctrine which, in fact of prodigies as in fact of belief, holds that it is contained in the Scriptures.

That the doctrine of my opponents is conformed to the traditions of their church, seems to me difficult to deny. I shall not, then, dispute with them this position of consistent Catholics, provided they do not pretend to that of Biblical Christians. But here my concessions cease; and, without entering again upon the Scripture considerations I have elsewhere set forth, I

* It gives me pleasure to acknowledge the courtesy with which I have been personally treated, not only by M. des Mousseaux (363), but also by M. de Mirville, in a similar passage.

cannot help pointing out their incompetency in a Bible point of view.

With that facility which has caused them to welcome at the outset, all the assertions from books of legends, all the stories of fairies and ghosts, all the exploits of the American *Spiritualists*, all the wonders of transcendent Mesmerism, all the accounts of the convulsionaries of Saint Médard, or of the *Théâtre sacré des Cérennes*, with that supercilious ignorance of Protestantism, which has made them intrepidly advance historical enormities,* they do not hesitate to bring forward quotations from the Bible, which remind us of some often met with in our French literature: "Help thyself, and Heaven will help thee, *as saith the Gospel!*" I give the following passages as a specimen.

Open the book of M. de Mirville, and turn to pages 191, 201, 204, 206, 208, 209, 245, 246, 448, 457, 459; you will not know which to admire most, the treatment inflicted by the author on the sacred texts, or the general approbation that has welcomed these quotations and these interpretations, which, to say the least, are very extraordinary.

You first meet a quotation: "The person possessed," saith the Gospel, "goes out into dry and barren places, caves and sepulchres." The passage being inclosed by inverted commas, you naturally suppose it to be textual. It is, moreover, impossible to imagine the contrary in presence of these words, "saith the Gospel." But look for it—which, by the way, will not be very easy, for M. de Mirville, in general, indicates neither book, chapter, nor verse; and if, by chance, he gives the book and the verse, he forgets to mention the chapter! I think that he has here intended to quote Matthew xii. 43, or Luke xi. 24. They are both thus expressed: "When the unclean spirit is gone out of a man, he walketh through dry places, seeking rest, and findeth none." As for the combination of caverns and sepulchres, which M. de Mirville found necessary to his proposi-

* See, for example, page 133 of the book of M. de Mirville

tion, he was only able to procure it by manufacturing a fantastical paragraph out of a text and a few reminiscences.

I certainly do not charge him with insincerity, but I say that he has treated Scripture with a frivolity which explains itself to those who take their stand on religious authority. Here is another rather strange quotation: "Do not yield to him the passage," saith the Apostle, *non date locum diabolo*, for he turns, circuit, and too often enters;—*et introivit in Judam post primam buccellam Satanas*, and Satan entered into Judas after the first sop." M. de Mirville adds in a note, "Words of the Passion, on the occasion of the Lord's Supper."

This note serves in place of a more precise indication, just as the words, "saith the Apostle," supply the place of a reference to *Ephesians* iv. 27, and to 1 *Peter* v. 8. Granted! but does it not appear, from the manner in which they are introduced, that these three passages—the first taken from the Gospel according to John, and the two others from two different epistles—all form only one? Does it not appear that the phrase, "and too often enters," makes really a part of it? Does it not especially appear as if the phrase, "neither give place to the devil," written by Paul, formed an integral part of the verse written by Peter, in which he speaks of the devil who walketh about like a roaring lion? It is thus that, in the same citation—a real bit of mosaic work—we meet a fragment from Peter, a fragment from Paul, and a fragment from M. de Mirville—the whole united under the common designation: "saith the Apostle!"

A little further on, M. de Mirville speaks to us "of the spiritual and atmospheric wickedness of the great Apostle." This is a free translation of *Ephesians*, vi. 12. I perfectly understand that M. de Mirville may have believed he discovered *atmospheric* wickedness in the Scripture; nevertheless, I insist that no Catholic or Protestant version furnishes him authority for such a liberty, and the original text still less. It stands as follows: *Τὰ πνευματικὰ τῆς πορνείας ἐν τοῖς ἐπουρανίοις*. I appeal to the Greek scholars. Let us continue our review. M. de Mirville thus expresses himself:

"The Israelites themselves said, in speaking of Jehovah : Our God is a God of mountains, '*in altis habitat*;' which Exodus repeats in these terms : 'Whoever sought and wished to find Jehorah, directed their steps towards Hoel-Moed.'"

Here, more than ever, I could wish that our author had designated the books and verses of the Bible from which he believes he has extracted these enormities. God, the true God, recognized by his people as a God of mountains, and representing himself as such in his word ! He should have quoted his authority. But, instead of that, he gives us an accumulation of passages perverted from their original sense, or with an imaginary meaning attached to them, which it is almost impossible to unravel. Let us, however, make the attempt.

I commence with the language attributed to the Israelites : "Our God is a God of mountains," and I discover that it was pronounced by the idolatrous servants of Ben-hadad, king of Syria, who likened the God of Israel to their local divinities. I certainly did not expect to find this same contempt which is caused by the same tendency to religious materialism, in a large volume, written in the name of the party claiming to be pre-eminently Christian ! Here, however, is the complete text from *1 Kings*, xx. 23 : "And the servants of the king of Syria said unto him, Their gods are gods of the hills ; therefore they were stronger than we ; but let us fight against them in the plain, and surely we shall be stronger than they."

"*In altis habitat*," adds M. de Mirville. For once, our embarrassment is only that of choice ; the passages in the Bible which declare that the Lord "dwells in very high places," are numerous. I shall content myself with a reference to the one hundred and thirteenth Psalm, the fifth verse. But, until now, the idea of taking these high places for mountains, has not occurred, that I am aware of, to any one.

Lastly, "whoever sought and wished to find Jehovah, directed their steps towards Hoel-Moed." Here M. de Mirville has anticipated the perplexity of his readers, and has had

the charity to refer them to the third chapter of Exodus. But, alas! In vain do I read over this chapter from one end to the other, I cannot succeed in there discovering anything whatever, bearing even a remote resemblance to the phrase quoted. Supposing it to be a typographical error, I have fallen back on Hoel-Moed; I have turned over the concordances, have sought among the Biblical dictionaries of Dom Calmet and his successors; labor lost! analogous names have succeeded no better, verses nearly similar have led to nothing. I confess myself incapable of divining this enigma. Hoel-Moed is, doubtless, a mountain resorted to by those who sought the Lord. But I am ignorant of its situation; I never heard of it, either in geography or in the Bible.

I read, at the bottom of the same page of M. de Mirville's book, a note couched in these terms: "All the gods of nations are spirits." (*Psalm lxxv.*) The passage, if it were real, would be of great importance, for it would settle in favor of M. de Mirville, one of the controverted questions between us. Now, *Psalm lxxv.* contains not the least trace of it, either in our Protestant versions, or in the Catholic versions *which correspond to our *Psalm lxxvi.* Still further, the whole book of Psalms contains nothing similar. I find, indeed, in *Psalm xvi.* (*vxc.* of the Catholic version): "For all the gods of the nations are idols" (or in the Catholic version): "All the gods of the nations are devils;" but even in adopting this second translation, I am still at the antipodes of that proposed by M. de Mirville. The very Catholic commentary of Dom Calmet, establishes in what sense the word *demons* is here understood by his Church: "All the gods of nations are demons," he writes; "or, according to the Hebrew: 'All the gods of nations are only *gods of nothing*, false divinities, without reality; but the Lord is master of the heavens. The Hebrew *Elilim*, which the Seventy here translate by *dæmonia*, may be rendered as a diminutive of *el*: small gods of nothing, *deastri*, or rather vain things, nothings.'"

We remark, in passing, and without taking the thing too

seriously, that M. de Mirville confounds Bethlehem, in the tribe of Judah, to the south of Jerusalem, with Bethel, in the tribe of Benjamin, to the north of the Holy City. This would be of no importance, if he did not, in part, establish on this confusion, the explanation of the *bethyles* or mysterious stones, and the theory of fatidical places.

In support of this theory, he also cites "the oaks of Mamre," which he considers as having filled, among the Hebrews, the part that pertains to the consecrated woods (*lucî*) among idolaters! Now, if we turn to all the passages of the Bible which speak of the oaks of Mamre, we shall see that Abraham dwelt there, we shall not see the slightest trace of superstitious ideas, which were never connected with this place until the period when degenerate Christianity undertook to label the whole of Palestine, and everywhere to mark out places of pilgrimage.

M. de Mirville has a way of explaining the success of the exorcisms effected by the Pagans: without heeding the celebrated language of Jesus Christ, he supposes that certain devils drive out other weaker ones. The Saviour says (*Matthew*, xii. 26): "If Satan cast out Satan, he is divided against himself;" this is in reply to the insinuations of the Pharisees: "This fellow doth not cast out devils, but by Beelzebub, the prince of the devils." M. de Mirville says, on the contrary: "If any one should ask us how the priests of Buddha can exercise such a power against spirits of the same master, we should answer with the Gospel, "the strong drive out other strong." An unfortunate expulsion, since, in this case, "the strong one driven out, returns with seven other strong ones more wicked than the first, and the last state of that man became worse than the first," which only happens, or which more rarely happens when the strong is driven out by a power entirely legitimate. If any one wishes to render literally the spirit and sense of our Gospels, he may be assured that wherever the word *strong* is employed in Scripture, it designates the spirits or the *bad Elohim*."

He even asserts that in consequence of translating differently from him, we arrive at the most ridiculous and the most complete misinterpretation possible. Now, here we have a specimen of the barefaced and summary proceedings, by means of which, M. de Mirville has rehabilitated so much that was worthless, and condemned without mercy so much that was justly respected. Do you believe, in the first place, that the Gospel (for he quotes from no other source), unites these two passages in one: "The strong drive out other strong," and "the strong returns with seven other strong ones?" But this is not so. Consult the three statements (*Matthew*, xii. 29, and following; *Mark*, iii. 27, and following; *Luke*, xi. 21, and following). You will see that the parable of the devil driven out, who returns with seven other devils, is entirely distinct from the passage which speaks of the strong, well-armed man, despoiled and disarmed by one stronger than he. Again, you will see that there is nowhere question of a strong man driven out, who returns with seven other strong men. The word strong (*fort*) is here an invention of M. de Mirville, so, also, with the word driven (*chassé*). In order to establish as well as possible, a connection between the two passages, he has introduced into the second, the expressions and thoughts of the first. We may, therefore, judge what the interpretation, entirely new, by the way, is worth, in virtue of which, Satan takes the place of Christ, and an intestine war between the devils is substituted for the solemn and decisive victory gained over the strong man by one who is stronger than he.

Here are other quotations not less free, and which are represented as textual: "Towards the time of Antichrist," it is written again, "magic will cover the earth, and its prodigies will exercise even the faith of the elect." How can we help supposing that these words, "it is written," announce a literal quotation? Yet this is by no means the case, and the most significant part of the phrase, *magic will cover the earth*, is the very portion not to be found in the verse in *Matthew* (xxiv. 24), which, indeed, differs on other points from the passage thus travestied.

M. de Mirville tells us that the member of the church "delivered up to Satan" was ordinarily seized with convulsions or strange pains ! Where does he get his information ? Perhaps he thinks it is affirmed by the Gospel, or by the Apostle. His examination of the question cannot have been very exact ; for venturing, in this instance, contrary to his custom, to name his authority, he indicates 2 Corinthians, in place of 1 Corinthians (v. 5).

In short, when he does correctly quote a passage, he takes it from the Latin translation, constructing long chains of reasoning on a word employed by the translator, without troubling himself to ascertain if the original supports his argument. Thus, after having repeated the declaration of Peter, in reference to Jesus (*Acts*, x. 38) : "who went about doing good and healing all that were oppressed of the devil ;" he adds : "It is remarkable that the expression *oppressos* relates to that terrible oppression which has been constantly complained of, as we have seen, by somnambulists, the Ursulines of Loudun, the Camisards, and the children at Cideville." . . . *Oppressos* is found in the Vulgate ! It is possible. If *opprimés* were found in the French translation, you would be no better authorized to infer the similarity which, by a play of words, you here attempt. If *opprimés* were found in the Greek, your right would be none the stronger, for the question related to a moral oppression ; moreover, the word *κατὰδυναστευορένους* leaves you not even this resource.

M. de Mirville (213, 268, 442) announces more extended dissertations on the meaning of certain portions of Scripture ; I hope he will read the Bible before he attempts to explain it. I tremble when I see him engage to find, in the epistles of Paul, the occult quintessence and the elementary spirits ! "In a subsequent article," says he, "we shall analyze the 3d chapter of the Epistle to the Galatians, and we hope to prove that the verses of this epistle, hitherto badly translated, and this is admitted by all commentators, signify nothing else."

Elsewhere he analyses the opinion of Van Helmont, in regard to the spirit who awoke, by means of an ointment or powder, the magical virtue asleep in the blood of man since the fall, and he adds : " We are astonished that Van Helmont should not have remembered in support of this very precious theory of the magic of the blood, the words of the Gospel : ' You are happy, Simon Peter, for neither flesh nor blood have revealed to you all these things.' These are not the only expressions of Scripture which spiritualize the works of *the flesh*, and we shall have much to say on this subject."

But it is especially in reference to Satan that M. de Mirville promises us a complete Scriptural study. It will not be wanting in originality, if I may judge by the programme. " At a later period," he writes, " we hope to enlarge on the immense rôle, filled in all cosmical and physical nature by the *prince of the air*, by this *light bearer* who surrounds our globe '*qui circumambulabat terram*;' mysterious agent which the Bible somewhere calls '*the principle of all the ways of the Lord, principium viarum Domini Behemoth*,' principle created after the Word and the Light were begotten, it being said to them in their turn : '*Ante Luciferum genui te*, I will beget you before Lucifer.' It is then we shall be able to magnify our subject, and join our efforts to those of science in the inquiry, if there be not some analogy between this great force of disorder, which dismays and confounds it in our disordered creation, and that gigantic adversary which Scripture represents to us as polluting nature, and corrupting all the ways between this king of fluids that it suspects and is looking for, and this *grand prince of the air*, formerly *light-bearer*, Lucifer; but *fallen light-bearer*, '*quo modo cecidisti, Lucifer?*' "

Doubtless, in this study announced by M. de Mirville, he will commence by justifying his application of the name *light-bearer* or *Lucifer* to Satan. He will point out to us some passage from Scripture authorizing such an appellation. As for me, I know very well that the Bible designates Satan under the names of Devil, Beelzebub, Demon, the Old Serpent, and the Tempter,

but I do not know that it has anywhere designated him under the name of *Lucifer* or the *Morning Star*. It is the Fathers, not the inspired authors, who, collecting together certain rabbinical and oriental traditions, have conferred upon him a title so generally adopted at the present day. M. de Mirville has, then, on this point, the excuse of almost universal usage, which makes it, however, none the less abominable, since the name *Lucifer* or *Morning Star*, far from belonging to his adversary, actually belongs to the Saviour himself. "There shall come a Star out of Jacob," proclaimed the prophet Balaam, even in the time of Moses. "I am the root and the offspring of David, and the bright and morning star," saith Jesus Christ, in the book of Revelations. (*Numbers*, xxiv. 17 ; *Revelations*, xxii. 16.)

"This *light-bearer*," adds M. de Mirville, "surrounds our globe, *qui circumambulabat terram*." Where does he find that written? Does it refer simply to the response which Satan makes to the Lord (*Job*, i. 7) : "From going to and fro in the earth, and from walking up and down in it, *circumivi terram et perambulavi eam*?" Surely I do not know.

It would be more easy to get at his authority, if M. de Mirville did not content himself with such indications as this : "The Bible *somewhere* says, *somewhere* calls." He thus continues : "Mysterious agent which the Bible somewhere calls the *principle of all the ways of the Lord*, *principium viarum Domini Behemoth*." However accustomed I may now be to see Behemoth figure in the quality of a demon (and the Fathers here again furnish the example) I confess that there is something in this way of quoting Scripture that confounds me. The Bible speaks of Behemoth only a single time (*Job* xl. 15) : "Behold now behemoth, which I made with thee ; he eateth grass as an ox." Under what pretext, by what act of prowess has this animal been transformed into Satan? I do not undertake to explain.

But the transformation once effected, we are at no loss to comprehend how Satan becomes all at once, the *principle of all the ways of the Lord*. Is it not written in the 19th verse

of the same chapter : "He is the chief of the ways of God?" Has not the Vulgate thought fit to translate it : '*Ipsæ est principium viarum Domini*?' It is true that commentators interpret with Dom Calmet : He is the chief of his power ; "he overcometh all the other animals." In any case, whether Behemoth be the first of animals created, or the most remarkable, as the general sense of the chapter seems to indicate, he has assuredly nothing in common with Satan.

M. de Mirville finds that he has not yet heaped up a sufficient number of misinterpretations ; he designates the devil as a principle created after the word and light were begotten, to which it was said in their turn ; "*Ante Luciferum genui te*, I will beget you before Lucifer." He claims to find here, I think, the third verse of Psalm cx. which is the fourth verse of Psalm cix., of the Vulgate. The true sense seems to be : "Thy youth is like dew from the womb of the morning."* But although the Vulgate may be a correct translation, and but few people venture to maintain this, although we should read with it ; "*Ante Luciferum genui te*, I have begotten you before the morning star,"† what inference shall we draw except that this Psalm refers to the generation of the Son, before the Eternal Ages, and consequently before the creation of the stars? It must first be proved that Satan is the morning star, and this never will be done.

We are not yet at the end. If the morning star has become Satan, the King of Babylon spoken of by Isaiah (xiv. 12) has submitted to the same metamorphosis. M. de Mirville therefore seizes upon this passage : "How art thou fallen, Lucifer? *quo modo cecidisti Lucifer*?" "I learn from Dom Calmet, that in the Hebrew it is : "How art thou fallen from Heaven, Hélel,‡ son of the morning?" It is the Seventy who have here

* The English translation is slightly different, as the reader may see by reference to the Bible.—TRANS.

† Read in the *Commentaire Littéral* of Dom Calmet the account of the various interpretations which this verse has received, and which comport with the Hebrew text.

‡ Or shining star.

introduced the expression, morning star or Lucifer. But the Seventy have, in no respect, changed the preceding or following verses, verses that clearly indicate Babylon and its king as this fallen star. I do not know what the Scripture will not be made to say, if declarations such as these are to have no value : "The burden of Babylon. . . . Thou shalt take up this proverb against the king of Babylon. . . . They that see thee shall narrowly look upon thee, and consider thee, saying, 'Is this the man that made the earth to tremble, that did shake kingdoms?' All the kings of the nations, even all of them, lie in glory, every one in his own house. But thou art cast out of thy grave. . . . For I will rise up against them saith the Lord of Hosts, and cut off from Babylon the name. . . . I will break the Assyrian. . . . (*Isaiah* xiii, 1 ; xiv, 4, 16 - 19, 22, 25.)

I feel compelled to pause a moment on this page, so characteristic of M. de Mirville, of his entire school, of his entire party ; thus do they quote Scripture, thus do they interpret it ! but, perhaps, I am wrong to be astonished, for a renunciation of the Bible is the necessary condition of obedience to tradition. How is it possible to acknowledge, at the same time, two authorities which completely and on all points contradict each other ! How believe at the same time in the Satan of the Bible, and in this personage of tradition, represented to us as being the principle of all the ways of the Lord, whose birth is closely connected in time with that of the Eternal generation of the Son, and to whom is given the title Lucifer, reserved to Christ ! Dualism, always disavowed in theory, has always subsisted in fact, and this is only too well proved by the part played by the devil in the Middle Ages. They who find the demonstration insufficient may complete it by consulting the works of cotemporary writers of the Ultramontane party.

M. des Mousseaux does not escape the common law. The Bible, under his pen, takes significations quite unforeseen. We find, on the 73d page of his book, an analysis of Psalm xci. (xc. of the Catholic version), that is worth about as much in

its way, as the *Scriptural* definition of Satan, interpreted according to M. de Mirville. The Psalmist says: "He shall deliver thee from the snare of the fowler, and from the *parole âpre** (or rather from the noisome pestilence). . . . "Thou shalt not be afraid for the terror by night; nor for the arrow that flieth by day; ni du démon du milieu du jour (or rather, the destruction that wasteth at noonday)." Do you know what signification he attaches to this touching description of the protection which will surround the faithful, night and day, as well as the hour of repose that interrupts the laborious day! *La parole âpre* is the spell cast by words! The flying arrows are fairies! The nocturnal terror and the dangers of the middle of the day are an express recognition of sorcery, phantoms, and the different relays prepared by the demons, those wonderful huntsmen who everywhere pursue and beset us.

M. des Mousseaux locates in the past all that the Apocalypse locates in the future: the great, celestial victory obtained by Michael and his angels over the dragon, the fall of the dragon upon earth, the smoke issuing from the bottomless pit, locusts like unto horses prepared for battle, the devil chained for a thousand years!

Elsewhere (114, 115, 128), he takes a convenient method of proving that the devils may cause death; he cites instances of blows struck by the exterminating angel, and he seems not to know whether this angel is a devil, who, of himself, has power to take away life, or whether he is simply a devoted and faithful agent of the judgments of the Lord! † In the same manner does he attribute to the devil the prophetic inspiration with which Saul was momentarily filled!

Yet, when I see him (165, 166) confound Apocrypha with Scripture, and seek his proofs in the additions to the book of

* Literally, the sharp or violent word.—TRANS.

† In this sense, which also implies dependence and subordination, the devil can also kill, as he can also put in prison. (Job, i. 11, 12, 19; Revelations, ii. 10.) He does what God wills and permits; nothing more, nothing less. He is, moreover, "prince of this world," only because the corrupt hearts belong to him.

Daniel, or in the history of Tobias, I have no longer courage to blame, I am far more inclined to pity him. Apocrypha and tradition have hidden the Bible from his sight ; it could not be otherwise.

One thing must indeed be admitted : in proportion to the weakness of the champions of sorcery on the Biblical ground, is their strength on the ecclesiastical ground. That they have on their side the certain and official tradition of their church, is incontestable. M. des Mousseaux is assuredly in the right when he says (131, 174-178) : " Not that we are ignorant that some concessions, made in the spirit of the last century, have led certain writers, with perfectly irreproachable intentions, to consider this sort of devil as only the play of a delirious imagination. But, for us, there can be neither play of the imagination nor delirium when the church believes and decides." Men, who fancy that to deny the supernatural is to perform an act of strong-mindedness, must, to be consistent, go still further, and, from the height of their superiority, say to the Roman Church : You either utter a falsehood or you are deranged, when you pretend to recite the instructions drawn up in your ritual, in the chapter of exorcisms, which are as follows : " The exorcist should order the demon to tell whether he is detained in the body of the *possédés* by some *magical* work, by *signs*, or by *objects acting as enchantments*. If the exorcised person has swallowed them, he must be made to vomit them up ; if they are not in his body, he must indicate the place where they are ; after they have been discovered they must be burned." The church, then, believes in magic, since it says so. Do those who refuse to give credence to this, think they hold the same belief as the church ?

It is not I who state this question, it is M. des Mousseaux. Those who would reply to him, will do well, first to weigh the proofs he accumulates. He proves (114-119) that the Roman Church acknowledges in demons the power to kill. He proves (92-95) that the Roman Church admits the existence of infected places, of localities impregnated with Satanic miasmata. He

proves (81) that the Roman Church admits the reality of fairies. He proves (29-36) that the Roman Church admits the reality of ghosts. He proves (53, 54) that the Roman Church admits the existence of familiar spirits, and (271, 272) that of knocking spirits.

In regard to the power exercised by demons over the elements and laws of nature ; in regard to obsessions, possessions, and magic in general, the language of Catholic tradition has never varied, and M. des Mousseaux states it correctly (8, 122, 123, 125, 225-227). He quotes (174) the anathema pronounced by Pope Innocent VIII. against those who, by witchcraft, bring disease on men or animals, and affect the earth with sterility. On this point, moreover, all demonstration would be superfluous, for the officers of the inquisition aided the civil magistrates in burning *loups garous* and sorcerers ; many thousand funeral piles have become historical facts, and a review of the sentences of death leave no doubt in respect to the doctrines. I do not speak of excommunications pronounced against caterpillars and rats, this is a fact of every day occurrence, and its practice has ceased in France only within the last century.

The dogma is then certain. M. des Mousseaux (48, 49, 101-111, 132-137, 168, 171-173, 182-187) has no difficulty in showing that he believes what Bernard, Abbé de Clairvaux, believed, what all the orthodox doctors believed with him, what the Fathers, the Popes and the Councils believed, what their frequent and solemn decisions did not allow of being contested, in a traditional point of view. Did not the monks of Loudun exorcise fire, water, air, earth, "and instruments of torture !" Is not the efficacy of sorcery inculcated, in our own times, by all treatises on theology, is it not taught in all the seminaries ? M. Lacordaire and M. Ventura maintain it as distinctly as the Marquis de Mirville, as the *Table parlante* and *l'Univers*. The Bishop of Mans thus expresses himself in his instructions to his clergy of February 14th, 1854 : "Another reason determines us to raise our voice at this time ; it is the weakening of faith in the intervention of spirits in the affairs of this world.

This belief seems superannuated. . . . Catholics, even, from thoughtlessness or from indifference, seem to partake of this practical incredulity, without regard to the teachings of the Divine Scriptures and of the Holy Church, which have received from heaven the tranquilizing privilege of infallibility. . . . All sorts of superstitions are known at Siam, wrote M. Bruguière in 1829, witchcraft, enchantments, spells, philters, evocations of the dead. . . . These diabolical operations produce effects so extraordinary, that it is impossible to explain them by any natural method. . . . Former missionaries in their *Lettres édifiantes*, speak of idols which moved of themselves, of leafy arbors and great winding-sheets suspended in the air . . . of a man transported from one road to another. The incredulous of all ages, rejecting the world of spirits, see, in such operations as these, only results of secret but natural causes, or of fraudulent manœuvres skilfully conducted. . . . Not thus did the Fathers of the Church and its doctors proceed. . . . What demons have done in one age they can do in another, unless prevented by God, who has all power over them. The operations of magic, then, of divination, of witchcraft, of sorcery, of evocations of the dead, are as possible now as formerly." . . .

In presence of this persevering and unanimous tradition, I can understand that M. des Mousseaux (377) should exclaim : " It would be necessary to deny, not only the Fathers of the Church and the most learned theologians of all ages, but even the sacramental formula of exorcisms which are a monument of the faith ! This is not all : it would be necessary to deny the testimony of learned societies, of the entire body of the magistracy, during the whole of the Middle Ages, and in all the countries of Europe ! In disowning the existence of these supernatural phenomena, one must, at the same time, deny the authority of historians, philosophers, and magicians, the church and the magistracy, people and individuals ; one must deny his own faith ; he must deny the testimony of the human senses ; he must deny all human nature."

This language finds its explanation among those who, adopt-

ing tradition for rule, accept, in a greater or less degree, universal consent as the demonstration, *par excellence*, of the truth. They are really obliged to say with M. des Mousseaux (70): "So many similar beliefs, in all times and among all people, could have had nothing but truth for their basis." But those who know that, in regard to subjects which touch on the supernatural, man, left to himself, invariably reasons falsely, will not be greatly surprised at the unanimity in error often met with. Would the Pagans, for example, have had the right to reject the Gospel, saying; "This is new! Behold, for three or four thousand years, entire humanity, or almost entire humanity, has admitted the plurality of gods; and does any one now come to talk to us of one only God, and especially of a God Saviour, of salvation by grace, by faith in his expiatory sacrifice! So many similar beliefs could have had nothing but truth for their basis." Did not Jewish tradition so completely give the lie to all revealed doctrines, that Jesus Christ solemnly rejected it? Did not Christian tradition accumulate so many fables, that the reappearance of the Bible at the time of the Reformation, seemed as revolutionary as it had been sixteen centuries before?

We are told of the universal consent that exists in favor of sorcery! Is it forgotten that, in purely supernatural matters, universal consent has existed in favor of the rotation of the sun round the earth? There has been universal consent, there has been testimony in all times and among all people, against Copernicus and Galileo, against the antipodes, against the circulation of the blood. We never make a discovery in science, we never return to a revealed doctrine, without knocking against universal consent, and without being obliged to say, with all due deference to M. des Mousseaux: "So many similar beliefs, in all times and among all people, may have been founded on not a particle of truth."

We do not, however, deny all truth to the phenomena referred to by M. des Mousseaux. The fluid action was real. It is, in general, on a real though distorted fact, that human ignorance

founds its falsest theories. In this sense, I am ready to acknowledge that there has always been a portion of truth at the basis of every error.

But let me not be asked to take a step further. They would have us make the *amende honorable* to all the lies and crimes of the Middle Ages! Such is the grand end proposed—nor does M. de Mirville attempt to conceal it. (100, 101, 102, 177, 183, 194, 197, 446, 447, 455.) Nevertheless, I venture to declare to him that, on this point, the modern spirit and the Christian spirit will, in concert, oppose an energetic resistance. They will stand on their guard, warned by words like these: .

“Our attention is occupied with a far graver care—that of immediately establishing, or rather of simply allowing to be established, the complete, absolute justification of the most delicate and least appreciated portions of our Catholic faith. The Count de Montalembert has recently thanked all the Catholic writers laboring in these latter days for the restoration of historical, philosophical, and social truth, adding: ‘Each day brings us to a truer appreciation of those great ages in which the Church was all—those ages so long forgotten or insulted by the majority of religious writers.’ Without wishing more than he to restore, we claim to vindicate the Middle Ages from the gravest accusation brought against them at the present day—that of having, through ignorance, caused thousands of the *innocent* to perish. . . . *L’Univers*—that able and devoted journal, so little embarrassed, as we all know, when called upon to explain with MM. de Maistre and de Falloux, either the inquisition, or the massacre of Saint Bartholomew—intrenched itself in absolute silence when, not long since, its enemies of *La Presse* pursued it to this difficult ground. The answer which *L’Univers* was not then prepared to give, is now before us, peremptory, absolute. . . . Had we no other object in view than to complete such historical rehabilitations, and to make better understood this spirit of the Middle Ages, hitherto so miserably travestied, our work would yet be wanting neither in actuality nor importance.”

"Our principal end is attained. . . . Who, then, dares keep up the miserable raillery of Fontenelle and Voltaire, in respect to what they called the foolish credulities of the Middle Ages? . . . The Count de Maistre prophesied to us some years since, 'that we should soon laugh at those who then laughed at the darkness of the Middle Ages.' Now, we repeat it, the prophecy is accomplished, day by day. . . .

"Jurisconsults will reverse judgment on all these great, calumniated men, guilty, it is said, of having caused so many innocent beings to perish. We do not justify these severities, although they were, after all, only errors; but neither let us convert zeal into cruelty, nor crime into touching innocence! We have seen, for example, what was the innocence of a Grandier! . . . The sorcerer was a man who, in place of using arsenic or the poignard in the attainment of his criminal ends, used precisely that far more formidable force which makes your tables turn, and which could move your houses. . . . The mildness of the laws, and the silence that has prevailed on such subjects, may have their favorable side; but do you know how many oppressed ones have *groaned* and *perished* in consequence of this same tolerance?"

And M. de Mirville declares that he knows more than one village in which whole families have succumbed under the action of witchcraft. Why would he no longer administer capital punishment to assassinations of this sort—the most formidable, the most cowardly of all? I have not the remotest idea. Perhaps, like *l'Univers*—which desires no more deaths at the stake, contenting itself at the present day, with imprisonment and fine—he would accommodate himself to the prejudices of the age. . . . Surely, the times are hard!

Who knows, moreover, whether, by dint of rehabilitating the Middle Ages, they will not also succeed, in a measure, in resuscitating them? Yet it would be cruel, always to condemn them to the inconsistency which affirms innumerable and incessant murders—the massacre of whole families by means of magical operations—and which, at the same time, says that the impunity allowed to such crimes *may have its favorable side!*

It was well done to burn Grandier, but it is not well to burn those who imitate him.

Such contradictions are not destined to endure. No sooner shall they have glorified the Middle Ages, and refuted "the historical calumnies" denounced by M. de Maistre, than the effects will be felt in our laws. They will erect no stakes or funeral piles, but they will give us something else. It is not in the nature of rehabilitations to remain absolutely sterile.

Rehabilitations ! I cannot express my detestation of these factitious and always selfish reactions against the judgment of the human conscience. We like to play with paradoxes, to play with fire. There is a sort of piquancy in setting our face against received opinions, in taking an opposite course to that of justice and good sense, in admiring what excites general horror, in accepting suspected testimony, in accepting it because it is suspected, in making a show of impartiality, (thus is it styled !) at the expense of the persecuted of all ages, in showing ourselves generous in behalf of the executioner. It looks well not to fall into the vulgar ravings which still groan over the inquisition, over Saint Bartholomew, over the bloody superstitions of former times ! It is a fine thing to invert the parts, to stigmatize the victims, and to do justice to the memory of the poor persecutors ! It shows a great and an independent mind ; it takes the place of courage with those who have never had any convictions except such as are in the fashion, and who do not know that this is also a fashion.

I look upon the tendency of such a state of mind to be very dangerous, for it is taken advantage of by a party bent on extracting from it all that it can give. And when its effect is only to weaken our most noble instincts, to encourage our cowardice, our increasing indifference, that pretended languor which sees the good side of everything, which has lost its power to get indignant at anything, do you think the evil small ? "When we meet not a crime, that is not extenuated," writes M. Gérusez,* "not a tarnished reputation that it is not attempted to restore,

* Successor of M. Guizot as Professor of Eloquence in the College of France ; a very distinguished literary critic.—TRANS.

the moral sense becomes obliterated, and the judgment perverted, by this play of paradoxes."

In whatever concerns the Middle Ages, the temptation to rehabilitation may easily be imagined; traditional belief has need of it. Continual error during half-a-score of centuries, would be only an indifferent guarantee of the infallibility claimed at the present day! Therefore is nothing neglected that can in any way assist to restore one of the most melancholy and shameful epochs through which the human race has passed. They talk to us of knighthood and cathedrals; then they slip in a word about the Crusades, about the simple and universal faith of those times, and finally, they agree with M. Ventura, in celebrating "their good sense in governmental matters."

If I were called upon to enter into the heart of the debate, I should criticise the Middle Ages without finding it necessary to calumniate them, without taking for granted (what is never the case) that everything connected with them was equally bad, without contesting, either the impetus given to religious architecture, the only indemnification for letters abolished and arts extinguished, or the services occasionally rendered by chivalry under a *régime* of brutality, rapine, and oppression. I should willingly grant that the vices of wicked and violent times often have a poetry wanting in prosperous times; that scamps and ruffians have professional graces, that the love of gold, which, at certain epochs, is satisfied by robbery and cruel exactions, seems sometimes less ignoble than that which is, at other epochs, satisfied by means of the not very chivalrous processes of industrialism. But these concessions made, I ask by what right, with what countenance they dare boast of, or excuse a social condition in which suffering was everywhere, in which prevailed an ignorance and an immorality so gross, that the picture of the disorders among the clergy alone, makes our hair, at the present day, stand on end. I ask the zealous defenders of the Middle Ages, if they would consent to submit one month only, to such tremendous misery, to expose themselves during even

that brief period, to daily contact with the impurity then everywhere pervading the social life, the romances and the lives of their saints, the visions of the sorcerers, and the preaching of the times.

Yes, the Middle Ages do very well in dramas and romances. We see there, knights and not lords, robbing on the highway ; we see artisans clothed in picturesque costume ; but we do not see their woe, their degradation, their perpetual anguish, where no one was sure of the morrow, of his liberty, of the morsel of black bread reserved to his family, of the honor of his daughter or wife.

The aspect of certain centuries of the Middle Ages, even now makes us dizzy, so immense is the burst of universal despair. The whole of society is groping about in a wrong direction ; it is profound night, hardly broken by a few, uncertain and fugitive glimmerings of day ; we see pestilences, endless wars without and within, long organized massacres, funeral piles, their fires never extinguished ; we meet with absurd institutions, impious dogmas, unheard-of pretensions proclaimed in the name of God, struggles of ambition, in which the self-styled infallible interpretations of the Gospel play an active part.

And during this time, all piety disappears. The Holy Books are gradually withdrawn from the hands of the people, and from the hands of the clergy themselves. A sort of Pagan brutishness takes possession of the soul. In place of a personal and living belief in Christianity, the adoration of forms, faith in the magical action of the sacraments, and especially the resignation of the conscience into the hands of the priests, progressively insinuate themselves. The entrance to Heaven is won by assisting at mass, by regular attendance in the confessional box, by purchasing absolution, if need be, with pious donations, by the slaughter of heretics, the pillage of Mahometan countries invaded by the armies of the Crusaders.

Yet it is the disappearance of such a state of things as this that I hear so much regretted ! This is that simple faith of the Middle Ages ! The negro worshippers of adders are not

less simple, and if belief only, is requisite, without reference to its objects, then has there been more than one period in the history of the world deserving the name of Middle Ages. But the most odious feature of this particular period consists in the fact that it forsook Christianity for these debasing superstitions ! Faith in the Saviour and the knowledge of the Scriptures were, doubtless, already compromised at its commencement ; but, thanks to it, what remained of them was not slow to vanish. Then was to be seen the spectacle of entire communities abandoning themselves into the hands of the clergy, receiving their direction on all questions, great and small, political and religious ; following their school with undeviating docility during all these ages, and coming out at last, perverted to a degree absolutely unheard of.

They who excuse the evil results of this education, arguing the bad disposition of the pupil, speaking of the barbarians and their invasions, of Feudalism and its crimes, are, probably, prepared to tell us for how many hundred years clerical domination used its influence to soften these rude manners, to enlighten these uncultivated minds, to develop these souls through the power of the Gospel, to infuse into their hearts a spirit of peace, of love, of liberty.

Nothing whatever of this nature was done ; the Holy Scriptures were proscribed, liberty of conscience was denied, the good news of salvation by grace was no longer proclaimed, light finally disappeared, and the admirers of the Middle Ages are reduced to the extremity (what irony) of praising them for not having destroyed everything, for having allowed a few monks to retain a small portion of the knowledge they refused to the people, for not having abolished the last trace of ancient literature, and for having transmitted to us a certain number of books through the medium of men who had reserved to themselves the monopoly of instruction ! Side by side with a people who knew not how to read, notwithstanding the highly extolled schools of the monasteries, we are shown doctors lost in the subtleties of scholasticism, and learnedly commenting on Aristotle, the knowledge of whom they derived from the

Arabs. Yet here we go off into ecstasies : " Behold ! they have preserved to us the depository of light ; without them, without their providential and benevolent ambition, without their necessary despotism, what would have become of corrupt and ignorant nations ?

First, to brutalize ; then, to govern and exact gratitude, because they govern after having brutalized ; to assume the attitude of saviours of civilization, because having everywhere suppressed, they alone have preserved some of its ruins, is to make capital out of their crime.

I have often asked myself what the Middle Ages would have been under other tutelage. What a magnificent epoch might then have been produced ! Formidable as was the barbarian invasion, it infused new blood into the impoverished body of the Latin world. The Germanic element, everywhere coming in contact with the Gospel, furnished something upon which to build a powerful and glorious civilization. Evangelical influence, even when it is incompletely accepted, gives to ideas and sentiments a generous direction ; it permits neither supineness, nor ignorance, nor spiritual servitude ; it develops the intellect, it touches the heart, it resolves social questions, insoluble without it. In place of justifying the Middle Ages through the very degradation they have produced ; in place of feeling gratitude that they have not absolutely destroyed everything, that they have not brought about the end of the world, it is far more proper and useful to inquire what would have taken place without them, and to demand an account of the good they have prevented.

The partisans of the Middle Ages are so imprudent as to provoke a revision of the proceedings of this period. Well ! so much the better. History will always be more severe towards it than controversy. She will demand an account of the patrimony it has squandered ; a patrimony of evangelical truth, and consequently, also, of progress, of happiness, of liberty. She will accuse it of having precipitated European nations into that hell which bears its name.

To take possession of society, to annihilate everything not in

accordance with itself, and then to exclaim : " You see that I am indeed necessary !" is a strange sophism, the success of which, however, is infallible. If, to-morrow (supposing an impossibility), Russia were to succeed in extending her dominion over all Europe, in permanently establishing for centuries her noble *régime*, the language of future historians would sustain something similar to the following thesis : " Absolute despotism, the knout and Siberia are indispensable in the government of society. The emperor, as is plainly to be seen, is the sole protector of the humble and the oppressed. He is the tutelary asylum of liberty and equality, such as are compatible with our times. The people are ignorant ; but more instruction would ruin them, and moreover, the empire provides for the maintenance of learned bodies that will transmit, in part, to generations to come, the knowledge *they have preserved*. Is it not evident, that examination, that discussion would engender division and anarchy ? Freedom of thought and of speech may have been useful in other epochs ; in ours, autocracy is the welfare of all."

Now we know what is the real worth of such propositions ; we, who see in England, for example, the results of a representative government and of free discussion. It is equally certain (I speak for those who do not profess fatalism in history), that the intervention of the pure Gospel would have entirely changed the condition of the Middle Ages, and would have established this long period on quite another basis. Without dreaming, far from it, of making all the nations Christian, it is reasonable to suppose that the influence of Christianity, as it existed in the Apostolic period, or as it is manifested in certain Protestant countries at the present day, would have created noble habits of mind, healthy and elevated currents of ideas, a progressive development of the intellect, a softening of the manners, which would have made it unnecessary for the monasteries to occupy themselves with the care of preserving a few remnants of old civilization. There was no reason why the world should be compelled to crouch down in thick darkness ;

there was no law to condemn either light or liberty to submit to an adjournment of ten or eleven hundred years.

But when the German nations no longer encountered in their path the book of the Scriptures, the generous perils, the wholesome restraint, and the powerful stimulus of a belief which calls into action the entire human being, and which has an immense influence, even on those who do not accept it; when the heaven was no longer put into the dough, the blessed fermentation produced by the Gospel could not be expected. Thence forth, there was no remedy, either for the brutality of the ones, or for the corruption of the others. Nothing remained but to rule society thus disinherited, by means of temporal and spiritual despotism, by clerical direction, by the absolute suppression of spontaneous sentiments and individual responsibility, by concentrating knowledge in the hands of the sacerdotal caste, especially by the terrible repression of all aspiration to religious independence. The Holy Spirit had ordained the contrary, when, on the eve of barbarian invasion into the heart of an empire already in decay, it inculcated in the New Testament only principles of liberty. Search, judge, it says. Examine the Scriptures; let every one embrace the salvation that is offered him; "Ye are bought with a price; be not ye the servants of men." (*1 Corinthians*, vii. 23.) That signifies nothing! The Holy Spirit, doubtless, did not foresee the arrival of the Franks, the Burgundians, or the Goths! The Holy Spirit was, probably, guilty of imprudence, in launching forth into the midst of such a crisis, these elements of agitation! Human wisdom, fortunately, came in time to withdraw the Bible, salvation by grace, the duty of personal sanctification, and all those stern instructions, the defect of which is to disturb the soul by elevating it, to found upon life, not upon death, the edifice of preservation and progress!

Then, in place of the divine education, that, which established by Christ and organized by the apostles, which alone good and always good, laboriously ameliorates the condition

of all races, in all times and in all countries, there is organized on the threshold of the Middle Ages, the educational system already familiar to us, and the fruits of which we are still gathering. It is the beau-ideal of the party that is at the present day endeavoring to resuscitate the supernatural apocrypha. Its love for the Middle Ages is not precisely platonic ; it is not a simple question of art, or of taste that is in debate between us. We are to settle whether Modern Europe shall be impelled in the direction of the sanctifying liberty instituted by the Gospel, or in that of the brutalizing slavery instituted by tradition.

Religious liberty, this is the great point in contest. If the partisans of the Middle Ages rehabilitate this dark period, it is, first, in order to stifle religious liberty. In this old arsenal of bloody tyrannies and shameful superstitions, they seek arms against heresy. They enjoy in advance, the pleasure to be received in confounding dissenters, in strengthening faith in sorceries and exorcisms, in proving that those burned in former times, well deserved their fate.

Now, I do not hesitate to say with M. Morin (*La Magie*, 30) : "I do not desire the day to come, when, having endured the torture, I must make a renunciation on the pavement of Notre Dame, with a wax taper of twelve pounds' weight in my hand, to pass thence to be burned on the Grève." Doubtless, M. de Mirville does not ask so much ; nevertheless, I do not find his language the most reassuring possible. (130, 131, 132, 140, 176.)

When he has occasion to refer to the horrid and refined persecutions practised upon the Protestants under Louis XIV., he thus expresses himself : "It would be easy for us to show that, while we stigmatize the details of their application as they deserve, and as all the honest Catholics themselves, to commence with the monarch, have stigmatized them, it is none the less true that in this cause, the government used only the right, or rather only the most sacred duty of legitimate defense.

Let it suffice for us to remember in relation to this revocation of the Edict of Nantes, which gave rise to the Camisards,

the thanks then voted by all the cities of France." . . .
 "The Catholic priests employed at first, and generally, only ways of gentleness, instruction and persuasion."

Thus, all is justified in the past, and all will be justified as occasion may demand, in the future. M. de Mirville does not wish to renew the scenes of the scaffold or the stake, God forbid ! I am even convinced that he rejects with sincere indignation, certain modes of treatment, entirely too barbarous ; yet other modes of treatment seem to him to enter into the category of "ways of gentleness ;" and moreover, Louis XIV. used "the right of legitimate defense." We notice also that M. de Mirville quietly introduces, in passing, that too convenient expression, which has served as an excuse to so many ages of atrocities : "*The political scaffold ! ! !*"

The expression is too convenient, I have said, and I regret it for the honor of M. de Mirville, who has almost always the great merit of being sincere at the risk of seeming imprudent. He does not ordinarily gloss over or pervert things, he does not cast aside troublesome dogmas, he does not disavow gross superstitions and traditions decidedly unsustainable, nor does he insinuate that the Holy Spirit was not quite as infallible in the Middle Ages as at present. No, he accepts courageously and without wincing, the entire heritage of his church ; he does not feel that he has a right to choose among the doctrines it has proclaimed, among the wholly secular practises it has enforced on the solemn authority of the Bible ; he takes it, such as it is, with its legends, its sorceries and its exorcisms, with its dogmas of temporal sovereignty and of persecution. He would evidently sign the articles in which *l'Univers* declares that no one can be a Catholic and maintain that Catholicism is constantly deceived by its bulls and its sermons, by the organ of its popes, of its general councils and of its priests, by its uninterrupted practise in short, when it has promulgated and applied the irrevocable principle of the extermination of heretics. That, at least, is logical and clear. The attack is made in front, and the flag boldly hoisted.

But the stab from behind; the perfidy that places executions at the stake and on the scaffold, to the account of the state and public security, is unworthy of his integrity. This, however, is not the place to enter upon a thorough discussion of such a proposition. If the time should ever come for its serious debate, our opponents will find with whom they have to deal; we shall furnish our authority, that of our martyrs; we shall establish, documents in hand, the acts and the official doctrines of the persecutors; we shall see, in particular, what becomes of the shameful pretext of political necessity, behind which the clever ones of the party would adroitly take refuge.

Never, since Pilate, has any one more audaciously washed their hands of innocent blood. This, moreover, is a question of history, and sometimes even, a simple question of dates. Before, long before the Camisards appeared, persecution was established and developed in consequence of the reiterated and unanimous entreaties of the clergy. And if we go still further back, to the 16th century, we may also say that before, long before the religious wars, at a time when the reformers demanded only the liberty to pray together for France and for her king, the priests of a church which pretends to a horror of blood, loudly laid claim to theirs, and made it run in torrents.

Those who reconstruct history according to the prudent advice of M. de Maistre, are very careful to pass over in silence, the thirty odd years that preceded the conspiracy of Amboise,* and the deplorable circumstances that led to the religious wars under the Valois; they are very careful to ignore the fact, that there were some measures taken before the revolt of the Cévennes, under Louis XIV. Fortunately, the facts subsist; Francis I. and Henry II. reigned previous to that, and in their time, reformers were burned, although they had given no pretext for such treatment, by any sedition whatever. They

* Formed by the Huguenots, in the year 1560, against Francis II., Catherine de Medicis, and de Guise.—*Trans.*

were burned in 1525; Louis de Berquin submitted to his punishment in 1529, and from this period to that in which the first symptoms of civil war appeared, a whole generation passed away, a generation during which an uninterrupted series of massacres took place, but which, thanks to God, did not show the least attempt at armed resistance, did not give the least injury to public security. Excommunications pronounced by the curés and vicars of the capital "against those who, knowing others to be Lutherans did not denounce them," indeed abounded, but nothing was heard of any disturbance caused by the "Lutherans."

It is the same in regard to the revocation of the Edict of Nantes.* The work was prepared and followed up for a quarter of a century, at the precise period when the Protestants, peaceable among the most peaceable, certainly caused no peril to the state. The Abbé de Caveirac has amused himself in counting four or five hundred declarations and decisions of the Councils between 1665 and 1685. And who were the originators of these measures, more and more cruel? The clergy. He has taken pains to collect the proofs in a compilation entitled: "*Actes, titres, et mémoires du clergé de France*," which has been published by him in twelve volumes, quarto. "It was," we there read, "the remonstrances of the bishops which gave rise to a great portion of the regulations afterwards made. Some were not published immediately, circumstances not permitting. But they were eventually issued by the king. *In these regulations, the conformity of the remonstrances of the clergy with the orders of the government, is worthy of remark.*" (Vol. i. 1125.)

No one then, thought himself obliged to speak of "political scaffolds," to offer reasons of state in excuse for his persecutions, or to throw on Louvois alone, the responsibility of the *dragonades*. The *memorials* of the clergy speak for themselves. The language there held by them, has, in

* See a pamphlet by M. Aug. Lièvre: "The rôle played by the Catholic Clergy of France in the revocation of the Edict of Nantes."

general, the merit of frankness. They suggest to the king the pious design of uniting all his subjects in one worship ; they point out to him "vigorous remedies ;" they remind him that he solemnly swore at the ceremony of his coronation to exert all his authority in the destruction of heresy.* It is thus that the employment of salutary severities was prepared. The petitions of the general assemblies of the clergy, are literally converted into so many declarations and decisions.

Nor are we to believe that the details of their execution revolted the instigators of such crimes ! The correspondence of the bishops is evidence to the contrary ; this one goes into ecstasies over results obtained "without violence and without arms ;" that one extols the measures that bring heretics back into the bosom of the Church "by a path strewn with flowers." All approve ; all, including Fenelon and Bossuet. Now, what were these measures ; One, in reference "to persons who, in their illness, refused to receive the sacrament," ordered that, if they recovered, they should be condemned to the galleys, and if they died, their bodies were to be drawn on a hurdle, and buried on the highway ! Another ordered that children should be forcibly taken from their fathers and mothers, and brought up in convents !

I pause. I have no room for further demonstration. My end is attained, if the reader now understands why I have regarded the manifesto of M. de Mirville as a very serious matter. Behind the resurrection of sorcery, rises that of the Middle Ages, and behind the Middle Ages is unrolled the entire theory of religious intolerance. Such insinuations should meet with energetic criticism, especially when they do not excite in the public mind, that instinctive and indignant repulsion, which would in itself, perhaps, be a sufficient safeguard. As there has been no evidence of any feeling of this sort, as the whole of the manifesto, sorcery, the Middle Ages, and the persecutions, all seem to have been favorably received, it was essential to

* See the bulletin of the Society of the history of French Protestantism. Second year, 349, 353, and fol., 399, 400.

throw light on each of these three points. I trust that I have succeeded. A declaration of war was addressed to Modern Civilization, and to the disciples of the Scriptures. I could not decline the combat. While I honor the zeal of the party by whom we are attacked, I am bound as far as my feeble strength will permit, to repel its menacing pretensions.

But this party not only labors to carry us backward and to ruin our religious liberties, already shaken to their very foundation by its efforts; its course of action really leads to infidelity. This consideration has great weight with me, and I would refer to it in closing, in order that the principal design of my work shall be inscribed on the last page, as it is on the first.

The champions of the supernatural apocrypha will, doubtless, not reconstruct the mediæval period; but they are capable of reconstructing an 18th century. They pretend, that in peopling inert matter with spirits, they will quicken the belief in a superhuman power, faith in another life! But they will succeed only in ruining the little influence the Gospel still exercises over the mind and heart. There are always "fly-catchers" among the bears of the fable, and the friends of Christianity, who, through devotion, throw stones at their heads, are more to be feared than enemies.

"Scarcely does one begin to believe in God," said Duclos, "than he believes also in the baptism of bells." I have not the slightest doubt of it. To believe in the baptism of bells is often a good way of dispensing with a belief in God, and nothing is so friendly to gross superstition, as the periods most hostile to living faith. Our age experiences only a mediocre repugnance for speaking tables and diabolical prodigies; it will follow you promptly and far upon this road; upon one condition, however, that questions of serious importance shall not be stated, that the conscience shall not be called into play, that the Gospel shall not be declared. If the point in question concerns the raising of the dead, or attention to frightful stories, it will lend its ear, and it will accord you that partial

confidence which is closely related to skepticism, which tickles the imagination without moving the heart, and which transforms into amusement things that should make us weep. But expect nothing more; far from thus coming nearer to Christian truth, it will remove from it with great strides.

It will remove from it, first, because the most solemn things of religion, judgment and forgiveness, God and Satan, will become subjects of curious revelations, of common-place chit-chat, of jest and profanation; because the devil, who is as well pleased to lie in ambush behind our raileries as behind our negations, will succeed in making celestial and infernal mysteries, eternal salvation, damnation, and finally, his own person, figure among the ordinary recreations of our social evenings.

It will remove from it, secondly, because the spectacle of a credulity so enormous will produce its usual effect. The world will at last include the supernatural apocrypha and the Biblical Supernatural in the same reprobation. It will plunge deeper than ever into its materialism, intrench itself more securely than ever behind its scientific pride, it will demand as a favor, to be left undisturbed, to hear no more under any form, either of devils, angels or revelations. "There is always something to be dreaded in the return from a journey." These words of Bayle recur to my mind when I meet people who pretend to lead us so far.

Let us not forget the inevitable reaction attendant upon such movements. It is all the more to be feared at the present day, in proportion as the permanent success of *Spiritualism* becomes impossible. The time has gone by for everybody, without exception, to believe in sorcerers and magicians; since Bacon, since the introduction of the experimental method, and its substitution for the authority of the Middle Ages, the popular belief in spirits has met with innumerable blows. If the world were still in dread of the charms of the 16th century,*

* The Prince de la Moskowa has lately published, in a very interesting work on the duel of Jarnac with Châtaignerale, the form of the oath taken by the combatants:

if Benvenuto Cellini could still call up those multitudes of evil spirits that formerly filled the Coliseum, if Paracelsus still kept his genius shut up in the handle of his sword, if faith in *Marcous** has been hitherto preserved in certain provinces, if, in short, the recent success of speaking tables manifests the force of these indestructible tendencies that urge us to superstition, it nevertheless remains incontestable that positive, firm, and general convictions no longer anywhere exist in favor of sorcery. In writing against them, I am not in the slightest danger of being burned by the application of the famous principle: "The greatest sorcerer is he who denies them." Even, at the commencement of the last century, the Palatine (*Nouvelles lettres*, 153, 293, 306) dared give utterance to the following remarks in his private correspondence: "At Paris, we no longer believe in sorcerers, nor do we hear them spoken of; at Rouen, they believe strongly in them and talk of them continually." "In places where they believe in ghosts, as at the Court of Cassel, they are frequently to be seen; with us, where they are not believed in, there is no question of them." "The thing is indeed realized." The author here refers to a dream of the princess Ragotzi. "This is really very strange; but it seems to me that these things happen to the princes of the house of Hesse, more than to any other persons. What is the reason? God only knows. It is quite different with us of the Palatinate; here, we never have either apparitions or dreams."

If this opinion prevailed more than a hundred years ago, I do not think we are much less skeptical now. That there is a fashion setting towards sorcery and the Middle Ages, is possible; that the tendency of this fashion is to spread many false and fatal ideas, is certain. But that a revolution, or rather a

"And, moreover, I do not bear about my person, or on my weapons, any words, charms, or incantations, with which I hope to injure my enemy."

* When seven male children are successively born in a family, and the body of the seventh is marked with a *fleur de lys*, this one is called a *Marcou*; he possesses power to cure the king's evil, especially on Good Friday, after midnight. Now, prodigies of this sort are so on the decline, that the *gens d'armes* have latterly prevented the miracle the parish d'Ormes (Loiret)!

complete counter-revolution, will be effected ; that in spite of the conquests of science and of conscience, we shall be made to accept as our positive creed, the profession of faith of *l'Univers* on magic, on legendary miracles, on Satanic magnetism, on the spirits of the tables, and above all, on the excellence of the ancient theocracy and of massacres ordered by the Church, I do not believe to be in the order of things probable. The feat is decidedly too great ; yet we know what succeeds such abortive attempts as these. This will not be the first time that credulity has served the cause of infidelity, and that Ultramontaniam has engendered Voltairianism.

I might almost venture to say that by the side of a credulity so shameful, infidels seem almost to have a noble part. When M. des Mousseaux (61-82, 116-119) gravely relates to us the history of fairies, or reproduces the anecdote of the demon-killer, of men who inhabited the thermæ of Neocæsarea, when M. de Mirville and his friends propose to us their exorcisms under the title of a universal remedy, I feel humiliated for my age and my country, I ask myself by what right we shall henceforth laugh at those who perform *charivari* in order to put an end to eclipses, and I am grateful to whoever will vigorously protest against such enormities.

Materialism for materialism, I fear that the least which does not disguise itself under the cloak of religion. In regard to that which mingles Bible quotations and the name of Jesus Christ with the fluid action of spirits, the influence of spells, the power of formulas, the diabolical infection of certain objects and places ; which goes back, under the semblance of devotion, to the Pagan personification of the forces of nature, to a sort of unconscious fetichism ; which attributes to a rotation or any other exterior act, the power of evoking devils and the souls of the dead, I cannot express the repugnance with which it inspires me. It was, in the Middle Ages, less deprived of all spiritual element, even though at bottom it was as odious. In all circumstances, under its ancient costume and under its modern costume, magician or *medium*, it exerts itself to give the lie to the great words of Pascal. Man, such

as it makes him, the slave of a combination of syllables, of a rotary incantation, or of a touch, is no longer the thinking reed, which, though the universe should crush it, would be superior to its destroyer.

I thank the infidels, then, for the resistance they oppose (not all of them) to the modern partisans of magic. But absolute victory will not come from this quarter ; we effectually repulse a thing only when we can replace it by something else ; truth alone, brings absolute victory, for negation of that which is false, never suffices when separated from the affirmation of that which is true. To faith is reserved the conquest of credulity. This I knew long before I undertook the present work ; but I now know it better yet. Wearied and disgusted by a perusal of so much folly, I return to my Bible. And what a feeling of peace does my soul experience in quitting the false supernatural for the true ! What a pleasure to find myself in the midst of these miracles, so solemn, so well established, so worthy, so spiritual ! I have had, as it were, a nightmare ; now, I am again awake, and I contemplate the pure light in these Scriptures, everywhere bearing traces of the hand of God, where all is edifying, even that which is amazing, even that which exceeds our comprehension, even that which wounds, in these Scriptures so clear that their legitimate interpretation cannot be perverted except by mutilating them, with the rationalists, or enlarging upon them, with the Catholic and Protestant disciples of tradition. Here is a book, which, translated into all the languages of the world, announces, in all climes and to all nations, the same good and holy God, the same gratuitous salvation, the same necessity for sanctification and good works. In reading the Bible we inhale a pure atmosphere, the lungs play freely. They who have experienced the pleasure caused by the Old Testament after reading the Apocrypha, the New Testament after the Protévangile of James,* after the Pastor of Hermas, after the stories of childhood or the gospel of

* The name of a book attributed to James, in which he speaks of the birth of the Virgin and of Jesus Christ.—TRANS.

Nicodemus,* after the Fathers, in short ; they only, can form an idea of one who, escaping from the wonders performed by magicians, treads once more on the ground of the wonders of the Bible.

And it is not alone in the marvellous we find the difference. If the dividing of the waters of the Red Sea and the resurrection of the dead, have a character which cannot be imitated by sorcery or magic, if a prophecy like that of the 53d chapter of Isaiah, or like that which the destiny of the Jewish people still verifies to the letter, has nothing to fear from a comparison with the predictions so famous at the present day, we find, also, in the whole body of written revelations, something that commands both our admiration and adoration. Humanity and Divinity there meet ; thus we witness in the person of our Saviour, perfect Divinity, perfect Humanity, without error and without sin. Whoever casts an attentive eye upon this vast collection which, extending from Moses to John, includes David, Isaiah, Daniel, Amos, Matthew, and Paul, will find it impossible to decide which is the more miraculous, the Divine uniformity with which these same dogmas are maintained throughout this long and progressive manifestation of the truth, or the diversity in the human race, which leaves to each man his form, his manners, his expression, his natural turn of thought. It is certainly not a mere exposition of dogmas, a monotonous series of oracles ; it is a living communication between heaven and earth, it is an unequalled book, in which are to be found food for the weak and for the strong, for the wise and for the ignorant, answers to all questions, assistance for all wants, consolation for all griefs. Here are mysteries that the thinkers will never fathom, here are words of love that the most simple can comprehend. "There are shallow waters for lambs," it has been said, "and there are deep waters where the elephants swim." †

* A Jewish senator, of the sect of the Pharisees, and a declared disciple of Christ. There is, under his name, a Gospel Apocrypha, written by a Manichean.—*TRASS.*

† See the beautiful pages of the book of M. Gausgen (*Théopneustie*), from 69 to 78, and elsewhere.

I appeal to those who are familiar with this treasure. In view of the present crisis, let them not remain inactive. Men of faith, it belongs to them to destroy superstitions. "For God hath not given us the spirit of fear, but of power, and of love, and of a *sound mind*." (2 *Timothy* i. 7.) Milton has, in his poem, portrayed the Pagan oracles which are silent from the time of Christ's resurrection: a great silence reigns on earth from the moment victory is obtained by him who calls himself "the truth." (*John* xiv. 6.) So even must the false supernatural be silent before the Bible. Truth, doubtless, is not destined to a complete triumph before the second coming of Christ; but it is called upon to exercise some empire over those even who detest it, and to make itself a focus of healthy ideas, which, by mere contact, put to flight certain excesses of gross credulity.

"And when they shall say unto you, Seek unto them that have familiar spirits, and unto wizards that peep, and that mutter; should not a people seek unto their God? for the living to the dead? to the law and to the testimony!" Such is our word of command, our cry of battle. Isaiah (viii. 19, 20) proclaimed it to the corrupt Jews of his times; it is no less appropriate to the melancholy calamities by which our age is afflicted. May a return to Divine revelation succeed this enthusiasm for human revelation! May it result in the edification of our race! May those souls to whom the earth does not suffice, and who seek, perhaps, the road to their celestial country, no longer lose their way in the train of *mediums*, but taste, at last, the refreshing waters of the pure Gospel!

There are such souls; let us take care not to forget it. Their number augments from day to day; the success of even the most absurd doctrines corresponds to incontestable aspirations. How many men, thirsting after the supernatural, but bewildered and discouraged, eagerly accept whatever is presented to them as such—evocations of the dead, faith in Satanic prodigies, the gloomy annals of sorcery—preferring these to nothing, experiencing as they do, the need of filling up, at any price, the void that is within them! Will Christians not take

compassion on such men -as these? will they not try to lead them to the Saviour and his word?

Thus the effort to revive faith in witchcraft and sorcery will, perhaps, have rendered us a great service, in making us incur a great peril. It will have provoked, on the one hand, the activity of the disciples of the Bible; and on the other, a more thorough study of extraordinary facts, metamorphosed into prodigies, than the past has ever attempted.

Such a work, if it is undertaken and pursued with energy, cannot fail to lead to magnificent results. Unexplored branches of science will at length be investigated; many hitherto insoluble difficulties will be resolved, although some will probably still remain which man will not succeed in resolving. Who doubts this? It is absurd for us to aspire to absolute demonstration in religious or philosophical matters, while God promises us only certainty. And the reason of this is very simple: demonstration would lay a restraint upon our convictions, which should remain free, in order to preserve their moral value; while certainty, although it never answers all objections, suffices for the sincere and sensible man. The reader will acknowledge, I trust, that, if this conscientious study of the supernatural apocrypha does not conclude with the absolute demonstration which I have not deemed it my province to seek, it at least produces certainty.

And now I turn to my other adversaries. They have too often been the allies of superstition. They have served it by refusing to study the natural law. Their energy against the facts which attack holy, scientific orthodoxy, has generally been equalled only by their indifference, or even their complaisance in regard to those which ruin the human conscience and faith. Have they occasionally condescended to manifest some indignation, this indignation has united the Biblical supernatural and the supernatural apocrypha in the same anathema. Thus to attack, is still to serve it; for it is to state the question in

terms most favorable to traditional belief ; either admit everything or reject everything ! Between the opinion of M. de Mirville and that of Lucretius, there is no middle term ! Those who do not say that the devil effects prodigies, must say that God does not effect miracles ! God is separated by an immense distance from human affairs, and in no way meddles with them ; he has created laws, and has entered into his repose, *semel jussit, semper paret !**

The campaign of the scientific men against modern magic, has, consequently, been neither very warm nor very brilliant. They have held themselves in reserve, I have said, in order to combat the profane who should venture to lay their hand on the holy ark of official physics. At one time, they treated it with utter contempt. "The Academy," they wrote, "has replied only by a disdainful silence ; it has not chosen to give its attention to the communications addressed to it on this subject." They soon perceived, however, that the enemy did not pause in its advances, and that its progress was not to be checked, as in China, by hideous figures painted on screens. But now, taking a different tone, M. Babinet (*Revue des Deux Mondes*, 520) no longer remembers the famous *basket* reserved to our observations, in common with the papers on perpetual motion ; he invites us to the Monday sittings of the Academy of Science, assuring us "that every experimenter has the right, if not written, at least tacitly admitted, to call for an examination of any result, whatsoever it may be, that has been obtained by a conscientious observer."

This is not all : the same article (530-531) substitutes, for the injuries previously heaped upon us, courtesies almost resembling compliments. "Is there in these evolutions nothing new, curious, or interesting ? They largely partake of all these features, and we are still far from knowing every detail connected with the transmission of the effects of the will of the chief member of the chain, said to be magnetic, to the table which obeys all his orders. What should be done in order to develop

* Seneca.

this branch of knowledge? We should carefully observe everything that may be connected with the case in which the table apparently moves without immediate contact; and if, *supposing an impossibility*, a table, or any other inert body, could be raised and maintained in the air, the experimenters might flatter themselves that they had made the first discovery of the age."

We do not ask so much. It is true that M. Babinet has employed this expression: *supposing an impossibility*; now, according to his opinion the action exercised by a fluid at a distance, constitutes an *impossibility*! He who has elsewhere (*Revue des Deux Mondes*, 806, 812-814), so well reviewed the intimate relations which unite the various fluids or various transformations of the only fluid; he who has so well shown that there, should probably be sought the agent who executes without our knowledge orders of our will and puts our members in motion, cannot admit that this agent communicates, at a distance, motion to inert objects, whether by means of impulsion, or by means of attraction! Indeed, he will permit me to tell him, we are much nearer coming to an understanding than I have hitherto dared flatter myself. Put our experiments side by side with those of M. Babinet, and then judge if he has the right to speak of impossibility.

"Aldini tried the action of the Voltaic pile on animals that had been killed, on the bodies of men who had been executed or who had been accidentally killed. He obtained some remarkable effects. Later, Aldini having come to Paris, many of these experiments were repeated on a large scale at the veterinary school near Paris. There, the head of an ox, separated from its body, and placed on a table where it was excited by the electric current, was observed to open its eyes and roll them furiously about, inflate its nostrils, shake its ears as though *the animal were alive and prepared for combat*. On another table, a dead horse gave such forcible kicks as to wound some of the persons present, and break portions of the apparatus placed within its reach. Still more recently, in England, certain physiologists bought the body of a criminal condemned to death

(a common custom in that country) for the purpose of verifying the electro-animal theories, and also entertaining the charitable intention of restoring the man to life, and reforming him. The corpse did not return to life;* but a violent and convulsive breathing was produced, the eyes reopened, the lips moved, and the face of the assassin, no longer obeying any instinctive direction, presented such 'strange physiognomical aspects as to cause one of the assistants to faint with horror, and he remained several days struck with a real moral obsession."

M. Babinet afterwards takes up the subject of the immense action exercised by electric currents throughout the entire world. "The currents, however weak they may be, exert an influence in the long run, over the metallic portions of the soil, and drift them towards the first obstacle or weakening force in their way. There, they abandon them, and a real deposit or metallic furrow is formed. . . . It is not easy to imagine how this agent, so little material, that is to say, the electric current can influence the particles. . . . In whatever manner the thing is done, we observe in experiments of physics, numerous transportations of matter which follow the electric current. Thus, in establishing a communication between two vases, half full of water, by means of a simple moistened wire, and conducting the electricity by this wire, one of the vases may be seen to fill at the expense of the other which empties itself by some mysterious action."

"All the admirable mechanism of nutrition," adds M. Babinet, "of secretion, of digestion in living bodies, is founded on electric transportation; and this is so true that in animals whose nerves communicating with the stomach have been cut off, digestion is re-established by substituting for the portion of the nerve abstracted, a wire, or metallic plate, which re-establishes the electrical communication."

Thus electricity reigns over the whole of nature. In our globe it transports metals; in our living bodies it effects tran-

* Do not forget that. Resurrection is a miracle. God alone has restored life.

sportations not less admirable ; in our dead bodies, it produces a violent agitation. Is this very far from admitting that the same agent, under one of its new forms, may obey orders and communicate motion ? To proclaim impossibilities, in face of such results, is to treat the subject with contempt.

Impossible ! and the electric current which influences metals, which turns across its path the magnet placed in the same plane, which empties one glass and fills another ; the magnetic attraction which nerves the iron at a distance ; the capillary attraction, which, in spite of terrestrial attraction, without electric action, without motion, properly speaking, causes water to rise in a vase ; are all these possible ? Indeed, they must be possible, since they really occur. Therefore, M. Babinet finds nothing in them to censure, and I cannot sufficiently express my astonishment that a man so enlightened as he, a man who has rendered us, unlearned ones, such great services in placing science within our reach, should so far deceive himself as to invoke against the magnetic elevation of the tables, the well established laws of the possible and impossible.* According to him, this elevation would be a real *effect without a cause*, since experience has established that all motion exacts a force acting by means of a body possessing the properties of magnitude, of weight, of material substance ! “ Who then has told him that the fluid or the agent, whatever it may be, which has thus been named, is neither a cause, nor a force, nor a material substance ? Everything depends with him (and with others) on this strange begging of the question. He takes the trouble to teach us that a kilogramme of oil weighs as much as a kilogramme of iron, and that a kilogramme of oil or of iron, of feathers or of lead, is only displaced in virtue of a proportional action ! Does he think we may be disposed to contradict him, and that we pretend to effect our elevations without exercising any action ?

If I am here guilty of repetition, it is less to renew an exhausted discussion than to show how very small, in reality, is

* *Revue des Deux Mondes*, May 1st, 1854, 510, 515, 519, 520, 522, 524, 526, 531.

the distance that separates us from our learned opponents. At first they made an outcry, they became indignant, they declared they would neither see nor hear anything ; then, feeling that such a position is untenable in face of serious and persevering observation, they have, at length, adopted the more polite forms which characterize the later works of M. Babinet, and henceforth content themselves with declaring impossible the action of our fluid, while they themselves establish the analogous action exercised by terrestrial magnetism and electricity.

So much for our serious antagonists. In regard to those who are not, those who only follow the crowd *en vrais moutons de Panurge*, who are loud in their denunciations, and who, compensating for their ignorance by their brutality, summon us to put an end to a discussion which has endured only too long. I do not know that I shall take pity on their solicitude alarmed for the honor of our times. When a new Marphurius finds it amiss that I should affirm the truth of what I have done, that I should believe what I have seen, when he says to me : " Be so good as to change this method of speaking," I do not feel disposed to adopt the theory of universal skepticism in order to please him. If he urges his point, and opposes to me the disks of M. Faraday, I answer that they make a sorry figure when placed by the side of the elevations without contact, and that he is unfortunate in having *demonstrated* the muscular origin of a motion which is transmitted at a distance.

I perfectly comprehend that the laugh is not yet on our side ; but let us have patience ! that will come, and *he laughs well who laughs last*. Meanwhile, some energy is required to enable us to persist in the right ; many persons who would brave a battery give way before a pun. What shall we do ? Shall we heal the malady of our generation, moral weakness, absence of character, by succumbing like others ? Certainly not. Fluid action exists ; the indubitable proof of it also exists ; this is not the moment to desert a cause which is evidently about to triumph : *Epur si muove*.

I now consider my task as finished. It is not for me to encroach upon the domain of others. There was a moral work to be done, and to this I have scrupulously confined myself. To restore to its legitimate position a truth hitherto misapprehended and trampled upon, to pursue its experimental verification, to maintain the compromised freedom of discussion, to combat, in short, superstitions, retrograde and anti-Christian tendencies, was something within the sphere of what I might attempt. As for scientific researches, properly so called, I abandon them to those to whom they of right belong.

The first and positive part of my work was devoted to the statement of our experiments, to the exhibition of our proofs, and to the refutation of objections.—In the second part, I entered upon the study of the supernatural in general; I showed in what way illusions, fraud, hallucination, errors of testimony, and fluid action, explain the enormities related in history. I showed that the supernatural apocrypha is not only condemned by reason, but that it is also, and first, condemned by the Bible.—The third part applied these principles to the various manifestations of this supernatural apocrypha; false miracles, spurious sorcery, the pretended magic of magnetism, the spirits of the speaking tables. My deductions have been of a nature to destroy all superstitious fables, modern as well as ancient, and, at the same time, to strengthen historical, scientific, and religious certainty.

Arrived at this point, I lay down the pen. More than one error has, doubtless, glided into my book; but, I trust, the reader will kindly pardon it, in consideration of the important truths I have sought to bring to light.



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