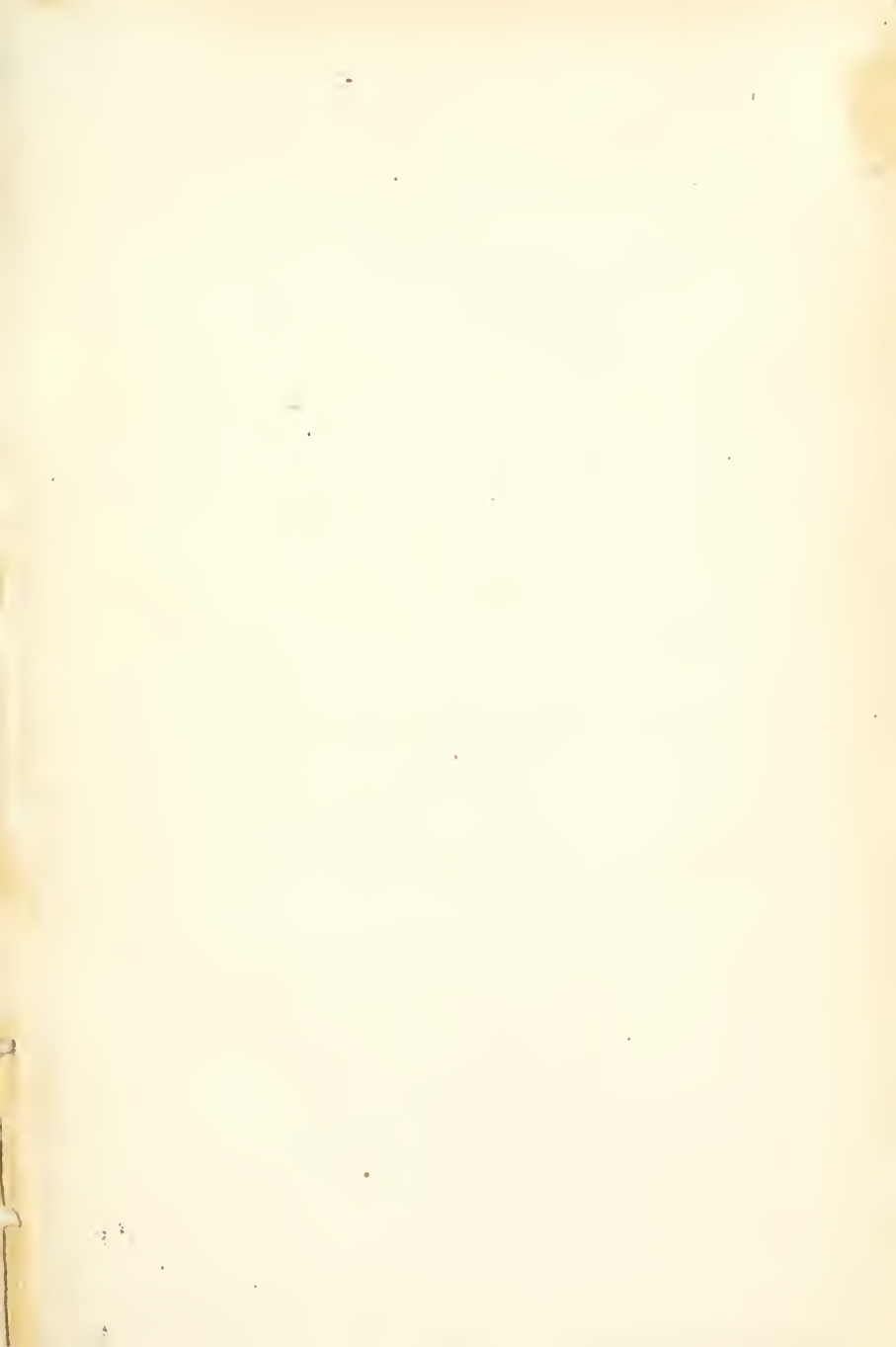





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SCIENCE vs. MODERN SPIRITUALISM.

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.

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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 Épîne, 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 Camisard 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 Cérénol 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 *Läsareprester*.

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 *cortége* 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 Cévennes*, 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 Cévénol 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 heroïsm. 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 Cévénol 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 Cévénol 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 Tauzue 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 Cévénol 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.' "

Jacques 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 Bruguier 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 Cevennes.

The striking analogy that exists between the characteristics of the Cévénol 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 somnambulic 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 Cévénol 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, Kamschatka 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 ecstatic 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 Cévénol 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 Fourcroy: "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 drunk 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 convulsion's.

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. Felicité 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 Felicité 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 times 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. Delenze, 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 Hecqnet, 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 erethism, 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 uncomfotableness, 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 Jeanne 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. Hanc made known his discovery to the proprietor of the inn of the Broeken, 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 jurisconsult, 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 marvellous 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 Ultramontane 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 Londun 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 Rosierucians.

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, geomaney, 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, undines, 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 enchanters, 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 enchanters. 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-

ipation 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 Ménestrier.

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 dependent 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 Aymar.

Aymar 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 Aymar. 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, Aymar 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. Aymar 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 Beaucaire, 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 Aymar 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, Aymar 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 its 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 Aymar, 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 Aymar'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, Pie 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 Pourceaugnacs 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 *possédées*, 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, Alciat, 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 mummerly 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 Lahaye-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 pronunciation 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. Soreery, 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 chrisem 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'était 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. Corpuseles, 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 corpuseles ! A bouquet communicates a sort of possession ; corpuseles !

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'inconstance 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 contagions 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 Naguelle, 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 Louviers, 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 Sante-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 Lanere, 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 Linousin, 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 Rouen. 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 somnambulatory 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 somnambulatory 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 *possédés* 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. Laubardemont 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 18th 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'Escoublean. 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 con-

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 Cérise 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 Barré 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

Loudun, 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 Loudun, 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 adversa-

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 Riche-lieu ! 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 persecutions. 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? Lanbardemont, 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 Lanbardemont, 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 Lanbardemont." . . . (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 *possédées* 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 Fourneau, which was true. But Fourneau, 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 Loudun 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 Ursulinés 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 Loudun 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 Loudun 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. "Two," 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 *possédées*, 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 demon?* ” (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 volo,*" 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 Laubardemont and of the Bishop of Poitiers—that is to say, of the temporal and spiritual heads of the enterprise. Grandier 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 savages ! 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 Laubardement 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 manslaughterers, 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, urbanus, 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 contortions, 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 *Miserere*. 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 Laubardemont'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 Jeanne 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 *possédées* 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. . . . I, 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 Fanre 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 demou, 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, Pérou, and Marou; 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 capitably 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 eiborinn, 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 Démorans 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 Nimes ; 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 Nimes, 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 *possédées* 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 *possédées* 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 Loudun 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 Loudun ; 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 somnambulic 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 somnambulic 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, be 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. Deleuze 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. Deleuze 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 somnambule 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 depositary."

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 somnambulant 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 somnambulant 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 somnambulic 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. (Deleuze, *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. Deleuze, 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 somnambulic 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 tæct as it is daily verified among magnetized persons. By means of this sense and of somnambulic 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. Deleuze, on every page of his book. He relates, in detail, the somnambulic 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 253, 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 somnambulist 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 Puysegur, 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. Puysegur, 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 somnambule 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 somnambule 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 trance 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 *rapport*. 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 inseruiens 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 *psyllé*. 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 *psyllés* 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 somnambulant 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 somnambulant : “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 somnambulant 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 somnambulic 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 somnambulic 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 somnambulant 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 somnambule 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. Deleuze 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 somnambule 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. Deleuze 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. Deleuze, 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.

Éré 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 automatons, 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 unhopèd-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 *possédées* 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 Magie 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 Pekin, 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 might." . . . (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 *lémaures*,* 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 Mousseaux (*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 narcoties, 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 indetical 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 impulsion 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-e-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 Cévénol 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 Weekman 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 compares 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 sugan-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. Spieer (*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 impressiou 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 depository 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. Moriu, 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 crudite 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 unhopèd-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, Caiphaz, 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 Riche-
mond, 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 médiaminiques*. 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, Rabbinites 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 *possédées* ; 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 obstinæy, 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 sorcery, 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 Bœotian 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 Ultramontanism, 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, odylic 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 πονηρίας 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 Jehovah, 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 xevi. (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 (*luci*) 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 : '*Ipse 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 shall 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. . . .

“Juriconsults 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.—TRASS.

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 Chataignerac, 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 Ultramontanism 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.—TRANS.

† See the beautiful pages of the book of M. Gaussen (*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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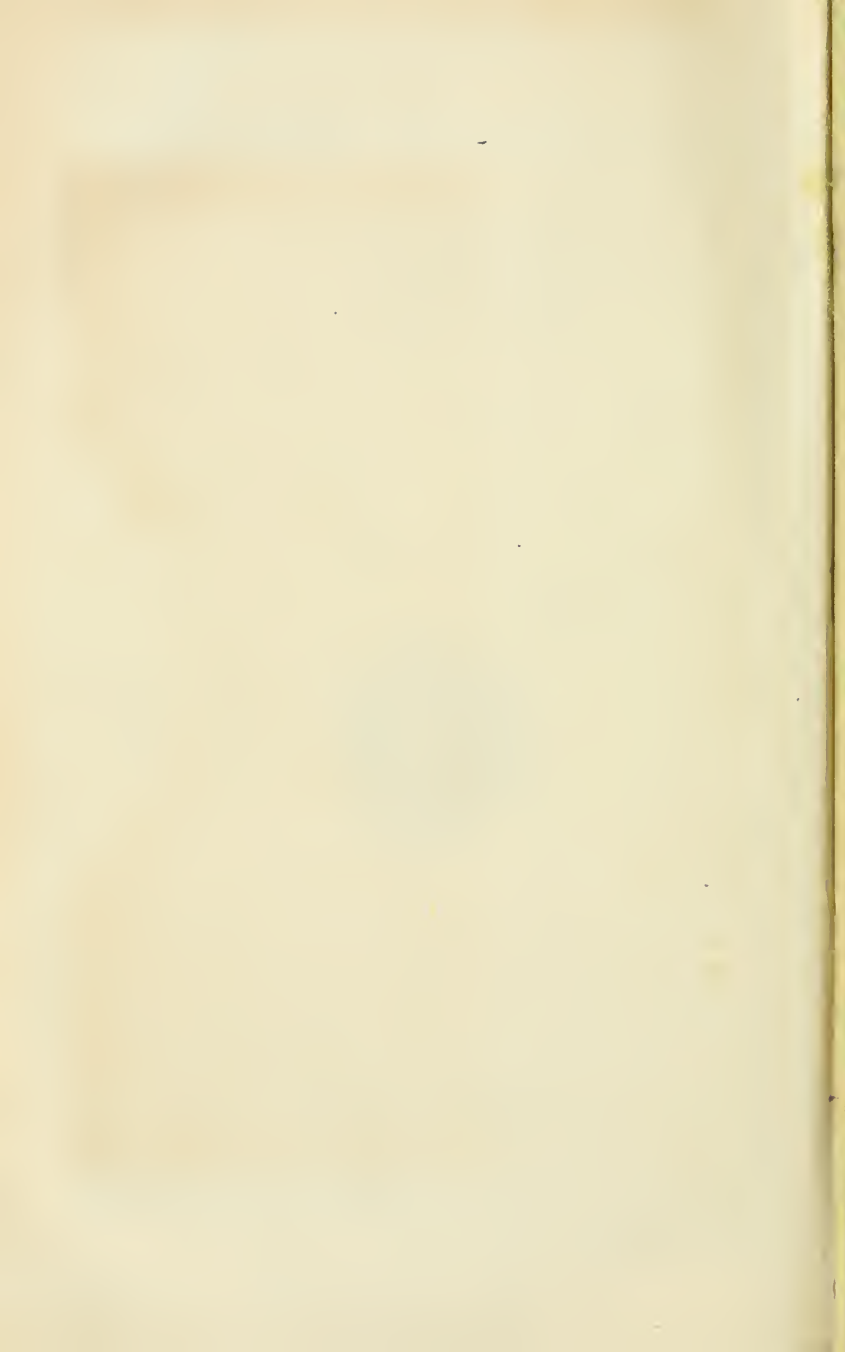
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