Extraordinary Popular Delusions, Volume Three

Charles MacKay

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"Il est bon de connaitre les delires de l'esprit humain.
Chaque peuple a ses folies plus ou moins grossieres."

Millot

PHILOSOPHICAL DELUSIONS.

Dissatisfaction with his lot seems to be the characteristic of man in all ages and climates. So far, however, from being an evil, as at first might be supposed, it has been the great civiliser of our race; and has tended, more than anything else, to raise us above the condition of the brutes. But the same discontent which has been the source of all improvement, has been the parent of no small progeny of follies and absurdities; to trace these latter is the object of the present volume. Vast as the subject appears, it is easily reducible within such limits as will make it comprehensive without being wearisome, and render its study both instructive and amusing.

Three causes especially have excited our discontent; and, by impelling us to seek for remedies for the irremediable, have bewildered us in a maze of madness and error. These are death, toil, and ignorance of the future — the doom of man upon this sphere, and for which he shows his antipathy by his love of life, his longing for abundance, and his craving curiosity to pierce the secrets of the days to come. The first has led many to imagine that they might find means to avoid death, or, failing in this, that they might, nevertheless, so prolong existence as to reckon it by centuries instead of units. From this sprang the search, so long continued and still pursued, for the elixir vitae, or water of life, which has led thousands to pretend to it and millions to believe in it. From the second sprang the absurd search for the philosopher's stone, which was to create plenty by changing all metals into gold; and from the third, the false sciences of astrology, divination, and their divisions of necromancy, chiromancy, augury, with all their train of signs, portents, and omens.

In tracing the career of the erring philosophers, or the wilful cheats, who have encouraged or preyed upon the credulity of mankind, it will simplify and elucidate the subject, if we divide it into three classes: — the first comprising alchymists, or those in general who have devoted themselves to the discovering of the philosopher's stone and the water of life; the second comprising astrologers, necromancers, sorcerers, geomancers, and all those who pretended to discover futurity; and the third consisting of the dealers in charms, amulets, philters, universal−panacea mongers, touchers for the evil, seventh sons of a seventh son, sympathetic powder compounders, homeopathists, animal magnetizers, and all the motley tribe of quacks, empirics, and charlatans.

But, in narrating the career of such men, it will be found that many of them united several or all of the functions just mentioned; that the alchymist was a fortune−teller, or a necromancer — that he pretended to cure all maladies by touch or charm, and to work miracles of every kind. In the dark and early ages of European history, this is more especially the case. Even as we advance to more recent periods, we shall find great difficulty in separating the characters. The alchymist seldom confined himself strictly to his pretended science — the sorcerer and necromancer to theirs, or the medical charlatan to his. Beginning with alchymy, some confusion of these classes is unavoidable; but the ground will clear for us as we advance.

Let us not, in the pride of our superior knowledge, turn with contempt from the follies of our predecessors. The study of the errors into which great minds have fallen in the pursuit of truth can never be uninstructive. As the man looks back to the days of his childhood and his youth, and recalls to his mind the strange notions and false opinions that swayed his actions at that time, that he may wonder at them, so should society, for its edification, look back to the opinions which governed the ages fled. He is but a superficial thinker who would despise and refuse to hear of them merely because they are absurd. No man is so wise but that he may learn some wisdom from his past errors, either of thought or action, and no society has made such advances as to be capable of no improvement from the retrospect of its past folly and credulity. And not only is such a study instructive: he who reads for amusement only, will find no chapter in the annals of the human mind more amusing than this. It opens out the whole realm of fiction — the wild, the fantastic, and the wonderful, and all the immense variety of things "that are not, and cannot be; but that have been imagined and believed."

BOOK I. THE ALCHYMISTS; OR, SEARCHERS FOR THE PHILOSOPHER'S STONE AND THE WATER OF LIFE.

"Mercury (loquitur). — The mischief a secret any of them know, above the consuming of coals and drawing of usquebaugh! Howsoever they may pretend, under the specious names of Geber, Arnold, Lulli, or bombast of Hohenheim, to commit miracles in art, and treason against nature! As if the title of philosopher, that creature of glory, were to be fetched out of a furnace! I am their crude, and their sublimate, their precipitate, and their unctions; their male and their female, sometimes their hermaphrodite — what they list to style me! They will calcine you a grave matron, as it might be a mother of the maids, and spring up a young virgin out of her ashes, as fresh as a phoenix; lay you an old courtier on the coals, like a sausage or a bloat−herring, and, after they have broiled him enough, blow a soul into him, with a pair of bellows! See! they begin to muster again, and draw their forces out against me! The genius of the place defend me!" — Ben Jonson's Masque "Mercury vindicated from the Alchymists."

THE ALCHYMISTS.

PART I. HISTORY OF ALCHYMY FROM THE EARLIEST PERIODS TO THE FIFTEENTH CENTURY.

PRETENDED ANTIQUITY OF THE ART. — GEBER. — ALFARABI. — AVICENNA. — ALBERTUS MAGNUS. — THOMAS AQUINAS. — ARTEPHIUS. — ALAIN DE LISLE. — ARNOLD DE VILLENEUVE. — PIETRO D'APONE. — RAYMOND LULLI. — ROGER BACON. — POPE JOHN XXII. — JEAN DE MEUNG. — NICHOLAS FLAMEL. — GEORGE RIPLEY. — BASIL VALENTINE. — BERNARD OF TREVES. — TRITHEMIUS. — THE MARECHAL DE RAYS. — JACQUES COEUR. — INFERIOR ADEPTS.

For more than a thousand years the art of alchymy captivated many noble spirits, and was believed in by millions. Its origin is involved in obscurity. Some of its devotees have claimed for it an antiquity coeval with the creation of man himself; others, again, would trace it no further back than the time of Noah. Vincent de Beauvais argues, indeed, that all the antediluvians must have possessed a knowledge of alchymy; and particularly cites Noah as having been acquainted with the elixir vitae, or he could not have lived to so prodigious an age, and have begotten children when upwards of five hundred. Lenglet du Fresnoy, in his "History of the Hermetic Philosophy," says, "Most of them pretended that Shem, or Chem, the son of Noah, was an adept in the art, and thought it highly probable that the words chemistry and alchymy were both derived from his name." Others say, the art was derived from the Egyptians, amongst whom it was first founded by Hermes Trismegistus. Moses, who is looked upon as a first−rate alchymist, gained his knowledge in Egypt; but he kept it all to himself, and would not instruct the children of Israel in its mysteries. All the writers upon alchymy triumphantly cite the story of the golden calf, in the 32nd chapter of Exodus, to prove that this great lawgiver was an adept, and could make or unmake gold at his pleasure. It is recorded, that Moses was so wroth with the Israelites for their idolatry, "that he took the calf which they had made, and burned it in the fire, and ground it to powder, and strewed it upon the water, and made the children of Israel drink of it." This, say the alchymists, he never could have done, had he not been in possession of the philosopher's stone; by no other means could he have made the powder of gold float upon the water. But we must leave this knotty point for the consideration of the adepts in the art, if any such there be, and come to more modern periods of its history. The Jesuit, Father Martini, in his "Historia Sinica," says, it was practised by the Chinese two thousand five hundred years before the birth of Christ; but his assertion, being unsupported, is worth nothing. It would appear, however, that pretenders to the art of making gold and silver existed in Rome in the first centuries after the Christian era, and that, when discovered, they were liable to punishment as knaves and impostors. At Constantinople, in the fourth century, the transmutation of metals was very generally believed in, and many of the Greek ecclesiastics wrote treatises upon the subject. Their names are preserved, and some notice of their works given, in the third volume of Lenglet du Fresnoy's "History of the Hermetic Philosophy." Their notion appears to have been, that all metals were composed of two substances; the one, metallic earth; and the other, a red inflammable matter, which they called sulphur. The pure union of these substances formed gold; but other metals were mixed with and contaminated by various foreign ingredients. The object of the philosopher's stone was to dissolve or neutralize all these ingredients, by which iron, lead, copper, and all metals would be transmuted into the original gold. Many learned and clever men wasted their time, their health, and their energies, in this vain pursuit; but for several centuries it took no great hold upon the imagination of the people. The history of the delusion appears, in a manner, lost from this time till the eighth century, when it appeared amongst the Arabians. From this period it becomes easier to trace its progress. A master then appeared, who was long looked upon as the father of the science, and whose name is indissolubly connected with it.

GEBER.

Of this philosopher, who devoted his life to the study of alchymy, but few particulars are known. He is thought to have lived in the year 730. His true name was Abou Moussah Djafar, to which was added Al Soft, or "The Wise," and he was born at Hauran, in Mesopotamia. ["Biographie Universelle."] Some have thought he was a Greek, others a Spaniard, and others, a prince of Hindostan: but, of all the mistakes which have been made respecting him, the most ludicrous was that made by the French translator of Sprenger's "History of Medicine,"

who thought, from the sound of his name, that he was a German, and rendered it as the "Donnateur," or Giver. No details of his life are known; but it is asserted, that he wrote more than five hundred works upon the philosopher's stone and the water of life. He was a great enthusiast in his art, and compared the incredulous to little children shut up in a narrow room, without windows or aperture, who, because they saw nothing beyond, denied the existence of the great globe itself. He thought that a preparation of gold would cure all maladies, not only in man, but in the inferior animals and plants. He also imagined that all the metals laboured under disease, with the exception of gold, which was the only one in perfect health. He affirmed, that the secret of the philosopher's stone had been more than once discovered; but that the ancient and wise men who had hit upon it, would never, by word or writing, communicate it to men, because of their unworthiness and incredulity. [His "sum of perfection," or instructions to students to aid them in the laborious search for the stone and elixir, has been translated into most of the languages of Europe. An English translation, by a great enthusiast in alchymy, one Richard Russell, was published in London in 1686. The preface is dated eight years previously, from the house of the alchymist, "at the Star, in Newmarket, in Wapping, near the Dock." His design in undertaking the translation was, as he informs us, to expose the false pretences of the many ignorant pretenders to the science who abounded in his day.] But the life of Geber, though spent in the pursuit of this vain chimera, was not altogether useless. He stumbled upon discoveries which he did not seek, and science is indebted to him for the first mention of corrosive sublimate, the red oxide of mercury, nitric acid, and the nitrate of silver. [Article, Geber, "Biographie Universelle."]

For more than two hundred years after the death of Geber, the Arabian philosophers devoted themselves to the study of alchymy, joining with it that of astrology. Of these the most celebrated was

ALFARABI.

Alfarabi flourished at the commencement of the tenth century, and enjoyed the reputation of being one of the most learned men of his age. He spent his life in travelling from country to country, that he might gather the opinions of philosophers upon the great secrets of nature. No danger dismayed him; no toil wearied him of the pursuit. Many sovereigns endeavoured to retain him at their courts; but he refused to rest until he had discovered the great object of his life — the art of preserving it for centuries, and of making gold as much as he needed. This wandering mode of life at last proved fatal to him. He had been on a visit to Mecca, not so much for religious as for philosophical purposes, when, returning through Syria, he stopped at the court of the Sultan Seifeddoulet, who was renowned as the patron of learning. He presented himself in his travelling attire, in the presence of that monarch and his courtiers; and, without invitation, coolly sat himself down upon the sofa, beside the Prince. The courtiers and wise men were indignant; and the Sultan, who did not know the intruder, was at first inclined to follow their example. He turned to one of his officers, and ordered him to eject the presumptuous stranger from the room; but Alfarabi, without moving, dared them to lay hands upon him; and, turning himself calmly to the prince, remarked, that he did not know who was his guest, or he would treat him with honour, not with violence. The Sultan, instead of being still further incensed, as many potentates would have been, admired his coolness; and, requesting him to sit still closer to him on the sofa, entered into a long conversation with him upon science and divine philosophy. All the court were charmed with the stranger. Questions for discussion were propounded, on all of which he showed superior knowledge. He convinced every one that ventured to dispute with him; and spoke so eloquently upon the science of alchymy, that he was at once recognised as only second to the great Geber himself. One of the doctors present inquired whether a man who knew so many sciences was acquainted with music? A1farabi made no reply, but merely requested that a lute should be brought him. The lute was brought; and he played such ravishing and tender melodies, that all the court were melted into tears. He then changed his theme, and played airs so sprightly, that he set the grave philosophers, Sultan and all, dancing as fast as their legs could carry them. He then sobered them again by a mournful strain, and made them sob and sigh as if broken−hearted. The Sultan, highly delighted with his powers, entreated him to stay, offering him every inducement that wealth, power, and dignity could supply; but the alchymist resolutely refused, it being decreed, he said, that he should never repose till he had discovered the philosopher's stone. He set out accordingly the same evening, and was murdered by some thieves in the deserts of Syria. His biographers give no further particulars of his life beyond mentioning, that he wrote several valuable treatises on his art, all of which, however, have been lost. His death happened in the year 954.

AVICENNA.

Avicenna, whose real name was Ebn Cinna, another great alchymist, was born at Bokhara, in 980. His reputation as a physician and a man skilled in all sciences was so great, that the Sultan Magdal Douleth resolved to try his powers in the great science of government. He was accordingly made Grand Vizier of that Prince, and ruled the state with some advantage: but, in a science still more difficult, he failed completely. He could not rule his own passions, but gave himself up to wine and women, and led a life of shameless debauchery. Amid the multifarious pursuits of business and pleasure, he nevertheless found time to write seven treatises upon the philosopher's stone, which were for many ages looked upon as of great value by pretenders to the art. It is rare that an eminent physician, as Avicenna appears to have been, abandons himself to sensual gratification; but so completely did he become enthralled in the course of a few years, that he was dismissed from his high office, and died shortly afterwards, of premature old age and a complication of maladies, brought on by debauchery. His death took place in the year 1036. After his time, few philosophers of any note in Arabia are heard of as devoting themselves to the study of alchymy; but it began shortly afterwards to attract greater attention in Europe. Learned men in France, England, Spain, and Italy expressed their belief in the science, and many devoted their whole energies to it. In the twelfth and thirteenth centuries especially, it was extensively pursued, and some of the brightest names of that age are connected with it. Among the most eminent of them are

ALBERTUS MAGNUS and THOMAS AQUINA.

The first of these philosophers was born in the year 1193, of a noble family at Lawingen, in the duchy of Neuburg, on the Danube. For the first thirty years of his life, he appeared remarkably dull and stupid, and it was feared by every one that no good could come of him. He entered a Dominican monastery at an early age; but made so little progress in his studies, that he was more than once upon the point of abandoning them in despair; but he was endowed with extraordinary perseverance. As he advanced to middle age, his mind expanded, and he learned whatever he applied himself to with extreme facility. So remarkable a change was not, in that age, to be accounted for but by a miracle. It was asserted and believed that the Holy Virgin, touched with his great desire to become learned and famous, took pity upon his incapacity, and appeared to him in the cloister where he sat, almost despairing, and asked him whether he wished to excel in philosophy or divinity. He chose philosophy, to the chagrin of the Virgin, who reproached him in mild and sorrowful accents that he had not made a better choice. She, however, granted his request that he should become the most excellent philosopher of the age; but set this drawback to his pleasure, that he should relapse, when at the height of his fame, into his former incapacity and stupidity. Albertus never took the trouble to contradict the story, but prosecuted his studies with such unremitting zeal that his reputation speedily spread over all Europe. In the year 1244, the celebrated Thomas Aquinas placed himself under his tuition. Many extraordinary stories are told of the master and his pupil. While they paid all due attention to other branches of science, they never neglected the pursuit of the philosopher's stone and the elixir vitae. Although they discovered neither, it was believed that Albert had seized some portion of the secret of life, and found means to animate a brazen statue, upon the formation of which, under proper conjunctions of the planets, he had been occupied many years of his life. He and Thomas Aquinas completed it together, endowed it with the faculty of speech, and made it perform the functions of a domestic servant. In this capacity it was exceedingly useful; but, through some defect in the machinery, it chattered much more than was agreeable to either philosopher. Various remedies were tried to cure it of its garrulity, but in vain; and one day Thomas Aquinas was so enraged at the noise it made, when he was in the midst of a mathematical problem, that he seized a ponderous hammer and smashed it to pieces. [Naude, "Apologie des Grands Hommes accuses de Magie ;" chap. xviii.] He was sorry afterwards for what he had done, and was reproved by his master for giving way to his anger, so unbecoming in a philosopher. They made no attempt to re−animate the statue.

Such stories as these show the spirit of the age. Every great man who attempted to study the secrets of nature was thought a magician; and it is not to be wondered at that, when philosophers themselves pretended to discover an elixir for conferring immortality, or a red stone which was to create boundless wealth, that popular opinion should have enhanced upon their pretensions, and have endowed them with powers still more miraculous. It was believed of Albertus Magnus that he could even change the course of the seasons; a feat which the many thought less difficult than the discovery of the grand elixir. Albertus was desirous of obtaining a piece of ground on which to build a monastery, in the neighbourhood of Cologne. The ground belonged to William, Count of Holland and

King of the Romans, who, for some reason or other, did not wish to part with it. Albertus is reported to have gained it by the following extraordinary method: — He invited the Prince, as he was passing through Cologne, to a magnificent entertainment prepared for him and all his court. The Prince accepted it, and repaired with a lordly retinue to the residence of the sage. It was in the midst of winter; the Rhine was frozen over, and the cold was so bitter that the knights could not sit on horseback without running the risk of losing their toes by the frost. Great, therefore, was their surprise, on arriving at Albert's house, to find that the repast was spread in his garden, in which the snow had drifted to the depth of several feet. The Earl,in high dudgeon, remounted his steed; but Albert at last prevailed upon him to take his seat at the table. He had no sooner done so, than the dark clouds rolled away from the sky — a warm sun shone forth — the cold north wind veered suddenly round, and blew a mild breeze from the south — the snows melted away — the ice was unbound upon the streams, and the trees put forth their green leaves and their fruit — flowers sprang up beneath their feet, while larks, nightingales, blackbirds, cuckoos, thrushes, and every sweet song−bird, sang hymns from every tree. The Earl and his attendants wondered greatly; but they ate their dinner, and in recompence for it, Albert got his piece of ground to build a convent on. He had not, however, shown them all his power. Immediately that the repast was over, he gave the word, and dark clouds obscured the sun — the snow fell in large flakes — the singing−birds fell dead — the leaves dropped from the trees, and the winds blew so cold, and howled so mournfully, that the guests wrapped themselves up in their thick cloaks, and retreated into the house to warm themselves at the blazing fire in Albert's kitchen. [Lenglet, "Histoire de la Philosophie Hermetique." See also, Godwin's "Lives of the Necromancers."]

Thomas Aquinas also could work wonders as well as his master. It is related of him, that he lodged in a street at Cologne, where he was much annoyed by the incessant clatter made by the horses' hoofs, as they were led through it daily to exercise by their grooms. He had entreated the latter to select some other spot where they might not disturb a philosopher, but the grooms turned a deaf ear to all his solicitations. In this emergency he had recourse to the aid of magic. He constructed a small horse of bronze, upon which he inscribed certain cabalistic characters, and buried it at midnight in the midst of the highway. The next morning, a troop of grooms came riding along as usual; but the horses, as they arrived at the spot where the magic horse was buried, reared and plunged violently — their nostrils distended with terror — their manes grew erect, and the perspiration ran down their sides in streams. In vain the riders applied the spur — in vain they coaxed or threatened, the animals would not pass the spot. On the following day, their success was no better. They were at length compelled to seek another spot for their exercise, and Thomas Aquinas was left in peace. [Naude, "Apologie des Grands Hommes accuses de Magie;" chap. xvii.]

Albertus Magnus was made Bishop of Ratisbon in 1259; but he occupied the See only four years, when he resigned, on the ground that its duties occupied too much of the time which he was anxious to devote to philosophy. He died in Cologne in 1280, at the advanced age of eighty−seven. The Dominican writers deny that he ever sought the philosopher's stone, but his treatise upon minerals sufficiently proves that he did.

ARTEPHIUS.

Artephius, a name noted in the annals of alchymy, was born in the early part of the twelfth century. He wrote two famous treatises; the one upon the philosopher's stone, and the other on the art of prolonging human life. In the latter he vaunts his great qualifications for instructing mankind on such a matter, as he was at that time in the thousand and twenty−fifth year of his age! He had many disciples who believed in his extreme age, and who attempted to prove that he was Apollonius of Tyana, who lived soon after the advent of Jesus Christ, and the particulars of whose life and pretended miracles have been so fully described by Philostratus. He took good care never to contradict a story, which so much increased the power he was desirous of wielding over his fellow−mortals. On all convenient occasions, he boasted of it; and having an excellent memory, a fertile imagination, and a thorough knowledge of all existing history, he was never at a loss for an answer when questioned as to the personal appearance, the manners, or the character of the great men of antiquity. He also pretended to have found the philosopher's stone; and said that, in search of it, he had descended to hell, and seen the devil sitting on a throne of gold, with a legion of imps and fiends around him. His works on alchymy have been translated into French, and were published in Paris in 1609 or 1610.

ALAIN DE LISLE.

Contemporary with Albertus Magnus was Alain de Lisle, of Flanders, who was named, from his great learning, the "universal doctor." He was thought to possess a knowledge of all the sciences, and, like Artephius, to have discovered the elixir vitae. He became one of the friars of the abbey of Citeaux, and died in 1298, aged about one hundred and ten years. It was said of him, that he was at the point of death when in his fiftieth year; but that the fortunate discovery of the elixir enabled him to add sixty years to his existence. He wrote a commentary on the prophecies of Merlin.

ARNOLD DE VILLENEUVE.

This philosopher has left a much greater reputation. He was born in the year 1245, and studied medicine with great success in the University of Paris. He afterwards travelled for twenty years in Italy and Germany, where he made acquaintance with Pietro d'Apone; a man of a character akin to his own, and addicted to the same pursuits. As a physician, he was thought, in his own lifetime, to be the most able the world had ever seen. Like all the learned men of that day, he dabbled in astrology and alchymy, and was thought to have made immense quantities of gold from lead and copper. When Pietro d'Apone was arrested in Italy, and brought to trial as a sorcerer, a similar accusation was made against Arnold; but he managed to leave the country in time and escape the fate of his unfortunate friend. He lost some credit by predicting the end of the world, but afterwards regained it. The time of his death is not exactly known; but it must have been prior to the year 1311, when Pope Clement V. wrote a circular letter to all the clergy of Europe who lived under his obedience, praying them to use their utmost efforts to discover the famous treatise of Arnold on "The Practice of Medicine." The author had promised, during his lifetime, to make a present of the work to the Holy See, but died without fulfilling it.

In a very curious work by Monsieur Longeville Harcouet, entitled "The History of the Persons who have lived several centuries, and then grown young again," there is a receipt, said to have been given by Arnold de Villeneuve, by means of which any one might prolong his life for a few hundred years or so. In the first place, say Arnold and Monsieur Harcouet, "the person intending so to prolong his life must rub himself well, two or three times a week, with the juice or marrow of cassia (moelle de la casse). Every night, upon going to bed, he must put upon his heart a plaster, composed of a certain quantity of Oriental saffron, red rose−leaves, sandal−wood, aloes, and amber, liquified in oil of roses and the best white wax. In the morning, he must take it off, and enclose it carefully in a leaden box till the next night, when it must be again applied. If he be of a sanguine temperament, he shall take sixteen chickens — if phlegmatic, twenty−five — and if melancholy, thirty, which he shall put into a yard where the air and the water are pure. Upon these he is to feed, eating one a day; but previously the chickens are to be fattened by a peculiar method, which will impregnate their flesh with the qualities that are to produce longevity in the eater. Being deprived of all other nourishment till they are almost dying of hunger, they are to be fed upon broth made of serpents and vinegar, which broth is to be thickened with wheat and bran." Various ceremonies are to be performed in the cooking of this mess, which those may see in the book of M. Harcouet, who are at all interested in the matter; and the chickens are to be fed upon it for two months. They are then fit for table, and are to be washed down with moderate quantities of good white wine or claret. This regimen is to be followed regularly every seven years, and any one may live to be as old as Methuselah! It is right to state, that M. Harcouet has but little authority for attributing this precious composition to Arnold of Villeneuve. It is not to be found in the collected works of that philosopher; but was first brought to light by a M. Poirier, at the commencement of the sixteenth century, who asserted that he had discovered it in MS. in the undoubted writing of Arnold.

PIETRO D'APONE.

This unlucky sage was born at Apone, near Padua, in the year 1250. Like his friend Arnold de Villeneuve, he was an eminent physician, and a pretender to the arts of astrology and alchymy. He practised for many years in Paris, and made great wealth by killing and curing, and telling fortunes. In an evil day for him, he returned to his own country, with the reputation of being a magician of the first order. It was universally believed that he had drawn seven evil spirits from the infernal regions, whom he kept enclosed in seven crystal vases, until he required their services, when he sent them forth to the ends of the earth to execute his pleasure. One spirit excelled in philosophy; a second, in alchymy; a third, in astrology; a fourth, in physic; a fifth, in poetry; a sixth, in music; and the seventh, in painting: and whenever Pietro wished for information or instruction in any of these arts, he had

only to go to his crystal vase, and liberate the presiding spirit. Immediately, all the secrets of the art were revealed to him; and he might, if it pleased him, excel Homer in poetry, Apelles in painting, or Pythagoras himself in philosophy. Although he could make gold out of brass, it was said of him, that he was very sparing of his powers in that respect, and kept himself constantly supplied with money by other and less creditable means. Whenever he disbursed gold, he muttered a certain charm, known only to himself; and next morning the gold was safe again in his own possession. The trader to whom he gave it, might lock it in his strong box, and have it guarded by a troop of soldiers; but the charmed metal flew back to its old master. Even if it were buried in the earth, or thrown into the sea, the dawn of the next morning would behold it in the pockets of Pietro. Few people, in consequence, liked to have dealings with such a personage, especially for gold. Some, bolder than the rest, thought that his power did not extend over silver; but, when they made the experiment, they found themselves mistaken. Bolts and bars could not restrain it, and it sometimes became invisible in their very hands, and was whisked through the air to the purse of the magician. He necessarily acquired a very bad character; and, having given utterance to some sentiments regarding religion which were the very reverse of orthodox, he was summoned before the tribunals of the Inquisition to answer for his crimes as a heretic and a sorcerer. He loudly protested his innocence, even upon the rack, where he suffered more torture than nature could support. He died in prison ere his trial was concluded, but was afterwards found guilty. His bones were ordered to be dug up, and publicly burned. He was also burned in effigy in the streets of Padua.

RAYMOND LULLI.

While Arnold de Villeneuve and Pietro d'Apone flourished in France and Italy, a more celebrated adept than either appeared in Spain. This was Raymond Lulli, a name which stands in the first rank among the alchymists. Unlike many of his predecessors, he made no pretensions to astrology or necromancy; but, taking Geber for his model, studied intently the nature and composition of metals, without reference to charms, incantations, or any foolish ceremonies. It was not, however, till late in life that he commenced his study of the art. His early and middle age were spent in a different manner, and his whole history is romantic in the extreme. He was born of an illustrious family, in Majorca, in the year 1235. When that island was taken from the Saracens by James I, King of Aragon, in 1230, the father of Raymond, who was originally of Catalonia, settled there, and received a considerable appointment from the Crown. Raymond married at an early age; and, being fond of pleasure, he left the solitudes of his native isle, and passed over with his bride into Spain. He was made Grand Seneschal at the court of King James, and led a gay life for several years. Faithless to his wife, he was always in the pursuit of some new beauty, till his heart was fixed at last by the lovely, but unkind Ambrosia de Castello. This lady, like her admirer, was married; but, unlike him, was faithful to her vows, and treated all his solicitations with disdain. Raymond was so enamoured, that repulse only increased his flame; he lingered all night under her windows, wrote passionate verses in her praise, neglected his affairs, and made himself the butt of all the courtiers. One day, while watching under her lattice, he by chance caught sight of her bosom, as her neckerchief was blown aside by the wind. The fit of inspiration came over him, and he sat down and composed some tender stanzas upon the subject, and sent them to the lady. The fair Ambrosia had never before condescended to answer his letters; but she replied to this. She told him, that she could never listen to his suit; that it was unbecoming in a wise man to fix his thoughts, as he had done, on any other than his God; and entreated him to devote himself to a religious life, and conquer the unworthy passion which he had suffered to consume him. She, however, offered, if he wished it, to show him the fair bosom which had so captivated him. Raymond was delighted. He thought the latter part of this epistle but ill corresponded with the former, and that Ambrosia, in spite of the good advice she gave him, had, at last, relented, and would make him as happy as he desired. He followed her about from place to place, entreating her to fulfil her promise: but still Ambrosia was cold, and implored him with tears to importune her no longer; for that she never could be his, and never would, if she were free to−morrow. "What means your letter, then?" said the despairing lover. "I will show you!" replied Ambrosia, who immediately uncovered her bosom, and exposed to the eyes of her horror−stricken admirer, a large cancer, which had extended to both breasts. She saw that he was shocked; and, extending her hand to him, she prayed him once more to lead a religious life, and set his heart upon the Creator, and not upon the creature. He went home an altered man. He threw up, on the morrow, his valuable appointment at the court, separated from his wife, and took a farewell of his children, after dividing one−half of his ample fortune among them. The other half he shared among the poor. He then threw himself at the

foot of a crucifix, and devoted himself to the service of God, vowing, as the most acceptable atonement for his errors, that he would employ the remainder of his days in the task of converting the Mussulmans to the Christian religion. In his dreams he saw Jesus Christ, who said to him, "Raymond! Raymond! follow me!" The vision was three times repeated, and Raymond was convinced that it was an intimation direct from Heaven. Having put his affairs in order, he set out on a pilgrimage to the shrine of St. James of Compostello, and afterwards lived for ten years in solitude amid the mountains of Aranda. Here he learned the Arabic, to qualify himself for his mission of converting the Mahometans. He also studied various sciences, as taught in the works of the learned men of the East, and first made acquaintance with the writings of Geber, which were destined to exercise so much influence over his future life.

At the end of this probation, and when he had entered his fortieth year, he emerged from his solitude into more active life. With some remains of his fortune, which had accumulated during his retirement, he founded a college for the study of Arabic, which was approved of by the Pope, with many commendations upon his zeal and piety. At this time he narrowly escaped assassination from an Arabian youth whom he had taken into his service. Raymond had prayed to God, in some of his accesses of fanaticism, that he might suffer martyrdom in his holy cause. His servant had overheard him; and, being as great a fanatic as his master, he resolved to gratify his wish, and punish him, at the same time, for the curses which he incessantly launched against Mahomet and all who believed in him, by stabbing him to the heart. He, therefore, aimed a blow at his master, as he sat one day at table; but the instinct of self−preservation being stronger than the desire of martyrdom, Raymond grappled with his antagonist, and overthrew him. He scorned to take his life himself; but handed him over to the authorities of the town, by whom he was afterwards found dead in his prison.

After this adventure Raymond travelled to Paris, where he resided for some time, and made the acquaintance of Arnold de Villeneuve. From him he probably received some encouragement to search for the philosopher's stone, as he began from that time forth to devote less of his attention to religious matters, and more to the study of alchymy. Still he never lost sight of the great object for which he lived — the conversion of the Mahometans — and proceeded to Rome, to communicate personally with Pope John XXI, on the best measures to be adopted for that end. The Pope gave him encouragement in words, but failed to associate any other persons with him in the enterprise which he meditated. Raymond, therefore, set out for Tunis alone, and was kindly received by many Arabian philosophers, who had heard of his fame as a professor of alchymy. If he had stuck to alchymy while in their country, it would have been well for him; but he began cursing Mahomet, and got himself into trouble. While preaching the doctrines of Christianity in the great bazaar of Tunis, he was arrested and thrown into prison. He was shortly afterwards brought to trial, and sentenced to death. Some of his philosophic friends interceded hard for him, and he was pardoned, upon condition that he left Africa immediately, and never again set foot in it. If he was found there again, no matter what his object might be, or whatever length of time might intervene, his original sentence would be carried into execution. Raymond was not at all solicitous of martyrdom when it came to the point, whatever he might have been when there was no danger, and he gladly accepted his life upon these conditions, and left Tunis with the intention of proceeding to Rome. He afterwards changed his plan, and established himself at Milan, where, for a length of time, he practised alchymy, and some say astrology, with great success.

Most writers who believed in the secrets of alchymy, and who have noticed the life of Raymond Lulli, assert, that while in Milan, he received letters from Edward King of England, inviting him to settle in his states. They add, that Lulli gladly accepted the invitation, and had apartments assigned for his use in the Tower of London, where he refined much gold; superintended the coinage of "rose−nobles;" and made gold out of iron, quicksilver, lead, and pewter, to the amount of six millions. The writers in the "Biographie Universelle," an excellent authority in general, deny that Raymond was ever in England, and say, that in all these stories of his wondrous powers as an alchymist, he has been mistaken for another Raymond, a Jew, of Tarragona. Naude, in his "Apologie," says, simply, "that six millions were given by Raymond Lulli to King Edward, to make war against the Turks and other infidels:" not that he transmuted so much metal into gold; but, as he afterwards adds, that he advised Edward to lay a tax upon wool, which produced that amount. To show that Raymond went to England, his admirers quote a work attributed to him, "De Transmutatione Animae Metallorum," in which he expressly says, that he was in England at the intercession of the King. [Vidimus omnia ista dum ad Angliam transiimus, propter intercessionem Domini Regis Edoardi illustrissimi.] The hermetic writers are not agreed whether it was Edward I, or Edward II,

who invited him over; but, by fixing the date of his journey in 1312, they make it appear that it was Edward II. Edmond Dickenson, in his work on the "Quintessences of the Philosophers," says, that Raymond worked in Westminster Abbey, where, a long time after his departure, there was found in the cell which he had occupied, a great quantity of golden dust, of which the architects made a great profit. In the biographical sketch of John Cremer, Abbot of Westminster, given by Lenglet, it is said, that it was chiefly through his instrumentality that Raymond came to England. Cremer had been himself for thirty years occupied in the vain search for the philosopher's stone, when he accidentally met Raymond in Italy, and endeavoured to induce him to communicate his grand secret. Raymond told him that he must find it for himself, as all great alchymists had done before him. Cremer, on his return to England, spoke to King Edward in high terms of the wonderful attainments of the philosopher, and a letter of invitation was forthwith sent him. Robert Constantinus, in the "Nomenclatore Scriptorum Medicorum," published in 1515, says, that after a great deal of research, be found that Raymond Lulli resided for some time in London, and that he actually made gold, by means of the philosopher's stone, in the Tower; that he had seen the golden pieces of his coinage, which were still named in England the nobles of Raymond, or rose−nobles. Lulli himself appears to have boasted that he made gold; for, in his well−known "Testamentum," he states, that he converted no less than fifty thousand pounds weight of quicksilver, lead, and pewter into that metal. [Converti una vice in aurum ad L millia pondo argenti vivi, plumbi, et stanni. — Lullii Testamentum.] It seems highly probable that the English King, believing in the extraordinary powers of the alchymist, invited him to England to make test of them, and that he was employed in refining gold and in coining. Camden, who is not credulous in matters like these, affords his countenance to the story of his coinage of nobles; and there is nothing at all wonderful in the fact of a man famous for his knowledge of metals being employed in such a capacity. Raymond was, at this time, an old man, in his seventy−seventh year, and somewhat in his dotage. He was willing enough to have it believed that he had discovered the grand secret, and supported the rumour rather than contradicted it. He did not long remain in England; but returned to Rome, to carry out the projects which were nearer to his heart than the profession of alchymy. He had proposed them to several successive Popes with little or no success. The first was a plan for the introduction of the Oriental languages into all the monasteries of Europe; the second, for the reduction into one of all the military orders, that, being united, they might move more efficaciously against the Saracens; and, the third, that the Sovereign Pontiff should forbid the works of Averroes to be read in the schools, as being more favourable to Mahometanism than to Christianity. The Pope did not receive the old man with much cordiality; and, after remaining for about two years in Rome, he proceeded once more to Africa, alone and unprotected, to preach the Gospel of Jesus. He landed at Bona in 1314; and so irritated the Mahometans by cursing their prophet, that they stoned him, and left him for dead on the sea−shore. He was found some hours afterwards by a party of Genoese merchants, who conveyed him on board their vessel, and sailed towards Majorca. The unfortunate man still breathed, but could not articulate. He lingered in this state for some days, and expired just as the vessel arrived within sight of his native shores. His body was conveyed with great pomp to the church of St. Eulalia, at Palma, where a public funeral was instituted in his honour. Miracles were afterwards said to have been worked at his tomb.

Thus ended the career of Raymond Lulli, one of the most extraordinary men of his age; and, with the exception of his last boast about the six millions of gold, the least inclined to quackery of any of the professors of alchymy. His writings were very numerous, and include nearly five hundred volumes, upon grammar, rhetoric, morals, theology, politics, civil and canon law, physics, metaphysics, astronomy, medicine, and chemistry.

ROGER BACON.

The powerful delusion of alchymy seized upon a mind still greater than that of Raymond Lulli. Roger Bacon firmly believed in the philosopher's stone, and spent much of his time in search of it. His example helped to render all the learned men of the time more convinced of its practicability, and more eager in the pursuit. He was born at Ilchester, in the county of Somerset, in the year 1214. He studied for some time in the university of Oxford, and afterwards in that of Paris, in which he received the degree of doctor of divinity. Returning to England in 1240, he became a monk of the order of St. Francis. He was by far the most learned man of his age; and his acquirements were so much above the comprehension of his contemporaries, that they could only account for them by supposing that he was indebted for them to the devil. Voltaire has not inaptly designated him "De l'or encroute de toutes les ordures de son siecle;" but the crust of superstition that enveloped his powerful mind,

though it may have dimmed, could not obscure the brightness of his genius. To him, and apparently to him only, among all the inquiring spirits of the time, were known the properties of the concave and convex lens. He also invented the magic−lantern; that pretty plaything of modern days, which acquired for him a reputation that embittered his life. In a history of alchymy, the name of this great man cannot be omitted, although, unlike many others of whom we shall have occasion to speak, he only made it secondary to other pursuits. The love of universal knowledge that filled his mind, would not allow him to neglect one branch of science, of which neither he nor the world could yet see the absurdity. He made ample amends for his time lost in this pursuit by his knowledge in physics and his acquaintance with astronomy. The telescope, burning−glasses, and gunpowder, are discoveries which may well carry his fame to the remotest time, and make the world blind to the one spot of folly — the diagnosis of the age in which he lived, and the circumstances by which he was surrounded. His treatise on the "Admirable Power of Art and Nature in the Production of the Philosopher's Stone" was translated into French by Girard de Tormes, and published at Lyons in 1557. His "Mirror of Alchymy" was also published in French in the same year, and in Paris in 1612, with some additions from the works of Raymond Lulli. A complete list of all the published treatises upon the subject may be seen in Lenglet du Fresnoy.

Pope John XXII.

This Prelate is said to have been the friend and pupil of Arnold de Villeneuve, by whom he was instructed in all the secrets of alchymy. Tradition asserts of him, that he made great quantities of gold, and died as rich as Croesus. He was born at Cahors, in the province of Guienne, in the year 1244. He was a very eloquent preacher, and soon reached high dignity in the Church. He wrote a work on the transmutation of metals, and had a famous laboratory at Avignon. He issued two Bulls against the numerous pretenders to the art, who had sprung up in every part of Christendom; from which it might be inferred that he was himself free from the delusion. The alchymists claim him, however, as one of the most distinguished and successful professors of their art, and say that his Bulls were not directed against the real adepts, but the false pretenders. They lay particular stress upon these words in his Bull, "Spondent, quas non exhibent, divitias, pauperes alchymistae." These, it is clear, they say, relate only to poor alchymists, and therefore false ones. He died in the year 1344, leaving in his coffers a sum of eighteen millions of florins. Popular belief alleged that he had made, and not amassed, this treasure; and alchymists complacently cite this as a proof that the philosopher's stone was not such a chimera as the incredulous pretended. They take it for granted that John really left this money, and ask by what possible means he could have accumulated it. Replying to their own question, they say triumphantly, "His book shows it was by alchymy, the secrets of which he learned from Arnold de Villeneuve and Raymond Lulli. But he was as prudent as all other hermetic philosophers. Whoever would read his book to find out his secret, would employ all his labour in vain; the Pope took good care not to divulge it." Unluckily for their own credit, all these gold−makers are in the same predicament; their great secret loses its worth most wonderfully in the telling, and therefore they keep it snugly to themselves. Perhaps they thought that, if everybody could transmute metals, gold would be so plentiful that it would be no longer valuable, and that some new art would be requisite to transmute it back again into steel and iron. If so, society is much indebted to them for their forbearance.

Jean De Meung

All classes of men dabbled in the art at this time; the last mentioned was a Pope, the one of whom we now speak was a poet. Jean de Meung, the celebrated author of the "Roman de la Rose," was born in the year 1279 or 1280, and was a great personage at the courts of Louis X, Philip the Long, Charles IV, and Philip de Valois. His famous poem of the "Roman de la Rose," which treats of every subject in vogue at that day, necessarily makes great mention of alchymy. Jean was a firm believer in the art, and wrote, besides his, "Roman," two shorter poems, the one entitled, "The Remonstrance of Nature to the wandering Alchymist," and "The Reply of the Alchymist to Nature." Poetry and alchymy were his delight, and priests and women were his abomination. A pleasant story is related of him and the ladies of the court of Charles IV. He had written the following libellous couplet upon the fair sex :—

"Toutes etes, serez, ou futes
De fait ou de volonte, putains,
Et qui, tres bien vous chercherait

Toutes putains, vous trouverait."

[These verses are but a coarser expression of the slanderous line of Pope, that "every woman is at heart a rake."]

This naturally gave great offence; and being perceived one day, in the King's antechamber, by some ladies who were waiting for an audience, they resolved to punish him. To the number of ten or twelve, they armed themselves with canes and rods; and surrounding the unlucky poet, called upon the gentlemen present to strip him naked, that they might wreak just vengeance upon him, and lash him through the streets of the town. Some of the lords present were in no wise loth, and promised themselves great sport from his punishment. But Jean de Meung was unmoved by their threats, and stood up calmly in the midst of them, begging them to hear him first, and then, if not satisfied, they might do as they liked with him. Silence being restored, he stood upon a chair, and entered on his defence. He acknowledged that he was the author of the obnoxious verses, but denied that they bore reference to all womankind. He only meant to speak of the vicious and abandoned, whereas those whom he saw around him, were patterns of virtue, loveliness, and modesty. If, however, any lady present thought herself aggrieved, he would consent to be stripped, and she might lash him till her arms were wearied. It is added, that by this means Jean escaped his flogging, and that the wrath of the fair ones immediately subsided. The gentlemen present were, however, of opinion, that if every lady in the room, whose character corresponded with the verses, had taken him at his word, the poet would, in all probability, have been beaten to death. All his life long he evinced a great animosity towards the priesthood, and his famous poem abounds with passages reflecting upon their avarice, cruelty, and immorality. At his death he left a large box, filled with some weighty material, which he bequeathed to the Cordeliers, as a peace−offering, for the abuse he had lavished upon them. As his practice of alchymy was well−known, it was thought the box was filled with gold and silver, and the Cordeliers congratulated each other on their rich acquisition. When it came to be opened, they found to their horror that it was filled only with slates, scratched with hieroglyphic and cabalistic characters. Indignant at the insult, they determined to refuse him Christian burial, on pretence that he was a sorcerer. He was, however, honourably buried in Paris, the whole court attending his funeral.

NICHOLAS FLAMEL.

The story of this alchymist, as handed down by tradition, and enshrined in the pages of Lenglet du Fresnoy, is not a little marvellous. He was born at Pontoise of a poor but respectable family, at the end of the thirteenth, or beginning of the fourteenth, century. Having no patrimony, he set out for Paris at an early age, to try his fortune as a public scribe. He had received a good education, was well skilled in the learned languages, and was an excellent penman. He soon procured occupation as a letter−writer and copyist, and used to sit at the corner of the Rue de Marivaux, and practise his calling: but he hardly made profits enough to keep body and soul together. To mend his fortunes he tried poetry; but this was a more wretched occupation still. As a transcriber he had at least gained bread and cheese; but his rhymes were not worth a crust. He then tried painting with as little success; and as a last resource, began to search for the philosopher's stone, and tell fortunes. This was a happier idea; he soon increased in substance, and had wherewithal to live comfortably. He, therefore, took unto himself his wife Petronella, and began to save money; but continued to all outward appearance as poor and miserable as before. In the course of a few years, he became desperately addicted to the study of alchymy, and thought of nothing but the philosopher's stone, the elixir of life, and the universal alkahest. In the year 1257, he bought by chance an old book for two florins, which soon became the sole study and object of his life. It was written with a steel instrument upon the bark of trees, and contained twenty−one, or as he himself always expressed it, three times seven, leaves. The writing was very elegant and in the Latin language. Each seventh leaf contained a picture and no writing. On the first of these was a serpent swallowing rods; on the second, a cross with a serpent crucified; and on the third, the representation of a desert, in the midst of which was a fountain with serpents crawling from side to side. It purported to be written by no less a personage than "Abraham, patriarch, Jew, prince, philosopher, priest, Levite, and astrologer;" and invoked curses upon any one who should cast eyes upon it, without being a sacrificer or a scribe. Nicholas Flamel never thought it extraordinary that Abraham should have known Latin, and was convinced that the characters on his book had been traced by the hands of that great patriarch himself. He was at first afraid to read it, after he became aware of the curse it contained; but he got over that difficulty by recollecting that, although he was not a sacrificer, he had practised as a scribe. As he read he was filled with

admiration, and found that it was a perfect treatise upon the transmutation of metals. All the process was clearly explained; the vessels, the retorts, the mixtures, and the proper times and seasons for the experiment. But as ill−luck would have it, the possession of the philosopher's stone or prime agent in the work was presupposed. This was a difficulty which was not to be got over. It was like telling a starving man how to cook a beefsteak, instead of giving him the money to buy one. But Nicholas did not despair; and set about studying the hieroglyphics and allegorical representations with which the book abounded. He soon convinced himself that it had been one of the sacred books of the Jews, and that it was taken from the temple of Jerusalem on its destruction by Titus. The process of reasoning by which he arrived at this conclusion is not stated.

From some expression in the treatise, he learned that the allegorical drawings on the fourth and fifth leaves, enshrined the secret of the philosopher's stone, without which all the fine Latin of the directions was utterly unavailing. He invited all the alchymists and learned men of Paris to come and examine them, but they all departed as wise as they came. Nobody could make anything either of Nicholas or his pictures; and some even went so far as to say that his invaluable book was not worth a farthing. This was not to be borne; and Nicholas resolved to discover the great secret by himself, without troubling the philosophers. He found on the first page, of the fourth leaf, the picture of Mercury, attacked by an old man resembling Saturn or Time. The latter had an hourglass on his head, and in his hand a scythe, with which he aimed a blow at Mercury's feet. The reverse of the leaf represented a flower growing on a mountain top, shaken rudely by the wind, with a blue stalk, red and white blossoms, and leaves of pure gold. Around it were a great number of dragons and griffins. On the first page of the fifth leaf was a fine garden, in the midst of which was a rose tree in full bloom, supported against the trunk of a gigantic oak. At the foot of this there bubbled up a fountain of milk−white water, which forming a small stream, flowed through the garden, and was afterwards lost in the sands. On the second page was a King, with a sword in his hand, superintending a number of soldiers, who, in execution of his orders, were killing a great multitude of young children, spurning the prayers and tears of their mothers, who tried to save them from destruction. The blood of the children was carefully collected by another party of soldiers, and put into a large vessel, in which two allegorical figures of the Sun and Moon were bathing themselves.

For twenty−one years poor Nicholas wearied himself with the study of these pictures, but still he could make nothing of them. His wife Petronella at last persuaded him to find out some learned Rabbi; but there was no Rabbi in Paris learned enough to be of any service to him. The Jews met but small encouragement to fix their abode in France, and all the chiefs of that people were located in Spain. To Spain accordingly Nicholas Flamel repaired. He left his book in Paris for fear, perhaps, that he might be robbed of it on the road; and telling his neighbours that he was going on a pilgrimage to the shrine of St. James of Compostello, he trudged on foot towards Madrid in search of a Rabbi. He was absent two years in that country, and made himself known to a great number of Jews, descendants of those who had been expelled from France in the reign of Philip Augustus. The believers in the philosopher's stone give the following account of his adventures: — They say that at Leon he made the acquaintance of a converted Jew, named Cauches, a very learned physician, to whom he explained the title and the nature of his little book. The Doctor was transported with joy as soon as he heard it named, and immediately resolved to accompany Nicholas to Paris, that he might have a sight of it. The two set out together; the Doctor on the way entertaining his companion with the history of his book, which, if the genuine book he thought it to be, from the description he had heard of it, was in the handwriting of Abraham himself, and had been in the possession of personages no less distinguished than Moses, Joshua, Solomon, and Esdras. It contained all the secrets of alchymy and of many other sciences, and was the most valuable book that had ever existed in this world. The Doctor was himself no mean adept, and Nicholas profited greatly by his discourse, as in the garb of poor pilgrims they wended their way to Paris, convinced of their power to turn every old shovel in that capital into pure gold. But, unfortunately, when they reached Orleans, the Doctor was taken dangerously ill. Nicholas watched by his bedside, and acted the double part of a physician and nurse to him; but he died after a few days, lamenting with his last breath that he had not lived long enough to see the precious volume. Nicholas rendered the last honours to his body; and with a sorrowful heart, and not one sous in his pocket, proceeded home to his wife Petronella. He immediately recommenced the study of his pictures; but for two whole years he was as far from understanding them as ever. At last, in the third year, a glimmer of light stole over his understanding. He recalled some expression of his friend, the Doctor, which had hitherto escaped his memory, and he found that all his previous experiments had been conducted on a wrong basis. He recommenced them now with renewed energy,

and at the end of the year had the satisfaction to see all his toils rewarded. On the 13th January 1382, says Lenglet, he made a projection on mercury, and had some very excellent silver. On the 25th April following, he converted a large quantity of mercury into gold, and the great secret was his.

Nicholas was now about eighty years of age, and still a hale and stout old man. His friends say that, by the simultaneous discovery of the elixir of life, he found means to keep death at a distance for another quarter of a century; and that he died in 1415, at the age of 116. In this interval he had made immense quantities of gold, though to all outward appearance he was as poor as a mouse. At an early period of his changed fortune, he had, like a worthy man, taken counsel with his old wife Petronella, as to the best use he could make of his wealth. Petronella replied, that as unfortunately they had no children, the best thing he could do, was to build hospitals and endow churches. Nicholas thought so too, especially when he began to find that his elixir could not keep off death, and that the grim foe was making rapid advances upon him. He richly endowed the church of St. Jacques de la Boucherie, near the Rue de Marivaux, where he had all his life resided, besides seven others in different parts of the kingdom. He also endowed fourteen hospitals, and built three chapels.

The fame of his great wealth and his munificent benefactions soon spread over all the country, and he was visited, among others, by the celebrated Doctors of that day, Jean Gerson, Jean de Courtecuisse, and Pierre d'Ailli. They found him in his humble apartment, meanly clad, and eating porridge out of an earthen vessel; and with regard to his secret, as impenetrable as all his predecessors in alchymy. His fame reached the ears of the King, Charles VI, who sent M. de Cramoisi, the Master of Requests, to find out whether Nicholas had indeed discovered the philosopher's stone. But M. de Cramoisi took nothing by his visit; all his attempts to sound the alchymist were unavailing, and he returned to his royal master no wiser than he came. It was in this year, 1414, that he lost his faithful Petronella. He did not long survive her; but died in the following year, and was buried with great pomp by the grateful priests of St. Jacques de la Boucherie.

The great wealth of Nicholas Flamel is undoubted, as the records of several churches and hospitals in France can testify. That he practised alchymy is equally certain, as he left behind several works upon the subject.

Those who knew him well, and who were incredulous about the philosopher's stone, give a very satisfactory solution of the secret of his wealth. They say that he was always a miser and a usurer; that his journey to Spain was undertaken with very different motives from those pretended by the alchymists; that, in fact, he went to collect debts due from Jews in that country to their brethren in Paris, and that he charged a commission of fully cent. per cent. in consideration of the difficulty of collecting and the dangers of the road; that when he possessed thousands, he lived upon almost nothing; and was the general money−lender, at enormous profits, of all the dissipated young men at the French court.

Among the works written by Nicholas Flamel on the subject of alchymy, is "The Philosophic Summary," a poem, reprinted in 1735, as an appendix to the third volume of the "Roman de la Rose." He also wrote three treatises upon natural philosophy, and an alchymic allegory, entitled "Le Desir desire." Specimens of his writing, and a fac−simile of the drawings in his book of Abraham, may be seen in Salmon's "Bibliotheque des Philosophes Chimiques." The writer of the article, "Flamel," in the "Biographie Universelle," says that, for a hundred years after the death of Flamel, many of the adepts believed that he was still alive, and that he would live for upwards of six hundred years. The house he formerly occupied, at the corner of the Rue de Marivaux, has been often taken by credulous speculators, and ransacked from top to bottom, in the hopes that gold might be found. A report was current in Paris, not long previous to the year 1816, that some lodgers had found in the cellars several jars filled with a dark−coloured ponderous matter. Upon the strength of the rumour, a believer in all the wondrous tales told of Nicholas Flamel bought the house, and nearly pulled it to pieces in ransacking the walls and wainscotting for hidden gold. He got nothing for his pains, however, and had a heavy bill to pay to restore his dilapidations.

GEORGE RIPLEY.

While alchymy was thus cultivated on the continent of Europe, it was not neglected in the isles of Britain. Since the time of Roger Bacon, it had fascinated the imagination of many ardent men in England. In the year 1404, an act of parliament was passed, declaring the making of gold and silver to be felony. Great alarm was felt at that time lest any alchymist should succeed in his projects, and perhaps bring ruin upon the state, by furnishing boundless wealth to some designing tyrant, who would make use of it to enslave his country. This alarm appears to have soon subsided; for, in the year 1455, King Henry VI, by advice of his council and parliament, granted four

successive patents and commissions to several knights, citizens of London, chemists, monks, mass−priests, and others, to find out the philosopher's stone and elixir, "to the great benefit," said the patent, "of the realm, and the enabling of the King to pay all the debts of the Crown in real gold and silver." Prinn, in his "Aurum Reginae," observes, as a note to this passage, that the King's reason for granting this patent to ecclesiastics was, that they were such good artists in transubstantiating bread and wine in the Eucharist, and therefore the more likely to be able to effect the transmutation of baser metals into better. No gold, of course, was ever made; and, next year, the King, doubting very much of the practicability of the thing, took further advice, and appointed a commission of ten learned men, and persons of eminence, to judge and certify to him whether the transmutation of metals were a thing practicable or no. It does not appear whether the commission ever made any report upon the subject.

In the succeeding reign, an alchymist appeared who pretended to have discovered the secret. This was George Ripley, the canon of Bridlington, in Yorkshire. He studied for twenty years in the universities of Italy, and was a great favourite with Pope Innocent VIII, who made him one of his domestic chaplains, and master of the ceremonies in his household. Returning to England in 1477, he dedicated to King Edward IV. his famous work, "The Compound of Alchymy; or, the Twelve Gates leading to the Discovery of the Philosopher's Stone." These gates he described to be calcination, solution, separation, conjunction, putrefaction, congelation, cibation, sublimation, fermentation, exaltation, multiplication, and projection! to which he might have added botheration, the most important process of all. He was very rich, and allowed it to be believed that he could make gold out of iron. Fuller, in his "Worthies of England," says that an English gentleman of good credit reported that, in his travels abroad, he saw a record in the island of Malta, which declared that Ripley gave yearly to the knights of that island, and of Rhodes, the enormous sum of one hundred thousand pounds sterling, to enable them to carry on the war against the Turks. In his old age, he became an anchorite near Boston, and wrote twenty−five volumes upon the subject of alchymy, the most important of which is the "Duodecim Portarum," already mentioned. Before he died, he seems to have acknowledged that he had misspent his life in this vain study, and requested that all men, when they met with any of his books, would burn them, or afford them no credit, as they had been written merely from his opinion, and not from proof; and that subsequent trial had made manifest to him that they were false and vain. [Fuller's "Worthies of England."]

BASIL VALENTINE.

Germany also produced many famous alchymists in the fifteenth century, the chief of whom are Basil Valentine, Bernard of Treves, and the Abbot Trithemius. Basil Valentine was born at Mayence, and was made prior of St. Peter's, at Erfurt, about the year 1414. It was known, during his life, that he diligently sought the philosopher's stone, and that he had written some works upon the process of transmutation. They were thought, for many years, to be lost; but were, after his death, discovered enclosed in the stone work of one of the pillars in the Abbey. They were twenty−one in number, and are fully set forth in the third volume of Lenglet's "History of the Hermetic Philosophy." The alchymists asserted, that Heaven itself conspired to bring to light these extraordinary works; and that the pillar in which they were enclosed was miraculously shattered by a thunderbolt; and that, as soon as the manuscripts were liberated, the pillar closed up again of its own accord!

BERNARD of TREVES.

The life of this philosopher is a remarkable instance of talent and perseverance misapplied. In the search of his chimera nothing could daunt him. Repeated disappointment never diminished his hopes; and, from the age of fourteen to that of eighty−five, he was incessantly employed among the drugs and furnaces of his laboratory, wasting his life with the view of prolonging it, and reducing himself to beggary in the hopes of growing rich.

He was born at either Treves or Padua, in the year 1406. His father is said by some to have been a physician in the latter city; and by others, to have been Count of the Marches of Treves, and one of the most wealthy nobles of his country. At all events, whether noble or physician, he was a rich man, and left his son a magnificent estate. At the age of fourteen he first became enamoured of the science of alchymy, and read the Arabian authors in their own language. He himself has left a most interesting record of his labours and wanderings, from which the following particulars are chiefly extracted: — The first book which fell into his hands, was that of the Arabian philosopher, Rhazes, from the reading of which he imagined that he had discovered the means of augmenting gold a hundred fold. For four years he worked in his laboratory, with the book of Rhazes continually before him. At the

end of that time, he found that he had spent no less than eight hundred crowns upon his experiment, and had got nothing but fire and smoke for his pains. He now began to lose confidence in Rhazes, and turned to the works of Geber. He studied him assiduously for two years; and, being young, rich, and credulous, was beset by all the chymists of the town, who kindly assisted him in spending his money. He did not lose his faith in Geber, or patience with his hungry assistants, until he had lost two thousand crowns − a very considerable sum in those days.

Among all the crowd of pretended men of science who surrounded him, there was but one as enthusiastic and as disinterested as himself. With this man, who was a monk of the order of St. Francis, he contracted an intimate friendship, and spent nearly all his time. Some obscure treatises of Rupecissa and Sacrobosco having fallen into their hands, they were persuaded, from reading them, that highly rectified spirits of wine was the universal alkahest, or dissolvent, which would aid them greatly in the process of transmutation. They rectified the alcohol thirty times, till they made it so strong as to burst the vessels which contained it. After they had worked three years, and spent three hundred crowns in the liquor, they discovered that they were on the wrong track. They next tried alum and copperas; but the great secret still escaped them. They afterwards imagined that there was a marvellous virtue in all excrement, especially the human, and actually employed more than two years in experimentalizing upon it, with mercury, salt, and molten lead! Again the adepts flocked around him from far and near, to aid him with their counsels. He received them all hospitably, and divided his wealth among them so generously and unhesitatingly, that they gave him the name of the "good Trevisan," by which he is still often mentioned in works that treat on alchymy. For twelve years he led this life, making experiments every day upon some new substance, and praying to God night and morning that he might discover the secret of transmutation.

In this interval he lost his friend the monk, and was joined by a magistrate of the city of Treves, as ardent as himself in the search. His new acquaintance imagined that the ocean was the mother of gold, and that sea−salt would change lead or iron into the precious metals. Bernard resolved to try; and, transporting his laboratory to a house on the coast of the Baltic, he worked upon salt for more than a year, melting it, sublimating it, crystalizing it, and occasionally drinking it, for the sake of other experiments. Still the strange enthusiast was not wholly discouraged, and his failure in one trial only made him the more anxious to attempt another.

He was now approaching the age of fifty, and had as yet seen nothing of the world. He, therefore, determined to travel through Germany, Italy, France, and Spain. Wherever he stopped he made inquiries whether there were any alchymists in the neighbourhood. He invariably sought them out; and, if they were poor, relieved, and, if affluent, encouraged them. At Citeaux he became acquainted with one Geoffrey Leuvier, a monk of that place, who persuaded him that the essence of egg−shells was a valuable ingredient. He tried, therefore, what could be done; and was only prevented from wasting a year or two on the experiment by the opinions of an attorney, at Berghem, in Flanders, who said that the great secret resided in vinegar and copperas. He was not convinced of the absurdity of this idea until he had nearly poisoned himself. He resided in France for about five years, when, hearing accidentally that one Master Henry, confessor to the Emperor Frederic III, had discovered the philosopher's stone, he set out for Germany to pay him a visit. He had, as usual, surrounded himself with a set of hungry dependants, several of whom determined to accompany him. He had not heart to refuse them, and he arrived at Vienna with five of them. Bernard sent a polite invitation to the confessor, and gave him a sumptuous entertainment, at which were present nearly all the alchymists of Vienna. Master Henry frankly confessed that he had not discovered the philosopher's stone, but that he had all his life been employed in searching for it, and would so continue, till he found it; — or died. This was a man after Bernard's own heart, and they vowed with each other an eternal friendship. It was resolved, at supper, that each alchymist present should contribute a certain sum towards raising forty−two marks of gold, which, in five days, it was confidently asserted by Master Henry, would increase, in his furnace, five fold. Bernard, being the richest man, contributed the lion's share, ten marks of gold, Master Henry five, and the others one or two a piece, except the dependants of Bernard, who were obliged to borrow their quota from their patron. The grand experiment was duly made; the golden marks were put into a crucible, with a quantity of salt, copperas, aquafortis, egg−shells, mercury, lead, and dung. The alchymists watched this precious mess with intense interest, expecting that it would agglomerate into one lump of pure gold. At the end of three weeks they gave up the trial, upon some excuse that the crucible was not strong enough, or that some necessary ingredient was wanting. Whether any thief had put his hands into the crucible is not known, but it is certain that the gold found therein at the close of the experiment was worth only sixteen marks, instead of

the forty−two, which were put there at the beginning.

Bernard, though he made no gold at Vienna, made away with a very considerable quantity. He felt the loss so acutely, that he vowed to think no more of the philosopher's stone. This wise resolution he kept for two months; but he was miserable. He was in the condition of the gambler, who cannot resist the fascination of the game while he has a coin remaining, but plays on with the hope of retrieving former losses, till hope forsakes him, and he can live no longer. He returned once more to his beloved crucibles, and resolved to prosecute his journey in search of a philosopher who had discovered the secret, and would communicate it to so zealous and persevering an adept as himself. From Vienna he travelled to Rome, and from Rome to Madrid. Taking ship at Gibraltar, he proceeded to Messina; from Messina to Cyprus; from Cyprus to Greece; from Greece to Constantinople; and thence into Egypt, Palestine, and Persia. These wanderings occupied him about eight years. From Persia he made his way back to Messina, and from thence into France. He afterwards passed over into England, still in search of his great chimera; and this occupied four years more of his life. He was now growing both old and poor; for he was sixty−two years of age, and had been obliged to sell a great portion of his patrimony to provide for his expenses. His journey to Persia had cost upwards of thirteen thousand crowns, about one−half of which had been fairly melted in his all−devouring furnaces: the other half was lavished upon the sycophants that he made it his business to search out in every town he stopped at.

On his return to Treves he found, to his sorrow, that, if not an actual beggar, he was not much better. His relatives looked upon him as a madman, and refused even to see him. Too proud to ask for favours from any one, and still confident that, some day or other, he would be the possessor of unbounded wealth, he made up his mind to retire to the island of Rhodes, where he might, in the mean time, hide his poverty from the eyes of all the world. Here he might have lived unknown and happy; but, as ill luck would have it, he fell in with a monk as mad as himself upon the subject of transmutation. They were, however, both so poor that they could not afford to buy the proper materials to work with. They kept up each other's spirits by learned discourses on the Hermetic Philosophy, and in the reading of all the great authors who had written upon the subject. Thus did they nurse their folly, as the good wife of Tam O'Shanter did her wrath, "to keep it warm." After Bernard had resided about a year in Rhodes, a merchant, who knew his family, advanced him the sum of eight thousand florins, upon the security of the last−remaining acres of his formerly large estate. Once more provided with funds, he recommenced his labours with all the zeal and enthusiasm of a young man. For three years he hardly stepped out of his laboratory: he ate there, and slept there, and did not even give himself time to wash his hands and clean his beard, so intense was his application. It is melancholy to think that such wonderful perseverance should have been wasted in so vain a pursuit, and that energies so unconquerable should have had no worthier field to strive in. Even when he had fumed away his last coin, and had nothing left in prospective to keep his old age from starvation, hope never forsook him. He still dreamed of ultimate success, and sat down a greyheaded man of eighty, to read over all the authors on the hermetic mysteries, from Geber to his own day, lest he should have misunderstood some process, which it was not yet too late to recommence. The alchymists say, that he succeeded at last, and discovered the secret of transmutation in his eighty−second year. They add, that he lived three years afterwards to enjoy his wealth. He lived, it is true, to this great age, and made a valuable discovery − more valuable than gold or gems. He learned, as he himself informs us, just before he had attained his eighty−third year, that the great secret of philosophy was contentment with our lot. Happy would it have been for him if he had discovered it sooner, and before he became decrepit, a beggar, and an exile!

He died at Rhodes, in the year 1490, and all the alchymists of Europe sang elegies over him, and sounded his praise as the "good Trevisan." He wrote several treatises upon his chimera, the chief of which are, the "Book of Chemistry," the "Verbum dimissum," and an essay "De Natura Ovi."

TRITHEMIUS.

The name of this eminent man has become famous in the annals of alchymy, although he did but little to gain so questionable an honour. He was born in the year 1462, at the village of Trittheim, in the electorate of Treves. His father was John Heidenberg, a vine−grower, in easy circumstances, who, dying when his son was but seven years old, left him to the care of his mother. The latter married again very shortly afterwards, and neglected the poor boy, the offspring of her first marriage. At the age of fifteen he did not even know his letters, and was, besides, half starved, and otherwise ill−treated by his step−father; but the love of knowledge germinated in the

breast of the unfortunate youth, and he learned to read at the house of a neighbour. His father−in−law set him to work in the vineyards, and thus occupied all his days; but the nights were his own. He often stole out unheeded, when all the household were fast asleep, poring over his studies in the fields, by the light of the moon; and thus taught himself Latin and the rudiments of Greek. He was subjected to so much ill−usage at home, in consequence of this love of study, that he determined to leave it. Demanding the patrimony which his father had left him, he proceeded to Treves; and, assuming the name of Trithemius, from that of his native village of Trittheim, lived there for some months, under the tuition of eminent masters, by whom he was prepared for the university. At the age of twenty, he took it into his head that he should like to see his mother once more; and he set out on foot from the distant university for that purpose. On his arrival near Spannheim, late in the evening of a gloomy winter's day, it came on to snow so thickly, that he could not proceed onwards to the town. He, therefore, took refuge for the night in a neighbouring monastery; but the storm continued several days, the roads became impassable, and the hospitable monks would not hear of his departure. He was so pleased with them and their manner of life, that he suddenly resolved to fix his abode among them, and renounce the world. They were no less pleased with him, and gladly received him as a brother. In the course of two years, although still so young, he was unanimously elected their Abbot. The financial affairs of the establishment had been greatly neglected, the walls of the building were falling into ruin, and everything was in disorder. Trithemius, by his good management and regularity, introduced a reform in every branch of expenditure. The monastery was repaired, and a yearly surplus, instead of a deficiency, rewarded him for his pains. He did not like to see the monks idle, or occupied solely between prayers for their business, and chess for their relaxation. He, therefore, set them to work to copy the writings of eminent authors. They laboured so assiduously, that, in the course of a few years, their library, which had contained only about forty volumes, was enriched with several hundred valuable manuscripts, comprising many of the classical Latin authors, besides the works of the early fathers, and the principal historians and philosophers of more modern date. He retained the dignity of Abbot of Spannheim for twenty−one years, when the monks, tired of the severe discipline he maintained, revolted against him, and chose another abbot in his place. He was afterwards made Abbot of St. James, in Wurtzburg, where he died in 1516.

During his learned leisure at Spannheim, he wrote several works upon the occult sciences, the chief of which are an essay on geomancy, or divination by means of lines and circles on the ground; another upon sorcery; a third upon alchymy; and a fourth upon the government of the world by its presiding angels, which was translated into English, and published by the famous William Lilly in 1647.

It has been alleged by the believers in the possibility of transmutation, that the prosperity of the abbey of Spannheim, while under his superintendence, was owing more to the philosopher's stone than to wise economy. Trithemius, in common with many other learned men, has been accused of magic; and a marvellous story is told of his having raised from the grave the form of Mary of Burgundy, at the intercession of her widowed husband, the Emperor Maximilian. His work on steganographia, or cabalistic writing, was denounced to the Count Palatine, Frederic II, as magical and devilish; and it was by him taken from the shelves of his library and thrown into the fire. Trithemius is said to be the first writer who makes mention of the wonderful story of the devil and Dr. Faustus, the truth of which he firmly believed. He also recounts the freaks of a spirit, named Hudekin, by whom he was at times tormented. [Biographie Universelle]

THE MARECHAL DE RAYS.

One of the greatest encouragers of alchymy in the fifteenth century was Gilles de Laval, Lord of Rays and a Marshal of France. His name and deeds are little known; but in the annals of crime and folly, they might claim the highest and worst pro−eminence. Fiction has never invented anything wilder or more horrible than his career; and were not the details but too well authenticated by legal and other documents which admit no doubt, the lover of romance might easily imagine they were drawn to please him from the stores of the prolific brain, and not from the page of history.

He was born about the year 1420, of one of the noblest families of Brittany. His father dying when Gilles had attained his twentieth year, he came into uncontrolled possession, at that early age, of a fortune which the monarchs of France might have envied him. He was a near kinsman of the Montmorencys, the Roncys, and the Craons; possessed fifteen princely domains, and had an annual revenue of about three hundred thousand livres. Besides this, he was handsome, learned, and brave. He distinguished himself greatly in the wars of Charles VII,

and was rewarded by that monarch with the dignity of a marshal of France. But he was extravagant and magnificent in his style of living, and accustomed from his earliest years to the gratification of every wish and passion; and this, at last, led him from vice to vice, and from crime to crime, till a blacker name than his is not to be found in any record of human iniquity.

In his castle of Champtoce, he lived with all the splendour of an Eastern Caliph. He kept up a troop of two hundred horsemen to accompany him wherever he went; and his excursions for the purposes of hawking and hunting were the wonder of all the country around, so magnificent were the caparisons of his steeds and the dresses of his retainers. Day and night, his castle was open all the year round to comers of every degree. He made it a rule to regale even the poorest beggar with wine and hippocrass. Every day an ox was roasted whole in his spacious kitchens, besides sheep, pigs, and poultry sufficient to feed five hundred persons. He was equally magnificent in his devotions. His private chapel at Champtoce was the most beautiful in France, and far surpassed any of those in the richly−endowed cathedrals of Notre Dame in Paris, of Amiens, of Beauvais, or of Rouen. It was hung with cloth of gold and rich velvet. All the chandeliers were of pure gold, curiously inlaid with silver. The great crucifix over the altar was of solid silver, and the chalices and incense−burners were of pure gold. He had, besides, a fine organ, which he caused to be carried from one castle to another, on the shoulders of six men, whenever he changed his residence. He kept up a choir of twenty−five young children of both sexes, who were instructed in singing by the first musicians of the day. The master of his chapel he called a bishop, who had under him his deans, archdeacons, and vicars, each receiving great salaries; the bishop four hundred crowns a year, and the rest in proportion.

He also maintained a whole troop of players, including ten dancing−girls and as many ballad−singers, besides morris−dancers, jugglers, and mountebanks of every description. The theatre on which they performed was fitted up without any regard to expense; and they played mysteries, or danced the morris−dance, every evening, for the amusement of himself and household, and such strangers as were sharing his prodigal hospitality.

At the age of twenty−three, he married Catherine, the wealthy heiress of the house of Touars, for whom he refurnished his castle at an expense of a hundred thousand crowns. His marriage was the signal for new extravagance, and he launched out more madly than ever he had done before; sending for fine singers or celebrated dancers from foreign countries to amuse him and his spouse, and instituting tilts and tournaments in his great court−yard almost every week for all the knights and nobles of the province of Brittany. The Duke of Brittany's court was not half so splendid as that of the Marechal de Rays. His utter disregard of wealth was so well known that he was made to pay three times its value for everything he purchased. His castle was filled with needy parasites and panderers to his pleasures, amongst whom he lavished rewards with an unsparing hand. But the ordinary round of sensual gratification ceased at last to afford him delight: he was observed to be more abstemious in the pleasures of the table, and to neglect the beauteous dancing−girls who used formerly to occupy so much of his attention. He was sometimes gloomy and reserved; and there was an unnatural wildness in his eye which gave indications of incipient madness. Still, his discourse was as reasonable as ever; his urbanity to the guests that flocked from far and near to Champtoce suffered no diminution; and learned priests, when they conversed with him, thought to themselves that few of the nobles of France were so well−informed as Gilles de Laval. But dark rumours spread gradually over the country; murder, and, if possible, still more atrocious deeds were hinted at; and it was remarked that many young children, of both sexes, suddenly disappeared, and were never afterwards heard of. One or two had been traced to the castle of Champtoce, and had never been seen to leave it; but no one dared to accuse openly so powerful a man as the Marechal de Rays. Whenever the subject of the lost children was mentioned in his presence, he manifested the greatest astonishment at the mystery which involved their fate, and indignation against those who might be guilty of kidnapping them. Still the world was not wholly deceived; his name became as formidable to young children as that of the devouring ogre in fairy tales; and they were taught to go miles round, rather than pass under the turrets of Champtoce.

In the course of a very few years, the reckless extravagance of the Marshal drained him of all his funds, and he was obliged to put up some of his estates for sale. The Duke of Brittany entered into a treaty with him for the valuable seignory of Ingrande; but the heirs of Gilles implored the interference of Charles VII. to stay the sale. Charles immediately issued an edict, which was confirmed by the Provincial Parliament of Brittany, forbidding him to alienate his paternal estates. Gilles had no alternative but to submit. He had nothing to support his extravagance but his allowance as a Marshal of France, which did not cover the one−tenth of his expenses. A man

of his habits and character could not retrench his wasteful expenditure and live reasonably; he could not dismiss without a pang his horsemen, his jesters, his morris−dancers, his choristers, and his parasites, or confine his hospitality to those who really needed it. Notwithstanding his diminished resources, he resolved to live as he had lived before, and turn alchymist, that he might make gold out of iron, and be still the wealthiest and most magnificent among the nobles of Brittany.

In pursuance of this determination he sent to Paris, Italy, Germany, and Spain, inviting all the adepts in the science to visit him at Champtoce. The messengers he despatched on this mission were two of his most needy and unprincipled dependants, Gilles de Sille and Roger de Bricqueville. The latter, the obsequious panderer to his most secret and abominable pleasures, he had intrusted with the education of his motherless daughter, a child but five years of age, with permission, that he might marry her at the proper time to any person he chose, or to himself if he liked it better. This man entered into the new plans of his master with great zeal, and introduced to him one Prelati, an alchymist of Padua, and a physician of Poitou, who was addicted to the same pursuits. The Marshal caused a splendid laboratory to be fitted up for them, and the three commenced the search for the philosopher's stone. They were soon afterwards joined by another pretended philosopher, named Anthony of Palermo, who aided in their operations for upwards of a year. They all fared sumptuously at the Marshal's expense, draining him of the ready money he possessed, and leading him on from day to day with the hope that they would succeed in the object of their search. From time to time new aspirants from the remotest parts of Europe arrived at his castle, and for months he had upwards of twenty alchymists at work − trying to transmute copper into gold, and wasting the gold, which was still his own, in drugs and elixirs.

But the Lord of Rays was not a man to abide patiently their lingering processes. Pleased with their comfortable quarters, they jogged on from day to day, and would have done so for years, had they been permitted. But he suddenly dismissed them all, with the exception of the Italian Prelati, and the physician of Poitou. These he retained to aid him to discover the secret of the philosopher's stone by a bolder method. The Poitousan had persuaded him that the devil was the great depositary of that and all other secrets, and that he would raise him before Gilles, who might enter into any contract he pleased with him. Gilles expressed his readiness, and promised to give the devil anything but his soul, or do any deed that the arch−enemy might impose upon him. Attended solely by the physician, he proceeded at midnight to a wild−looking place in a neighbouring forest; the physician drew a magic circle around them on the sward, and muttered for half an hour an invocation to the Evil Spirit to arise at his bidding, and disclose the secrets of alchymy. Gilles looked on with intense interest, and expected every moment to see the earth open, and deliver to his gaze the great enemy of mankind. At last the eyes of the physician became fixed, his hair stood on end, and he spoke, as if addressing the fiend. But Gilles saw nothing except his companion. At last the physician fell down on the sward as if insensible. Gilles looked calmly on to see the end. After a few minutes the physician arose, and asked him if he had not seen how angry the devil looked? Gilles replied, that he had seen nothing; upon which his companion informed him that Beelzebub had appeared in the form of a wild leopard, growled at him savagely, and said nothing; and that the reason why the Marshal had neither seen nor heard him, was that he hesitated in his own mind as to devoting himself entirely to the service. De Rays owned that he had indeed misgivings, and inquired what was to be done to make the devil speak out, and unfold his secret? The physician replied, that some person must go to Spain and Africa to collect certain herbs which only grew in those countries, and offered to go himself, if De Rays would provide the necessary funds. De Rays at once consented; and the physician set out on the following day with all the gold that his dupe could spare him. The Marshal never saw his face again.

But the eager Lord of Champtoce could not rest. Gold was necessary for his pleasures; and unless, by supernatural aid, he had no means of procuring many further supplies. The physician was hardly twenty leagues on his journey, before Gilles resolved to make another effort to force the devil to divulge the art of gold making. He went out alone for that purpose, but all his conjurations were of no effect. Beelzebub was obstinate, and would not appear. Determined to conquer him if he could, he unbosomed himself to the Italian alchymist, Prelati. The latter offered to undertake the business, upon condition that De Rays did not interfere in the conjurations, and consented besides to furnish him with all the charms and talismans that might be required. He was further to open a vein in his arm, and sign with his blood a contract that he would work the devil's will in all things, and offer up to him a sacrifice of the heart, lungs, hands, eyes, and blood of a young child. The grasping monomaniac made no hesitation; but agreed at once to the disgusting terms proposed to him. On the following night, Prelati went out

alone; and after having been absent for three or four hours, returned to Gilles, who sat anxiously awaiting him. Prelati then informed him that he had seen the devil in the shape of a handsome youth of twenty. He further said, that the devil desired to be called Barron in all future invocations; and had shown him a great number of ingots of pure gold, buried under a large oak in the neighbouring forest, all of which, and as many more as he desired, should become the property of the Marechal de Rays if he remained firm, and broke no condition of the contract. Prelati further showed him a small casket of black dust, which would turn iron into gold; but as the process was very troublesome, he advised that they should be contented with the ingots they found under the oak tree, and which would more than supply all the wants that the most extravagant imagination could desire. They were not, however, to attempt to look for the gold till a period of seven times seven weeks, or they would find nothing but slates and stones for their pains. Gilles expressed the utmost chagrin and disappointment, and at once said that he could not wait for so long a period; if the devil were not more prompt, Prelati might tell him, that the Marechal de Rays was not to be trifled with, and would decline all further communication with him. Prelati at last persuaded him to wait seven times seven days. They then went at midnight with picks and shovels to dig up the ground under the oak, where they found nothing to reward them but a great quantity of slates, marked with hieroglyphics. It was now Prelati's turn to be angry; and he loudly swore that the devil was nothing but a liar and a cheat. The Marshal joined cordially in the opinion, but was easily persuaded by the cunning Italian to make one more trial. He promised at the same time that he would endeavour, on the following night, to discover the reason why the devil had broken his word. He went out alone accordingly, and on his return informed his patron that he had seen Barron, who was exceedingly angry that they had not waited the proper time ere they looked for the ingots. Barron had also said, that the Marechal de Rays could hardly expect any favours from him, at a time when he must know that he had been meditating a pilgrimage to the Holy Land, to make atonement for his sins. The Italian had doubtless surmised this, from some incautious expression of his patron, for De Rays frankly confessed that there were times when, sick of the world and all its pomps and vanities, he thought of devoting himself to the service of God.

In this manner the Italian lured on from month to month his credulous and guilty patron, extracting from him all the valuables he possessed, and only waiting a favourable opportunity to decamp with his plunder. But the day of retribution was at hand for both. Young girls and boys continued to disappear in the most mysterious manner; and the rumours against the owner of Champtoce grew so loud and distinct, that the Church was compelled to interfere. Representations were made by the Bishop of Nantes to the Duke of Brittany, that it would be a public scandal if the accusations against the Marechal de Rays were not inquired into. He was arrested accordingly in his own castle, along with his accomplice Prelati, and thrown into a dungeon at Nantes to await his trial.

The judges appointed to try him were the Bishop of Nantes Chancellor of Brittany, the Vicar of the Inquisition in France, and the celebrated Pierre l'Hopital, the President of the Provincial Parliament. The offences laid to his charge were sorcery, sodomy, and murder. Gilles, on the first day of his trial, conducted himself with the utmost insolence. He braved the judges on the judgment seat, calling them simoniacs and persons of impure life, and said he would rather be hanged by the neck like a dog without trial, than plead either guilty or not guilty to such contemptible miscreants. But his confidence forsook him as the trial proceeded, and he was found guilty on the clearest evidence of all the crimes laid to his charge. It was proved that he took insane pleasure in stabbing the victims of his lust, and in observing the quivering of their flesh, and the fading lustre of their eyes as they expired. The confession of Prelati first made the judges acquainted with this horrid madness, and Gilles himself confirmed it before his death. Nearly a hundred children of the villagers around his two castles of Champtoce and Machecoue, had been missed within three years the greater part, if not all, of whom were immolated to the lust or the cupidity of this monster. He imagined that he thus made the devil his friend, and that his recompence would be the secret of the philosopher's stone.

Gilles and Prelati were both condemned to be burned alive. At the place of execution they assumed the air of penitence and religion. Gilles tenderly embraced Prelati, saying, "Farewell, friend Francis! In this world we shall never meet again; but let us place our hopes in God; we shall see each other in Paradise." Out of consideration for his high rank and connections, the punishment of the Marshal was so far mitigated, that he was not burned alive like Prelati. He was first strangled, and then thrown into the flames: his body, when half consumed, was given over to his relatives for interment; while that of the Italian was burned to ashes, and then scattered in the winds. [For full details of this extraordinary trial, see "Lobineau's Nouvelle Histoire de Bretagne;" and D'Argentre's work

on the same subject.]

JACQUES COEUR.

This remarkable pretender to the secret of the philosopher's stone, was contemporary with the last mentioned. He was a great personage at the court of Charles VII, and in the events of his reign played a prominent part. From a very humble origin he rose to the highest honours of the state, and amassed enormous wealth, by peculation and the plunder of the country which he should have served. It was to hide his delinquencies in this respect, and to divert attention from the real source of his riches, that he boasted of having discovered the art of transmuting the inferior metals into gold and silver.

His father was a goldsmith in the city of Bourges; but so reduced in circumstances towards the latter years of his life, that he was unable to pay the necessary fees to procure his son's admission into the guild. Young Jacques became, however, a workman in the Royal Mint of Bourges, in 1428, and behaved himself so well, and showed so much knowledge of metallurgy, that he attained rapid promotion in that establishment. He had also the good fortune to make the acquaintance of the fair Agnes Sorel, by whom he was patronized and much esteemed. Jacques had now three things in his favour − ability, perseverance, and the countenance of the King's mistress. Many a man succeeds with but one of these to help him forward: and it would have been strange indeed, if Jacques Coeur, who had them all, should have languished in obscurity. While still a young man he was made Master of the Mint, in which he had been a journeyman, and installed at the same time into the vacant office of Grand Treasurer of the royal household.

He possessed an extensive knowledge of finance, and turned it wonderfully to his own advantage as soon as he became intrusted with extensive funds. He speculated in articles of the first necessity, and made himself very unpopular by buying up grain, honey, wines, and other produce, till there was a scarcity, when he sold it again at enormous profit. Strong in the royal favour, he did not hesitate to oppress the poor by continual acts of forestalling and monopoly. As there is no enemy so bitter as the estranged friend, so of all the tyrants and tramplers upon the poor, there is none so fierce and reckless as the upstart that sprang from their ranks. The offensive pride of Jacques Coeur to his inferiors was the theme of indignant reproach in his own city, and his cringing humility to those above him was as much an object of contempt to the aristocrats into whose society he thrust himself. But Jacques did not care for the former, and to the latter he was blind. He continued his career till he became the richest man in France, and so useful to the King that no important enterprise was set on foot until he had been consulted. He was sent in 1446 on an embassy to Genoa, and in the following year to Pope Nicholas V. In both these missions he acquitted himself to the satisfaction of his sovereign, and was rewarded with a lucrative appointment, in addition to those which he already held.

In the year 1449, the English in Normandy, deprived of their great general, the Duke of Bedford, broke the truce with the French King, and took possession of a small town belonging to the Duke of Brittany. This was the signal for the recommencemerit of a war, in which the French regained possession of nearly the whole province. The money for this war was advanced, for the most part, by Jacques Coeur. When Rouen yielded to the French, and Charles made his triumphal entry into that city, accompanied by Dunois and his most famous generals, Jacques was among the most brilliant of his cortege. His chariot and horses vied with those of the King in the magnificence of their trappings; and his enemies said of him that he publicly boasted that he alone had driven out the English, and that the valour of the troops would would have been nothing without his gold.

Dunois appears, also, to have been partly of the same opinion. Without disparaging the courage of the army, he acknowledged the utility of the able financier, by whose means they had been fed and paid, and constantly afforded him his powerful protection.

When peace returned, Jacques again devoted himself to commerce, and fitted up several galleys to trade with the Genoese. He also bought large estates in various parts of France; the chief of which were the baronies of St. Fargeau, Meneton, Salone, Maubranche, Meaune, St. Gerant de Vaux, and St. Aon de Boissy; the earldoms or counties of La Palisse, Champignelle, Beaumont, and Villeneuve la Genet, and the marquisate of Toucy. He also procured for his son, Jean Coeur, who had chosen the Church for his profession, a post no less distinguished than that of Archbishop of Bourges.

Everybody said that so much wealth could not have been honestly acquired; and both rich and poor longed for the day that should humble the pride of the man, whom the one class regarded as an upstart and the other as an

oppressor. Jacques was somewhat alarmed at the rumours that were afloat respecting him, and of dark hints that he had debased the coin of the realm and forged the King's seal to an important document, by which he had defrauded the state of very considerable sums. To silence these rumours, he invited many alchymists from foreign countries to reside with him, and circulated a counter−rumour, that he had discovered the secret of the philosopher's stone. He also built a magnificent house in his native city, over the entrance of which he caused to be sculptured the emblems of that science. Some time afterwards, he built another, no less splendid, at Montpellier, which he inscribed in a similar manner. He also wrote a treatise upon the hermetic philosophy, in which he pretended that he knew the secret of transmuting metals.

But all these attempts to disguise his numerous acts of peculation proved unavailing; and he was arrested in 1452, and brought to trial on several charges. Upon one only, which the malice of his enemies invented to ruin him, was he acquitted; which was, that he had been accessory to the death, by poison, of his kind patroness, Agnes Sorel. Upon the others, he was found guilty; and sentenced to be banished the kingdom, and to pay the enormous fine of four hundred thousand crowns. It was proved that he had forged the King's seal; that, in his capacity of Master of the Mint of Bourges, he had debased, to a very great extent, the gold and silver coin of the realm; and that he had not hesitated to supply the Turks with arms and money to enable them to carry on war against their Christian neighbours, for which service he had received the most munificent recompences. Charles VII. was deeply grieved at his condemnation, and believed to the last that he was innocent. By his means the fine was reduced within a sum which Jacques Coeur could pay. After remaining for some time in prison, he was liberated, and left France with a large sum of money, part of which, it was alleged, was secretly paid him by Charles out of the produce of his confiscated estates. He retired to Cyprus, where he died about 1460, the richest and most conspicuous personage of the island.

The writers upon alchymy all claim Jacques Coeur as a member of their fraternity, and treat as false and libellous the more rational explanation of his wealth which the records of his trial afford. Pierre Borel, in his "Antiquites Gauloises," maintains the opinion that Jacques was an honest man, and that he made his gold out of lead and copper by means of the philosopher's stone. The alchymic adepts in general were of the same opinion; but they found it difficult to persuade even his contemporaries of the fact. Posterity is still less likely to believe it.

INFERIOR ADEPTS OF THE FOURTEENTH AND FIFTEENTH CENTURIES.

Many other pretenders to the secrets of the philosopher's stone appeared in every country in Europe, during the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. The possibility of transmutation was so generally admitted, that every chemist was more or less an alchymist. Germany, Holland, Italy, Spain, Poland, France, and England produced thousands of obscure adepts, who supported themselves, in the pursuit of their chimera, by the more profitable resources of astrology and divination. The monarchs of Europe were no less persuaded than their subjects of the possibility of discovering the philosopher's stone. Henry VI. and Edward IV. of England encouraged alchymy. In Germany, the Emperors Maximilian, Rodolph, and Frederic II. devoted much of their attention to it; and every inferior potentate within their dominions imitated their example. It was a common practice in Germany, among the nobles and petty sovereigns, to invite an alchymist to take up his residence among them, that they might confine him in a dungeon till he made gold enough to pay millions for his ransom. Many poor wretches suffered perpetual imprisonment in consequence. A similar fate appears to have been intended by Edward II. for Raymond Lulli, who, upon the pretence that he was thereby honoured, was accommodated with apartments in the Tower of London. He found out in time the trick that was about to be played him, and managed to make his escape, some of his biographers say, by jumping into the Thames, and swimming to a vessel that lay waiting to ceive him. In the sixteenth century, the same system was pursued, as will be shown more fully in the life of Seton the Cosmopolite, in the succeeding chapter.

The following is a catalogue of the chief authors upon alchymy, who flourished during this epoch, and whose lives and adventures are either unknown or are unworthy of more detailed notice. John Dowston, an Englishman, lived in 1315, and wrote two treatises on the philosopher's stone. Richard, or, as some call him, Robert, also an Englishman, lived in 1330, and wrote a work entitled "Correctorium Alchymiae," which was much esteemed till the time of Paracelsus. In the same year lived Peter of Lombardy, who wrote what he called a "Complete Treatise upon the Hermetic Science," an abridgement of which was afterwards published by Lacini, a monk of Calabria. In 1330 the most famous alchymist of Paris was one Odomare, whose work "De Practica Magistri" was, for a long time, a hand−book among the brethren of the science. John de Rupecissa, a French monk of the order of St.

Francis, flourished in 1357, and pretended to be a prophet as well as an alchymist. Some of his prophecies were so disagreeable to Pope Innocent VI, that the Pontiff determined to put a stop to them, by locking up the prophet in the dungeons of the Vatican. It is generally believed that he died there, though there is no evidence of the fact. His chief works are the "Book of Light," the "Five Essences," the "Heaven of Philosophers," and his grand work "De Confectione Lapidis." He was not thought a shining light among the adepts. Ortholani was another pretender, of whom nothing is known, but that he exercised the arts of alchymy and astrology at Paris, shortly before the time of Nicholas Flamel. His work on the practice of alchymy was written in that city in 1358. Isaac of Holland wrote, it is supposed, about this time; and his son also devoted himself to the science. Nothing worth repeating is known of their lives. Boerhaave speaks with commendation of many passages in their works, and Paracelsus esteemed them highly: the chief are "De Triplici Ordine Elixiris et Lapidis Theoria," printed at Berne in 1608; and "Mineralia Opera, seu de Lapide Philosophico," printed at Middleburg in 1600. They also wrote eight other works upon the same subject. Koffstky, a Pole, wrote an alchymical treatise, entitled "The Tincture of Minerals," about the year 1488. In this list of authors a royal name must not be forgotten. Charles VI. of France, one of the most credulous princes of the day, whose court absolutely swarmed with alchymists, conjurers, astrologers, and quacks of every description, made several attempts to discover the philosopher's stone, and thought he knew so much about it, that he determined to enlighten the world with a treatise. It is called the "Royal Work of Charles VI. of France, and the Treasure of Philosophy." It is said to be the original from which Nicholas Flamel took the idea of his "Desir Desire." Lenglet du Fresnoy says it is very allegorical, and utterly incomprehensible. For a more complete list of the hermetic philosophers of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, the reader is referred to the third volume of Lenglet's History already quoted.

PART II.

PROGRESS OF THE INFATUATION DURING THE SIXTEENTH AND SEVENTEENTH CENTURIES. — AUGURELL0. — CORNELIUS AGRIPPA. — PARACELSUS. — GEORGE AGRICOLA. — DENYS ZACHAIRE. — DR. DEE AND EDWARD KELLY. — THE COSMOPOLITE. — SENDIVOGIUS. — THE ROSICRUCIANS. — MICHAEL MAYER. — ROBERT FLUDD. — JACOB BOHMEN. — JOHN HEYDN. — JOSEPH FRANCIS BORRI. — ALCHYMICAL WRITERS OF THE SEVENTEENTH CENTURY. — DE LISLE. — ALBERT ALUYS. — COUNT DE ST. GERMAINS. — CAGLIOSTRO. — PRESENT STATE OF THE SCIENCE.

During the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, the search for the philosopher's stone was continued by thousands of the enthusiastic and the credulous; but a great change was introduced during this period. The eminent men who devoted themselves to the study, totally changed its aspect, and referred to the possession of their wondrous stone and elixir, not only the conversion of the base into the precious metals, but the solution of all the difficulties of other sciences. They pretended that by its means man would be brought into closer communion with his Maker; that disease and sorrow would be banished from the world; and that "the millions of spiritual beings who walk the earth unseen" would be rendered visible, and become the friends, companions, and instructors of mankind. In the seventeenth century more especially, these poetical and fantastic doctrines excited the notice of Europe; and from Germany, where they had been first disseminated by Rosencreutz, spread into France and England, and ran away with the sound judgment of many clever, but too enthusiastic, searchers for the truth. Paracelsus, Dee, and many others of less note, were captivated by the grace and beauty of the new mythology, which was arising to adorn the literature of Europe. Most of the alchymists of the sixteenth century, although ignorant of the Rosicrucians as a sect, were, in some degree, tinctured with their fanciful tenets: but before we speak more fully of these poetical visionaries, it will be necessary to resume the history of the hermetic folly where we left off in the former chapter, and trace the gradual change that stole over the dreams of the adepts. It will be seen that the infatuation increased rather than diminished as the world grew older.

AUGURELLO.

Among the alchymists who were born in the fifteenth, and distinguished themselves in the sixteenth century, the first, in point of date, is John Aurelio Augurello. He was born at Rimini in 1441, and became Professor of the belles lettres at Venice and Trevisa. He was early convinced of the truth of the hermetic science, and used to pray to God that he might be happy enough to discover the philosopher's stone. He was continually surrounded by the paraphernalia of chemistry, and expended all his wealth in the purchase of drugs and metals. He was also a poet, but of less merit than pretensions. His "Chrysopeia," in which lie pretended to teach the art of making gold, he dedicated to Pope Leo X, in the hope that the Pontiff would reward him handsomely for the compliment; but the Pope was too good a judge of poetry to be pleased with the worse than mediocrity of his poem, and too good a philosopher to approve of the strange doctrines which it inculcated: he was, therefore, far from gratified at the dedication. It is said, that when Augurello applied to him for a reward, the Pope, with great ceremony and much apparent kindness and cordiality, drew an empty purse from his pocket, and presented it to the alchymist, saying, that since he was able to make gold, the most appropriate present that could be made him, was a purse to put it in. This scurvy reward was all that the poor alchymist ever got either for his poetry or his alchymy. He died in a state of extreme poverty, in the eighty−third year of his age.

CORNELIUS AGRIPPA.

This alchymist has left a more distinguished reputation. The most extraordinary tales were told and believed of his powers. He could turn iron into gold by his mere word. All the spirits of the air, and demons of the earth, were under his command, and bound to obey him in everything. He could. raise from the dead the forms of the great men of other days, and make them appear "in their habit as they lived," to the gaze of the curious who had courage enough to abide their presence.

He was born at Cologne in 1486, and began, at an early age, the study of chemistry and philosophy. By some

means or other which have never been very clearly explained, he managed to impress his contemporaries with a great idea of his wonderful attainments. At the early age of twenty, so great was his reputation as an alchymist, that the principal adepts of Paris wrote to Cologne, inviting him to settle in France, and aid them with his experience in discovering the philosopher's stone. Honours poured upon him in thick succession; and he was highly esteemed by all the learned men of his time. Melancthon speaks of him with respect and commendation. Erasmus also bears testimony in his favour; and the general voice of his age proclaimed him a light of literature and an ornament to philosophy. Some men, by dint of excessive egotism, manage to persuade their contemporaries that they are very great men indeed: they publish their acquirements so loudly in people's ears, and keep up their own praises so incessantly, that the world's applause is actually taken by storm. Such seems to have been the case with Agrippa. He called himself a sublime theologian, an excellent jurisconsult, an able physician, a great philosopher, and a successful alchymist. The world, at last, took him at his word; and thought that a man who talked so big, must have some merit to recommend him — that it was, indeed, a great trumpet which sounded so obstreperous a blast. He was made secretary to the Emperor Maximilian, who conferred upon him the title of Chevalier, and gave him the honorary command of a regiment. He afterwards became Professor of Hebrew and the belles lettres, at the University of Dole, in France; but quarrelling with the Franciscan monks upon some knotty point of divinity, he was obliged to quit the town. He took refuge in London, where he taught Hebrew and cast nativities, for about a year. From London he proceeded to Pavia, and gave lectures upon the writings, real or supposed, of Hermes Trismegistus; and might have lived there in peace and honour, had he not again quarrelled with the clergy. By their means his position became so disagreeable, that he was glad to accept an offer made him by the magistracy of Metz, to become their Syndic and Advocate−General. Here, again, his love of disputation made him enemies: the theological wiseacres of that city asserted, that St. Anne had three husbands, in which opinion they were confirmed by the popular belief of the day. Agrippa needlessly ran foul of this opinion, or prejudice as he called it, and thereby lost much of his influence. Another dispute, more creditable to his character, occurred soon after, and sank him for ever in the estimation of the Metzians. Humanely taking the part of a young girl who was accused of witchcraft, his enemies asserted, that he was himself a sorcerer, and raised such a storm over his head, that he was forced to fly the city. After this, he became physician to Louisa de Savoy, mother of King Francis I. This lady was curious to know the future, and required her physician to cast her nativity. Agrippa replied, that he would not encourage such idle curiosity. The result was, he lost her confidence, and was forthwith dismissed. If it had been through his belief in the worthlessness of astrology, that he had made his answer, we might admire his honest and fearless independence; but, when it is known that, at the very same time, he was in the constant habit of divination and fortunetelling; and that he was predicting splendid success, in all his undertakings, to the Constable of Bourbon, we can only wonder at his thus estranging a powerful friend through mere petulance and perversity.

He was, about this time, invited both by Henry VIII. of England, and Margaret of Austria, Governess of the Low Countries, to fix his residence in their dominions. He chose the service of the latter, by whose influence he was made historiographer to the Emperor Charles V. Unfortunately for Agrippa, he never had stability enough to remain long in one position, and offended his patrons by his restlessness and presumption. After the death of Margaret, he was imprisoned at Brussels, on a charge of sorcery. He was released after a year; and, quitting the country, experienced many vicissitudes. He died in great poverty in 1534, aged forty−eight years.

While in the service of Margaret of Austria, he resided principally at Louvain, in which city he wrote his famous work on the Vanity and Nothingness of human Knowledge. He also wrote, to please his Royal Mistress, a treatise upon the Superiority of the Female Sex, which be dedicated to her, in token of his gratitude for the favours she had heaped upon him. The reputation he left behind him in these provinces was anything but favourable. A great number of the marvellous tales that are told of him, relate to this period of his life. It was said, that the gold which he paid to the traders with whom he dealt, always looked remarkably bright, but invariably turned into pieces of slate and stone in the course of four−and−twenty hours. Of this spurious gold he was believed to have made large quantities by the aid of the devil, who, it would appear from this, had but a very superficial knowledge of alchymy, and much less than the Marechal de Rays gave him credit for. The Jesuit Delrio, in his book on Magic and Sorcery, relates a still more extraordinary story of him. One day, Agrippa left his house, at Louvain; and, intending to be absent for some time, gave the key of his study to his wife, with strict orders that no one should enter it during his absence. The lady herself, strange as it may appear, had no curiosity

to pry into her husband's secrets, and never once thought of entering the forbidden room: but a young student, who had been accommodated with an attic in the philosopher's house, burned with a fierce desire to examine the study; hoping, perchance, that he might purloin some book or implement which would instruct him in the art of transmuting metals. The youth, being handsome, eloquent, and, above all, highly complimentary to the charms of the lady, she was persuaded, without much difficulty, to lend him the key, but gave him strict orders not to remove anything. The student promised implicit obedience, and entered Agrippa's study. The first object that caught his attention, was a large grimoire, or book of spells, which lay open on the philosopher's desk. He sat himself down immediately, and began to read. At the first word he uttered, he fancied he heard a knock at the door. He listened; but all was silent. Thinking that his imagination had deceived him, he read on, when immediately a louder knock was heard, which so terrified him, that he started to his feet. He tried to say, "come in;" but his tongue refused its office, and he could not articulate a sound. He fixed his eyes upon the door, which, slowly opening, disclosed a stranger of majestic form, but scowling features, who demanded sternly, why he was summoned? "I did not summon you," said the trembling student. "You did!" said the stranger, advancing, angrily; "and the demons are not to be invoked in vain." The student could make no reply; and the demon, enraged that one of the uninitiated should have summoned him out of mere presumption, seized him by the throat and strangled him. When Agrippa returned, a few days afterwards, he found his house beset with devils. Some of them were sitting on the chimneypots, kicking up their legs in the air; while others were playing at leapfrog, on the very edge of the parapet. His study was so filled with them that he found it difficult to make his way to his desk. When, at last, he had elbowed his way through them, he found his book open, and the student lying dead upon the floor. He saw immediately how the mischief had been done; and, dismissing all the inferior imps, asked the principal demon how he could have been so rash as to kill the young man. The demon replied, that he had been needlessly invoked by an insulting youth, and could do no less than kill him for his presumption. Agrippa reprimanded him severely, and ordered him immediately to reanimate the dead body, and walk about with it in the market−place for the whole of the afternoon. The demon did so: the student revived; and, putting his arm through that of his unearthly murderer, walked very lovingly with him, in sight of all the people. At sunset, the body fell down again, cold and lifeless as before, and was carried by the crowd to the hospital, it being the general opinion that he had expired in a fit of apoplexy. His conductor immediately disappeared. When the body was examined, marks of strangulation were found on the neck, and prints of the long claws of the demon on various parts of it. These appearances, together with a story, which soon obtained currency, that the companion of the young man had vanished in a cloud of flame and smoke, opened people's eyes to the truth. The magistrates of Louvain instituted inquiries; and the result was, that Agrippa was obliged to quit the town.

Other authors besides Delrio relate similar stories of this philosopher. The world in those days was always willing enough to believe in tales of magic and sorcery; and when, as in Agrippa's case, the alleged magician gave himself out for such, and claimed credit for the wonders he worked, it is not surprising that the age should have allowed his pretensions. It was dangerous boasting, which sometimes led to the stake or the gallows, and therefore was thought to be not without foundation. Paulus Jovius, in his "Eulogia Doctorum Virorum," says, that the devil, in the shape of a large black dog, attended Agrippa wherever he went. Thomas Nash, in his adventures of Jack Wilton, relates, that at the request of Lord Surrey, Erasmus, and some other learned men, Agrippa called up from the grave many of the great philosophers of antiquity; among others, Tully, whom he caused to re−deliver his celebrated oration for Roscius. He also showed Lord Surrey, when in Germany, an exact resemblance in a glass of his mistress the fair Geraldine. She was represented on her couch weeping for the absence of her lover. Lord Surrey made a note of the exact time at which he saw this vision, and ascertained afterwards that his mistress was actually so employed at the very minute. To Thomas Lord Cromwell, Agrippa represented King Henry VIII. hunting in Windsor Park, with the principal lords of his court; and to please the Emperor Charles V. he summoned King David and King Solomon from the tomb.

Naude, in his "Apology for the Great Men who have been falsely suspected of Magic," takes a great deal of pains to clear Agrippa from the imputations cast upon him by Delrio, Paulus Jovius, and other such ignorant and prejudiced scribblers. Such stories demanded refutation in the days of Naude, but they may now be safely left to decay in their own absurdity. That they should have attached, however, to the memory of a man, who claimed the power of making iron obey him when he told it to become gold, and who wrote such a work as that upon magic, which goes by his name, is not at all surprising.

PARACELSUS.

This philosopher, called by Naude, "the zenith and rising sun of all the alchymists," was born at Einsiedeln, near Zurich, in the year 1493. His true name was Hohenheim; to which, as he himself informs us, were prefixed the baptismal names of Aureolus Theophrastus Bombastes Paracelsus. The last of these he chose for his common designation while he was yet a boy; and rendered it, before he died, one of the most famous in the annals of his time. His father, who was a physician, educated his son for the same pursuit. The latter was an apt scholar, and made great progress. By chance the work of Isaac Hollandus fell into his hands, and from that time he became smitten with the mania of the philosopher's stone. All his thoughts henceforth were devoted to metallurgy; and he travelled into Sweden that he might visit the mines of that country, and examine the ores while they yet lay in the bowels of the earth. He also visited Trithemius at the monastery of Spannheim, and obtained instructions from him in the science of alchymy. Continuing his travels, he proceeded through Prussia and Austria into Turkey, Egypt, and Tatary, and thence returning to Constantinople, learned, as he boasted, the art of transmutation, and became possessed of the elixir vitae. He then established himself as a physician in his native Switzerland at Zurich, and commenced writing works upon alchymy and medicine, which immediately fixed the attention of Europe. Their great obscurity was no impediment to their fame; for the less the author was understood, the more the demonologists, fanatics, and philosopher's−stone−hunters seemed to appreciate him. His fame as a physician kept pace with that which he enjoyed as an alchymist, owing to his having effected some happy cures by means of mercury and opium; drugs unceremoniously condemned by his professional brethren. In the year 1526, he was chosen Professor of Physics and Natural Philosophy in the University of Basle, where his lectures attracted vast numbers of students. He denounced the writings of all former physicians as tending to mislead; and publicly burned the works of Galen and Avicenna, as quacks and impostors. He exclaimed, in presence of the admiring and half−bewildered crowd, who assembled to witness the ceremony, that there was more knowledge in his shoestrings than in the writings of these physicians. Continuing in the same strain, he said all the universities in the world were full of ignorant quacks; but that he, Paracelsus, over flowed with wisdom. "You will all follow my new system," said he, with furious gesticulations, "Avicenna, Galen, Rhazis, Montagnana, Meme — you will all follow me, ye professors of Paris, Montpellier, Germany, Cologne, and Vienna! and all ye that dwell on the Rhine and the Danube — ye that inhabit the isles of the sea; and ye also, Italians, Dalmatians, Athenians, Arabians, Jews — ye will all follow my doctrines, for I am the monarch of medicine!"

But he did not long enjoy the esteem of the good citizens of Basle. It is said that he indulged in wine so freely, as not unfrequently to be seen in the streets in a state of intoxication. This was ruinous for a physician, and his good fame decreased rapidly. His ill fame increased in still greater proportion, especially when he assumed the airs of a sorcerer. He boasted of the legions of spirits at his command; and of one especially, which he kept imprisoned in the hilt of his sword. Wetterus, who lived twenty−seven months in his service, relates that he often threatened to invoke a whole army of demons, and show him the great authority which he could exercise over them. He let it be believed, that the spirit in his sword had custody of the elixir of life, by means of which he could make any one live to be as old as the antediluvians. He also boasted that he had a spirit at his command, called "Azoth," whom he kept imprisoned in a jewel; and in many of the old portraits he is represented with a jewel, inscribed with the word "Azoth," in his hand.

If a sober prophet has little honour in his own country, a drunken one has still less. Paracelsus found it at last convenient to quit Basle, and establish himself at Strasbourg. The immediate cause of this change of residence was as follows: — A citizen lay at the point of death, and was given over by all the physicians of the town. As a last resource Paracelsus was called in, to whom the sick man promised a magnificent recompence, if by his means he were cured. Paracelsus gave him two small pills, which the man took and rapidly recovered. When he was quite well, Paracelsus sent for his fee; but the citizen had no great opinion of the value of a cure which had been so speedily effected. He had no notion of paying a handful of gold for two pills, although they had saved his life, and he refused to pay more than the usual fee for a single visit. Paracelsus brought an action against him, and lost it. This result so exasperated him, that he left Basle in high dudgeon. He resumed his wandering life, and travelled in Germany and Hungary, supporting himself as he went on the credulity and infatuation of all classes of society. He cast nativities — told fortunes — aided those who had money to throw away upon the experiment, to find the philosopher's stone — prescribed remedies for cows and pigs, and aided in the recovery of stolen goods. After

residing successively at Nuremburg, Augsburg, Vienna, and Mindelheim, he retired in the year 1541 to Saltzbourg, and died in a state of abject poverty in the hospital of that town.

If this strange charlatan found hundreds of admirers during his life, he found thousands after his death. A sect of Paracelsists sprang up in France and Germany, to perpetuate the extravagant doctrines of their founder upon all the sciences, and upon alchymy in particular. The chief leaders were Bodenstein and Dorneus. The following is a summary of his doctrine, founded upon supposed existence of the philosopher's stone; it is worth preserving from its very absurdity, and altogether unparalleled in the history of philosophy:— First of all, he maintained that the contemplation of the perfection of the Deity sufficed to procure all wisdom and knowledge; that the Bible was the key to the theory of all diseases, and that it was necessary to search into the Apocalypse to know the signification of magic medicine. The man who blindly obeyed the will of God, and who succeeded in identifying himself with the celestial intelligences, possessed the philosopher's stone — he could cure all diseases, and prolong life to as many centuries as he pleased; it being by the very same means that Adam and the antediluvian patriarchs prolonged theirs. Life was an emanation from the stars — the sun governed the heart, and the moon the brain. Jupiter governed the liver, Saturn the gall, Mercury the lungs, Mars the bile, and Venus the loins. In the stomach of every human being there dwelt a demon, or intelligence, that was a sort of alchymist in his way, and mixed, in their due proportions, in his crucible, the various aliments that were sent into that grand laboratory the belly.[See the article "Paracelsus," by the learned Renaudin, in the "Biographie Universelle."] He was proud of the title of magician, and boasted that he kept up a regular correspondence with Galen from hell; and that he often summoned Avicenna from the same regions to dispute with him on the false notions he had promulgated respecting alchymy, and especially regarding potable gold and the elixir of life. He imagined that gold could cure ossification of the heart, and, in fact, all diseases, if it were gold which had been transmuted from an inferior metal by means of the philosopher's stone, and if it were applied under certain conjunctions of the planets. The mere list of the works in which he advances these frantic imaginings, which he called a doctrine, would occupy several pages.

GEORGE AGRICOLA.

This alchymist was born in the province of Misnia, in 1494. His real name was Bauer, meaning a husbandman, which, in accordance with the common fashion of his age, he Latinized into Agricola. From his early youth, he delighted in the visions of the hermetic science. Ere he was sixteen, he longed for the great elixir which was to make him live for seven hundred years, and for the stone which was to procure him wealth to cheer him in his multiplicity of days. He published a small treatise upon the subject at Cologne, in 1531, which obtained him the patronage of the celebrated Maurice, Duke of Saxony. After practising for some years as a physician at Joachimsthal, in Bohemia, he was employed by Maurice as superintendent of the silver mines of Chemnitz. He led a happy life among the miners, making various experiments in alchymy while deep in the bowels of the earth. He acquired a great knowledge of metals, and gradually got rid of his extravagant notions about the philosopher's stone. The miners had no faith in alchymy; and they converted him to their way of thinking, not only in that but in other respects. From their legends, he became firmly convinced that the bowels of the earth were inhabited by good and evil spirits, and that firedamp and other explosions sprang from no other causes than the mischievous propensities of the latter. He died in the year 1555, leaving behind him the reputation of a very able and intelligent man.

DENIS ZACHAIRE.

Autobiography, written by a wise man who was once a fool, is not only the most instructive, but the most delightful of reading. Denis Zachaire, an alchymist of the sixteenth century, has performed this task, and left a record of his folly and infatuation in pursuit of the philosopher's stone, which well repays perusal. He was born in the year 1510, of an ancient family in Guienne, and was early sent to the university of Bordeaux, under the care of a tutor to direct his studies. Unfortunately, his tutor was a searcher for the grand elixir, and soon rendered his pupil as mad as himself upon the subject. With this introduction, we will allow Denis Zachaire to speak for himself, and continue his narrative in his own words :—" I received from home," says he, "the sum of two hundred crowns for the expenses of myself and master; but before the end of the year, all our money went away in the smoke of our furnaces. My master, at the same time, died of a fever, brought on by the parching heat of our

laboratory, from which he seldom or never stirred, and which was scarcely less hot than the arsenal of Venice. His death was the more unfortunate for me, as my parents took the opportunity of reducing my allowance, and sending me only sufficient for my board and lodging, instead of the sum I required to continue my operations in alchymy.

"To meet this difficulty and get out of leading−strings, I returned home at the age of twenty−five, and mortgaged part of my property for four hundred crowns. This sum was necessary to perform an operation of the science, which had been communicated to me by an Italian at Toulouse, and who, as he said, had proved its efficacy. I retained this man in my service, that we might see the end of the experiment. I then, by means of strong distillations, tried to calcinate gold and silver; but all my labour was in vain. The weight of the gold I drew out of my furnace was diminished by one−half since I put it in, and my four hundred crowns were very soon reduced to two hundred and thirty. I gave twenty of these to my Italian, in order that he might travel to Milan, where the author of the receipt resided, and ask him the explanation of some passages which we thought obscure. I remained at Toulouse all the winter, in the hope of his return; but I might have remained there till this day if I had waited for him, for I never saw his face again.

"In the succeeding summer there was a great plague, which forced me to quit the town. I did not, however, lose sight of my work. I went to Cahors, where I remained six months, and made the acquaintance of an old man, who was commonly known to the people as 'the Philosopher;' a name which, in country places, is often bestowed upon people whose only merit is, that they are less ignorant than their neighbours. I showed him my collection of alchymical receipts, and asked his opinion upon them. He picked out ten or twelve of them, merely saying that they were better than the others. When the plague ceased, I returned to Toulouse, and recommenced my experiments in search of the stone. I worked to such effect that my four hundred crowns were reduced to one hundred and seventy.

"That I might continue my work on a safer method, I made acquaintance, in 1537, with a certain Abbe, who resided in the neighbourhood. He was smitten with the same mania as myself, and told me that one of his friends, who had followed to Rome in the retinue of the Cardinal d'Armagnac, had sent him from that city a new receipt, which could not fail to transmute iron and copper, but which would cost two hundred crowns. I provided half this money, and the Abbe the rest; and we began to operate at our joint expense. As we required spirits of wine for our experiment, I bought a tun of excellent vin de Gaillac. I extracted the spirit, and rectified it several times. We took a quantity of this, into which we put four marks of silver, and one of gold, that had been undergoing the process of calcination for a month. We put this mixture cleverly into a sort of horn−shaped vessel, with another to serve as a retort; and placed the whole apparatus upon our furnace, to produce congelation. This experiment lasted a year; but, not to remain idle, we amused ourselves with many other less important operations. We drew quite as much profit from these as from our great work.

The whole of the year 1537 passed over without producing any change whatever: in fact, we might have waited till doomsday for the congelation of our spirits of wine. However, we made a projection with it upon some heated quicksilver; but all was in vain. Judge of our chagrin, especially of that of the Abbe, who had already boasted to all the monks of his monastery, that they had only to bring the large pump which stood in a corner of the cloister, and he would convert it into gold; but this ill luck did not prevent us from persevering. I once more mortgaged my paternal lands for four hundred crowns, the whole of which I determined to devote to a renewal of my search for the great secret. The Abbe contributed the same sum; and, with these eight hundred crowns, I proceeded to Paris, a city more abounding with alchymists than any other in the world, resolved never to leave it until I had either found the philosopher's stone, or spent all my money. This journey gave the greatest offence to all my relations and friends, who, imagining that I was fitted to be a great lawyer, were anxious that I should establish myself in that profession. For the sake of quietness, I pretended, at last, that such was my object.

"After travelling for fifteen days, I arrived in Paris, on the 9th of January 1539. I remained for a month, almost unknown; but I had no sooner begun to frequent the amateurs of the science, and visited the shops of the furnace−makers, than I had the acquaintance of more than a hundred operative alchymists, each of whom had a different theory and a different mode of working. Some of them preferred cementation; others sought the universal alkahest, or dissolvent; and some of them boasted the great efficacy of the essence of emery. Some of them endeavoured to extract mercury from other metals to fix it afterwards; and, in order that each of us should be thoroughly acquainted with the proceedings of the others, we agreed to meet somewhere every night, and report

progress. We met sometimes at the house of one, and sometimes in the garret of another; not only on week days, but on Sundays, and the great festivals of the Church. 'Ah!' one used to say, 'if I had the means of recommencing this experiment, I should do something.' ' Yes,' said another, 'if my crucible had not cracked, I should have succeeded before now :' while a third exclaimed, with a sigh, 'If I had but had a round copper vessel of sufficient strength, I would have fixed mercury with silver.' There was not one among them who had not some excuse for his failure; but I was deaf to all their speeches. I did not want to part with my money to any of them, remembering how often I had been the dupe of such promises.

"A Greek at last presented himself; and with him I worked a long time uselessly upon nails, made of cinabar, or vermilion. I was also acquainted with a foreign gentleman newly arrived in Paris, and often accompanied him to the shops of the goldsmiths, to sell pieces of gold and silver, the produce, as he said, of his experiments. I stuck closely to him for a long time, in the hope that he would impart his secret. He refused for a long time, but acceded, at last, on my earnest entreaty, and I found that it was nothing more than an ingenious trick. I did not fail to inform my friend, the Abbe, whom I had left at Toulouse, of all my adventures; and sent him, among other matters, a relation of the trick by which this gentleman pretended to turn lead into gold. The Abbe still imagined that I should succeed at last, and advised me to remain another year in Paris, where I had made so good a beginning. I remained there three years; but, notwithstanding all my efforts, I had no more success than I had had elsewhere.

"I had just got to the end of my money, when I received a letter from the Abbe, telling me to leave everything, and join him immediately at Toulouse. I went accordingly, and found that he had received letters from the King of Navarre (grandfather of Henry IV). This Prince was a great lover of philosophy, full of curiosity, and had written to the Abbe, that I should visit him at Pau; and that he would give me three or four thousand crowns, if I would communicate the secret I had learned from the foreign gentleman. The Abbe's ears were so tickled with the four thousand crowns, that he let me have no peace, night or day, until he had fairly seen me on the road to Pau. I arrived at that place in the month of May 1542. I worked away, and succeeded, according to the receipt I had obtained. When I had finished, to the satisfaction of the King, he gave me the reward that I expected. Although he was willing enough to do me further service, he was dissuaded from it by the lords of his court; even by many of those who had been most anxious that I should come. He sent me then about my business, with many thanks; saying, that if there was anything in his kingdom which he could give me — such as the produce of confiscations, or the like — he should be most happy. I thought I might stay long enough for these prospective confiscations, and never get them at last; and I therefore determined to go back to my friend, the Abbe.

"I learned, that on the road between Pau and Toulouse, there resided a monk, who was very skilful in all matters of natural philosophy. On my return, I paid him a visit. He pitied me very much, and advised me, with much warmth and kindness of expression, not to amuse myself any longer with such experiments as these, which were all false and sophistical; but that I should read the good books of the old philosophers, where I might not only find the true matter of the science of alchymy, but learn also the exact order of operations which ought to be followed. I very much approved of this wise advice; but, before I acted upon it, I went back to my Abbe, of Toulouse, to give him an account of the eight hundred crowns, which we had had in common; and, at the same time, share with him such reward as I had received from the King of Navarre. If he was little satisfied with the relation of my adventures since our first separation, he appeared still less satisfied when I told him I had formed a resolution to renounce the search for the philosopher's stone. The reason was, that he thought me a good artist. Of our eight hundred crowns, there remained but one hundred and seventy−six. When I quitted the Abbe, I went to my own house, with the intention of remaining there, till I had read all the old philosophers, and of then proceeding to Paris.

"I arrived in Paris on the day after All Saints, of the year 1546, and devoted another year to the assiduous study of great authors. Among others, the 'Turba Philosophorum' of the 'Good Trevisan,' ' The Remonstance of Nature to the wandering Alchymist,' by Jean de Meung; and several others of the best books: but, as I had no right' principles, I did not well know what course to follow.

"At last I left my solitude; not to see my former acquaintances, the adepts and operators, but to frequent the society of true philosophers. Among them I fell into still greater uncertainties; being, in fact, completely bewildered by the variety of operations which they showed me. Spurred on, nevertheless, by a sort of frenzy or inspiration, I threw myself into the works of Raymond Lulli and of Arnold de Villeneuve. The reading of these,

and the reflections I made upon them, occupied me for another year, when I finally determined on the course I should adopt. I was obliged to wait, however, until I had mortgaged another very considerable portion of my patrimony. This business was not settled until the beginning of Lent, 1549, when I commenced my operations. I laid in a stock of all that was necessary, and began to work the day after Easter. It was not, however, without some disquietude and opposition from my friends who came about me; one asking me what I was going to do, and whether I had not already spent money enough upon such follies. Another assured me that, if I bought so much charcoal, I should strengthen the suspicion already existing, that I was a coiner of base money. Another advised me to purchase some place in the magistracy, as I was already a Doctor of Laws. My relations spoke in terms still more annoying to me, and even threatened that, if I continued to make such a fool of myself, they would send a posse of police−officers into my house, and break all my furnaces and crucibles into atoms. I was wearied almost to death by this continued persecution; but I found comfort in my work and in the progress of my experiment, to which I was very attentive, and which went on bravely from day to day. About this time, there was a dreadful plague in Paris, which interrupted all intercourse between man and man, and left me as much to myself as I could desire. I soon had the satisfaction to remark the progress and succession of the three colours which, according to the philosophers, always prognosticate the approaching perfection of the work. I observed them distinctly, one after the other; and next year, being Easter Sunday, 1550, I made the great trial. Some common quicksilver, which I put into a small crucible on the fire, was, in less than an hour, converted into very good gold. You may judge how great was my joy, but I took care not to boast of it. I returned thanks to God for the favour he had shown me, and prayed that I might only be permitted to make such use of it as would redound to his glory.

"On the following day, I went towards Toulouse to find the Abbe, in accordance with a mutual promise that we should communicate our discoveries to each other. On my way, I called in to see the sage monk who had assisted me with his counsels; but I had the sorrow to learn that they were both dead. After this, I would not return to my own home, but retired to another place, to await one of my relations whom I had left in charge of my estate. I gave him orders to sell all that belonged to me, as well movable as immovable — to pay my debts with the proceeds, and divide all the rest among those in any way related to me who might stand in need of it, in order that they might enjoy some share of the good fortune which had befallen me. There was a great deal of talk in the neighbourhood about my precipitate retreat; the wisest of my acquaintance imagining that, broken down and ruined by my mad expenses, I sold my little remaining property that I might go and hide my shame in distant countries.

"My relative already spoken of rejoined me on the 1st of July, after having performed all the business I had intrusted him with. We took our departure together, to seek a land of liberty. We first retired to Lausanne, in Switzerland, when, after remaining there for some time, we resolved to pass the remainder of our days in some of the most celebrated cities of Germany, living quietly and without splendour."

Thus ends the story of Denis Zachaire, as written by himself. He has not been so candid at its conclusion as at its commencement, and has left the world in doubt as to his real motives for pretending that he had discovered the philosopher's stone. It seems probable that the sentence he puts into the months of his wisest acquaintances was the true reason of his retreat; that he was, in fact, reduced to poverty, and hid his shame in foreign countries. Nothing further is known of his life, and his real name has never yet been discovered. He wrote a work on alchymy, entitled "The true Natural Philosophy of Metals."

DR. DEE and EDWARD KELLY.

John Dee and Edward Kelly claim to be mentioned together, having been so long associated in the same pursuits, and undergone so many strange vicissitudes in each other's society. Dee was altogether a wonderful man, and had he lived in an age when folly and superstition were less rife, he would, with the same powers which he enjoyed, have left behind him a bright and enduring reputation. He was born in London, in the year 1527, and very early manifested a love for study. At the age of fifteen he was sent to Cambridge, and delighted so much in his books, that he passed regularly eighteen hours every day among them. Of the other six, he devoted four to sleep and two for refreshment. Such intense application did not injure his health, and could not fail to make him one of the first scholars of his time. Unfortunately, however, he quitted the mathematics and the pursuits of true philosophy to indulge in the unprofitable reveries of the occult sciences. He studied alchymy, astrology, and magic, and thereby rendered himself obnoxious to the authorities at Cambridge. To avoid persecution, he was at

last obliged to retire to the university of Louvain; the rumours of sorcery that were current respecting him rendering his longer stay in England not altogether without danger. He found at Louvain many kindred spirits who had known Cornelius Agrippa while he resided among them, and by whom he was constantly entertained with the wondrous deeds of that great master of the hermetic mysteries. From their conversation he received much encouragement to continue the search for the philosopher's stone, which soon began to occupy nearly all his thoughts.

He did not long remain on the Continent, but returned to England in 1551, being at that time in the twenty−fourth year of his age. By the influence of his friend, Sir John Cheek, he was kindly received at the court of King Edward VI, and rewarded (it is difficult to say for what) with a pension of one hundred crowns. He continued for several years to practise in London as an astrologer; casting nativities, telling fortunes, and pointing out lucky and unlucky days. During the reign of Queen Mary he got into trouble, being suspected of heresy, and charged with attempting Mary's life by means of enchantments. He was tried for the latter offence, and acquitted; but was retained in prison on the former charge, and left to the tender mercies of Bishop Bonner. He had a very narrow escape from being burned in Smithfield, but he, somehow or other, contrived to persuade that fierce bigot that his orthodoxy was unimpeachable, and was set at liberty in 1555.

On the accession of Elizabeth, a brighter day dawned upon him. During her retirement at Woodstock, her servants appear to have consulted him as to the time of Mary's death, which Circumstance, no doubt, first gave rise to the serious charge for which he was brought to trial. They now came to consult him more openly as to the fortunes of their mistress; and Robert Dudley, the celebrated Earl of Leicester, was sent by command of the Queen herself to know the most auspicious day for her coronation. So great was the favour he enjoyed that, some years afterwards, Elizabeth condescended to pay him a visit at his house in Mortlake, to view his museum of curiosities, and, when he was ill, sent her own physician to attend upon him.

Astrology was the means whereby he lived, and he continued to practise it with great assiduity; but his heart was in alchymy. The philosopher's stone and the elixir of life haunted his daily thoughts and his nightly dreams. The Talmudic mysteries, which he had also deeply studied, impressed him with the belief, that he might hold converse with spirits and angels, and learn from them all the mysteries of the universe. Holding the same idea as the then obscure sect of the Rosicrucians, some of whom he had perhaps encountered in his travels in Germany, he imagined that, by means of the philosopher's stone, he could summon these kindly spirits at his will. By dint of continually brooding upon the subject, his imagination became so diseased, that he at last persuaded himself that an angel appeared to him, and promised to be his friend and companion as long as he lived. He relates that, one day, in November 1582, while he was engaged in fervent prayer, the window of his museum looking towards the west suddenly glowed with a dazzling light, in the midst of which, in all his glory, stood the great angel Uriel. Awe and wonder rendered him speechless; but the angel smiling graciously upon him, gave him a crystal, of a convex form, and told him that, whenever he wished to hold converse with the beings of another sphere, he had only to gaze intently upon it, and they would appear in the crystal and unveil to him all the secrets of futurity. [The "crystal" alluded to appears to have been a black stone, or piece of polished coal. The following account of it is given in the Supplement to Granger's "Biographical History." — "The black stone into which Dee used to call his spirits was in the collection of the Earls of Peterborough, from whence it came to Lady Elizabeth Germaine. It was next the property of the late Duke of Argyle, and is now Mr. Walpole's. It appears upon examination to be nothing more than a polished piece of cannel coal; but this is what Butler means when he says, 'Kelly did all his feats upon The devil's looking−glass — a stone.'"] This saying, the angel disappeared. Dee found from experience of the crystal that it was necessary that all the faculties of the soul should be concentrated upon it, otherwise the spirits did not appear. He also found that he could never recollect the conversations he had with the angels. He therefore determined to communicate the secret to another person, who might converse with the spirits while he (Dee) sat in another part of the room, and took down in writing the revelations which they made.

He had at this time in his service, as his assistant, one Edward Kelly, who, like himself, was crazy upon the subject of the philosopher's stone. There was this difference, however, between them, that, while Dee was more of an enthusiast than an impostor, Kelly was more of an impostor than an enthusiast. In early life he was a notary, and had the misfortune to lose both his ears for forgery. This mutilation, degrading enough in any man, was destructive to a philosopher; Kelly, therefore, lest his wisdom should suffer in the world's opinion, wore a black skull−cap, which, fitting close to his head, and descending over both his cheeks, not only concealed his loss, but

gave him a very solemn and oracular appearance. So well did he keep his secret, that even Dee, with whom he lived so many years, appears never to have discovered it. Kelly, with this character, was just the man to carry on any piece of roguery for his own advantage, or to nurture the delusions of his master for the same purpose. No sooner did Dee inform him of the visit he had received from the glorious Uriel, than Kelly expressed such a fervour of belief that Dee's heart glowed with delight. He set about consulting his crystal forthwith, and on the 2nd of December 1581, the spirits appeared, and held a very extraordinary discourse with Kelly, which Dee took down in writing. The curious reader may see this farrago of nonsense among the Harleian MSS. in the British Museum. The later consultations were published in a folio volume, in 1659, by Dr. Meric Casaubon, under the title of "A True and Faithful Relation of what passed between Dr. John Dee and some Spirits; tending, had it succeeded, to a general Alteration of most States and Kingdoms in the World." [Lilly, the astrologer, in his Life written by himself, frequently tells of prophecies delivered by the angels in a manner similar to the angels of Dr. Dee. He says, "The prophecies were not given vocally by the angels, but by inspection of the crystal in types and figures, or by apparition the circular way; where, at some distance, the angels appear, representing by forms, shapes, and creatures what is demanded. It is very rare, yea, even in our days," quoth that wiseacre, "for any operator or master to hear the angels speak articulately: when they do speak, it is like the Irish, much in the throat!"]

The fame of these wondrous colloquies soon spread over the country, and even reached the Continent. Dee, at the same time, pretended to be in possession of the elixir vitae, which he stated he had found among the ruins of Glastonbury Abbey, in Somersetshire. People flocked from far and near to his house at Mortlake to have their nativities cast, in preference to visiting astrologers of less renown. They also longed to see a man who, according to his own account, would never die. Altogether, he carried on a very profitable trade, but spent so much in drugs and metals to work out some peculiar process of transmutation, that he never became rich.

About this time there came into England a wealthy polish nobleman, named Albert Laski, Count Palatine of Siradz. His object was principally, he said, to visit the court of Queen Elizabeth, the fame of whose glory and magnificence had reached him in distant Poland. Elizabeth received this flattering stranger with the most splendid hospitality, and appointed her favourite Leicester to show him all that was worth seeing in England. He visited all the curiosities of London and Westminster, and from thence proceeded to Oxford and Cambridge, that he might converse with some of the great scholars whose writings shed lustre upon the land of their birth. He was very much disappointed at not finding Dr. Dee among them, and told the Earl of Leicester that he would not have gone to Oxford if he had known that Dee was not there. The Earl promised to introduce him to the great alchymist on their return to London, and the Pole was satisfied. A few days afterwards, the Earl and Laski being in the antechamber of the Queen, awaiting an audience of her Majesty, Dr. Dee arrived on the same errand, and was introduced to the Pole. [Albert Laski, son of Jaroslav, was Palatine of Siradz, and afterwards of Sendomir, and chiefly contributed to the election of Henry of Valois, the Third of France, to the throne of Poland, and was one of the delegates who went to France in order to announce to the new monarch his elevation to the sovereignty of Poland. After the deposition of Henry, Albert Laski voted for Maximilian of Austria. In 1585 he visited England, when Queen Elizabeth received him with great distinction. The honours which were shown him during his visit to Oxford, by the especial command of the Queen, were equal to those rendered to sovereign princes. His extraordinary prodigality rendered his enormous wealth insufficient to defray his expenses, and he therefore became a zealous adept in alchymy, and took from England to Poland with him two known alchymists. — Count Valerian Krasinski's "Historical Sketch of the Reformation in Poland."] An interesting conversation ensued, which ended by the stranger inviting himself to dine with the astrologer at his house at Mortlake. Dee returned home in some tribulation, for he found he had not money enough, without pawning his plate, to entertain Count Laski and his retinue in a manner becoming their dignity. In this emergency he sent off an express to the Earl of Leicester, stating frankly the embarrassment he laboured under, and praying his good offices in representing the matter to her Majesty. Elizabeth immediately sent him a present of twenty pounds.

On the appointed day, Count Laski came, attended by a numerous retinue, and expressed such open and warm admiration of the wonderful attainments of his host, that Dee turned over, in his own mind, how he could bind irretrievably to his interests a man who seemed so well inclined to become his friend. Long acquaintance with Kelly had imbued him with all the roguery of that personage; and he resolved to make the Pole pay dearly for his dinner. He found out, before many days, that he possessed great estates in his own country, as well as great

influence; but that an extravagant disposition had reduced him to temporary embarrassment. He also discovered, that he was a firm believer in the philosopher's stone and the water of life. He was, therefore, just the man upon whom an adventurer might fasten himself. Kelly thought so too; and both of them set to work, to weave a web, in the meshes of which they might firmly entangle the rich and credulous stranger. They went very cautiously about it; first throwing out obscure hints of the stone and the elixir; and, finally, of the spirits, by means of whom they could turn over the pages of the Book of Futurity, and read the awful secrets inscribed therein. Laski eagerly implored that he might be admitted to one of their mysterious interviews with Uriel and the angels; but they knew human nature too well to accede at once to the request. To the Count's entreaties they only replied by hints of the difficulty or impropriety of summoning the spirits in the presence of a stranger; or of one who might, perchance, have no other motive than the gratification of a vain curiosity: but they only meant to whet the edge of his appetite by this delay, and would have been sorry indeed if the Count had been discouraged. To show how exclusively the thoughts both of Dee and Kelly were fixed upon their dupe, at this time, it is only necessary to read the introduction to their first interview with the spirits, related in the volume of Dr. Casaubon. The entry made by Dee, under the date of the 25th of May 1583, says, that when the spirit appeared to them, "I, [John Dee], and E. K. [Edward Kelly], sat together, conversing of that noble Polonian Albertus Laski, his great honour here with us obtained, and of his great liking among all sorts of the people." No doubt they were discussing how they might make the most of the "noble Polonian," and concocting the fine story with which they afterwards excited his curiosity, and drew him firmly within their toils. "Suddenly," says Dee, as they were thus employed, "there seemed to come out of the oratory, a spiritual creature, like a pretty girl, of seven or nine years of age, attired on her head, with her hair rolled up before, and hanging down behind; with a gown of silk, of changeable red and green, and with a train. She seemed to play up and down, and seemed to go in and out behind the books; and, as she seemed to go between them, the books displaced themselves, and made way for her."

With such tales as these they lured on the Pole from day to day; and at last persuaded him to be a witness of their mysteries. Whether they played off any optical delusions upon him; or whether, by the force of a strong imagination, he deluded himself, does not appear; but certain it is, that he became a complete tool in their hands, and consented to do whatever they wished him. Kelly, at these interviews, placed himself at a certain distance from the wondrous crystal, and gazed intently upon it; while Dee took his place in corner, ready to set down the prophecies as they were uttered by the spirits. In this manner they prophesied to the Pole, that he should become the fortunate possessor of the philosopher's stone; that he should live for centuries, and be chosen King of Poland; in which capacity he should gain many great victories over the Saracens, and make his name illustrious over all the earth. For this pose it was necessary, however, that Laski should leave England, and take them with him, together with their wives and families; that he should treat them all sumptuously, and allow them to want for nothing. Laski at once consented; and very shortly afterwards they were all on the road to Poland.

It took them upwards of four months to reach the Count's estates, in the neighbourhood of Cracow. In the mean time, they led a pleasant life, and spent money with an unsparing hand. When once established in the Count's palace, they commenced the great hermetic operation of transmuting iron into gold. Laski provided them with all necessary materials, and aided them himself with his knowledge of alchymy: but, somehow or other, the experiment always failed at the very moment that it ought to have succeeded; and they were obliged to recommence operations on a grander scale. But the hopes of Laski were not easily extinguished. Already, in idea, the possessor of countless millions, he was not to be cast down for fear of present expenses. He thus continued from day to day, and from month to month, till he was, at last, obliged to sell a portion of his deeply−mortgaged estates, to find aliment for the hungry crucibles of Dee and Kelly, and the no less hungry stomachs of their wives and families. It was not till ruin stared him in the face, that he awoke from his dream of infatuation — too happy, even then, to find that he had escaped utter beggary. Thus restored to his senses, his first thought was how to rid himself of his expensive visiters. Not wishing to quarrel with them, he proposed that they should proceed to Prague, well furnished with letters of recommendation to the Emperor Rudolph. Our alchymists too plainly saw that nothing more was to be made of the almost destitute Count Laski. Without hesitation, therefore, they accepted the proposal, and set out forthwith to the Imperial residence. They had no difficulty, on their arrival at Prague, in obtaining an audience of the Emperor. They found him willing enough to believe that such a thing as the philosopher's stone existed, and flattered themselves that they had made a favourable impression upon him; but, from some cause or other — perhaps the look of low cunning and quackery upon the face of Kelly — the

Emperor conceived no very high opinion of their abilities. He allowed them, however, to remain for some months at Prague, feeding themselves upon the hope that he would employ them: but the more he saw of them, the less he liked them; and, when the Pope's Nuncio represented to him, that he ought not to countenance such heretic magicians, he gave orders that they should quit his dominions within four−and−twenty hours. It was fortunate for them that so little time was given them; for, had they remained six hours longer, the Nuncio had received orders to procure a perpetual dungeon, or the stake, for them.

Not knowing well where to direct their steps, they resolved to return to Cracow, where they had still a few friends; but, by this time, the funds they had drawn from Laski were almost exhausted; and they were many days obliged to go dinnerless and supperless. They had great difficulty to keep their poverty a secret from the world; but they managed to bear privation without murmuring, from a conviction that if the fact were known, it would militate very much against their pretensions. Nobody would believe that they were possessors of the philosopher's stone, if it were once suspected that they did not know how to procure bread for their subsistence. They still gained a little by casting nativities, and kept starvation at arm's length, till a new dupe, rich enough for their purposes, dropped into their toils, in the shape of a royal personage. Having procured an introduction to Stephen, King of Poland, they predicted to him, that the Emperor Rudolph would shortly be assassinated, and that the Germans would look to Poland for his successor. As this prediction was not precise enough to satisfy the King, they tried their crystal again; and a spirit appeared, who told them that the new sovereign of Germany would be Stephen of Poland. Stephen was credulous enough to believe them, and was once present when Kelly held his mystic conversations with the shadows of his crystal. He also appears to have furnished them with money to carry on their experiments in alchymy: but he grew tired, at last, of their broken promises, and their constant drains upon his pocket; and was on the point of discarding them with disgrace, when they met with another dupe, to whom they eagerly transferred their services. This was Count Rosenberg, a nobleman of large estates, at Trebona, in Bohemia. So comfortable did they find themselves in the palace of this munificent patron, that they remained nearly four years with him, faring sumptuously, and having an almost unlimited command of his money. The Count was more ambitious than avaricious: he had wealth enough, and did not care for the philosopher's stone on account of the gold, but of the length of days it would bring him. They had their predictions, accordingly, all ready framed to suit his character. They prophesied that he should be chosen King of Poland; and promised, moreover, that he should live for five hundred years to enjoy his dignity; provided always, that he found them sufficient money to carry on their experiments.

But now, while fortune smiled upon them; while they revelled in the rewards of successful villany, retributive justice came upon them in a shape they had not anticipated. Jealousy and mistrust sprang up between the two confederates, and led to such violent and frequent quarrels, that Dee was in constant fear of exposure. Kelly imagined himself a much greater personage than Dee; measuring, most likely, by the standard of impudent roguery; and was displeased that on all occasions, and from all persons, Dee received the greater share of honour and consideration. He often threatened to leave Dee to shift for himself; and the latter, who had degenerated into the mere tool of his more daring associate, was distressed beyond measure at the prospect of his desertion. His mind was so deeply imbued with superstition, that he believed the rhapsodies of Kelly to be, in a great measure, derived from his intercourse with angels; and he knew not where, in the whole world, to look for a man of depth and wisdom enough to succeed him. As their quarrels every day became more and more frequent, Dee wrote letters to Queen Elizabeth, to secure a favourable reception on his return to England; whither he intended to proceed, if Kelly forsook him. He also sent her a round piece of silver, which he pretended he had made of a portion of brass cut out of a warming−pan. He afterwards sent her the warming−pan also, that she might convince herself that the piece of silver corresponded exactly with the hole which was cut into the brass. While thus preparing for the worst, his chief desire was to remain in Bohemia with Count Rosenberg, who treated him well, and reposed much confidence in him. Neither had Kelly any great objection to remain; but a new passion had taken possession of his breast, and he was laying deep schemes to gratify it. His own wife was ill−favoured and ill−natured; Dee's was comely and agreeable: and he longed to make an exchange of partners, without exciting the jealousy or shocking the morality of Dee. This was a difficult matter; but, to a man like Kelly, who was as deficient in rectitude and right feeling as he was full of impudence and ingenuity, the difficulty was not insurmountable. He had also deeply studied the character and the foibles of Dee; and he took his measures accordingly. The next time they consulted the spirits, Kelly pretended to be shocked at their language, and refused

to tell Dee what they had said. Dee insisted, and was informed that they were henceforth to have their wives in common. Dee, a little startled, inquired whether the spirits might not mean that they were to live in common harmony and good−will? Kelly tried again, with apparent reluctance, and said the spirits insisted upon the literal interpretation. The poor fanatic, Dee, resigned himself to their will; but it suited Kelly's purpose to appear coy a little longer. He declared that the spirits must be spirits, not of good, but of evil; and refused to consult them any more. He thereupon took his departure, saying that he would never return.

Dee, thus left to himself, was in sore trouble and distress of mind. He knew not on whom to fix as the successor to Kelly for consulting the spirits; but at last chose his son Arthur, a boy of eight years of age. He consecrated him to this service with great ceremony, and impressed upon the child's mind the dignified and awful nature of the duties he was called upon to perform; but the poor boy had neither the imagination, the faith, nor the artifice of Kelly. He looked intently upon the crystal, as he was told; but could see nothing and hear nothing. At last, when his eyes ached, he said he could see a vague indistinct shadow; but nothing more. Dee was in despair. The deception had been carried on so long, that he was never so happy as when he fancied he was holding converse with superior beings; and he cursed the day that had put estrangement between him and his dear friend Kelly. This was exactly what Kelly had foreseen; and, when he thought the Doctor had grieved sufficiently for his absence, he returned unexpectedly, and entered the room where the little Arthur was in vain endeavouring to distinguish something in the crystal. Dee, in entering this circumstance in his journal, ascribes this sudden return to a "miraculous fortune," and a "divine fate;" and goes on to record that Kelly immediately saw the spirits, which had remained invisible to little Arthur. One of these spirits reiterated the previous command, that they should have their wives in common. Kelly bowed his head, and submitted; and Dee, in all humility, consented to the arrangement.

This was the extreme depth of the wretched man's degradation. In this manner they continued to live for three or four months, when, new quarrels breaking out, they separated once more. This time their separation was final. Kelly, taking the elixir which he had found in Glastonbury Abbey, proceeded to Prague, forgetful of the abrupt mode in which he had previously been expelled from that city. Almost immediately after his arrival, he was seized by order of the Emperor Rudolph, and thrown into prison. He was released after some months' confinement, and continued for five years to lead a vagabond life in Germany, telling fortunes at one place, and pretending to make gold at another. He was a second time thrown into prison, on a charge of heresy and sorcery; and he then resolved, if ever he obtained his liberty, to return to England. He soon discovered that there was no prospect of this, and that his imprisonment was likely to be for life. He twisted his bed−clothes into a rope, one stormy night in February 1595, and let himself down from the window of his dungeon, situated at the top of a very high tower. Being a corpulent man, the rope gave way, and he was precipitated to the ground. He broke two of his ribs, and both his legs; and was otherwise so much injured, that he expired a few days afterwards.

Dee, for a while, had more prosperous fortune. The warming−pan he had sent to Queen Elizabeth was not without effect. He was rewarded, soon after Kelly had left him, with an invitation to return to England. His pride, which had been sorely humbled, sprang up again to its pristine dimensions; and he set out for Bohemia with a train of attendants becoming an ambassador. How he procured the money does not appear, unless from the liberality of the rich Bohemian Rosenberg, or perhaps from his plunder. He travelled with three coaches for himself and family, and three waggons to carry his baggage. Each coach had four horses, and the whole train was protected by a guard of four and twenty soldiers. This statement may be doubted; but it is on the authority of Dee himself, who made it on oath before the commissioners appointed by Elizabeth to inquire into his circumstances. On his arrival in England he had an audience of the Queen, who received him kindly as far as words went, and gave orders that he should not be molested in his pursuits of chemistry and philosophy. A man who boasted of the power to turn baser metals into gold, could not, thought Elizabeth, be in want of money; and she, therefore, gave him no more substantial marks of her approbation than her countenance and protection.

Thrown thus unexpectedly upon his own resources, Dee began in earnest the search for the philosopher's stone. He worked incessantly among his furnaces, retorts, and crucibles, and almost poisoned himself with deleterious fumes. He also consulted his miraculous crystal; but the spirits appeared not to him. He tried one Bartholomew to supply the place of the invaluable Kelly; but he being a man of some little probity, and of no imagination at all, the spirits would not hold any communication with him. Dee then tried another pretender to philosophy, of the name of Hickman; but had no better fortune. The crystal had lost its power since the departure

of its great high−priest. From this quarter then Dee could get no information on the stone or elixir of the alchymists, and all his efforts to discover them by other means were not only fruitless but expensive. He was soon reduced to great distress, and wrote piteous letters to the Queen, praying relief. He represented that, after he left England with Count Laski, the mob had pillaged his house at Mortlake, accusing him of being a necromancer and a wizard; and had broken all his furniture, burned his library, consisting of four thousand rare volumes, and destroyed all the philosophical instruments and curiosities in his museum. For this damage he claimed compensation; and furthermore stated, that, as he had come to England by the Queen's command, she ought to pay the expenses of his journey. Elizabeth sent him small sums of money at various times; but, Dee still continuing his complaints, a commission was appointed to inquire into his circumstances. He finally obtained a small appointment as Chancellor of St. Paul's cathedral, which he exchanged, in 1595, for the wardenship of the college at Manchester. He remained in this capacity till 1602 or 1603, when, his strength and intellect beginning to fail him, he was compelled to resign. He retired to his old dwelling at Mortlake, in a state not far removed from actual want, supporting himself as a common fortune−teller, and being often obliged to sell or pawn his books to procure a dinner. James I. was often applied to on his behalf, but he refused to do anything for him. It may be said to the discredit of this King, that the only reward he would grant the indefatigable Stowe, in his days of old age and want, was the royal permission to beg; but no one will blame him for neglecting such a quack as John Dee. He died in 1608, in the eighty−first year of his age, and was buried at Mortlake.

THE COSMOPOLITE.

Many disputes have arisen as to the real name of the alchymist who wrote several works under the above designation. The general opinion is that he was a Scotsman, named Seton; and that by a fate very common to alchymists, who boasted too loudly of their powers of transmutation, he ended his days miserably in a dungeon, into which he was thrown by a German potentate until he made a million of gold to pay his ransom. By some he has been confounded with Michael Sendivog, or Sendivogius, a Pole, a professor of the same art, who made a great noise in Europe at the commencement of the seventeenth century. Lenglet du Fresnoy, who is in general well−informed with respect to the alchymists, inclines to the belief that these personages were distinct; and gives the following particulars of the Cosmopolite, extracted from George Morhoff, in his "Epistola ad Langelottum," and other writers.

About the year 1600, one Jacob Haussen, a Dutch pilot, was shipwrecked on the coast of Scotland. A gentleman, named Alexander Seton, put off in a boat, and saved him from drowning, and afterwards entertained him hospitably for many weeks at his house on the shore. Haussen saw that he was addicted to the pursuits of chemistry, but no conversation on the subject passed between them at the time. About a year and a half afterwards, Haussen being then at home at Enkhuysen, in Holland, received a visit from his former host. He endeavoured to repay the kindness that had been shown him; and so great a friendship arose between them, that Seton, on his departure, offered to make him acquainted with the great secret of the philosopher's stone. In his presence the Scotsman transmuted a great quantity of base metal into pure gold, and gave it him as a mark of his esteem. Seton then took leave of his friend, and travelled into Germany. At Dresden he made no secret of his wonderful powers; having, it is said, performed transmutation successfully before a great assemblage of the learned men of that city. The circumstance coming to the ears of the Duke or Elector of Saxony, he gave orders for the arrest of the alchymist. He caused him to be imprisoned in a high tower, and set a guard of forty men to watch that he did not escape, and that no strangers were admitted to his presence. The unfortunate Seton received several visits from the Elector, who used every art of persuasion to make him divulge his secret. Seton obstinately refused either to communicate his secret, or to make any gold for the tyrant; on which he was stretched upon the rack, to see if the argument of torture would render him more tractable. The result was still the same, − neither hope of reward nor fear of anguish could shake him. For several months he remained in prison, subjected alternately to a sedative and a violent regimen, till his health broke, and he wasted away almost to a skeleton.

There happened at that time to be in Dresden a learned Pole, named Michael Sendivogius, who had wasted a good deal of his time and substance in the unprofitable pursuits of alchymy. He was touched with pity for the hard fate, and admiration for the intrepidity of Seton; and determined, if possible, to aid him in escaping from the clutch of his oppressor. He requested the Elector's permission to see the alchymist, and obtained it with some difficulty. He found him in a state of great wretchedness, — shut up from the light of day in a noisome dungeon,

and with no better couch or fare than those allotted to the worst of criminals. Seton listened eagerly to the proposal of escape, and promised the generous Pole that he would make him richer than an Eastern monarch if by his means he were liberated. Sendivogius immediately commenced operations. He sold some property which he possessed near Cracow, and with the proceeds led a merry life at Dresden. He gave the most elegant suppers, to which he regularly invited the officers of the guard, and especially those who did duty at the prison of the alchymist. He insinuated himself at last into their confidence, and obtained free ingress to his friend as often as he pleased; pretending that he was using his utmost endeavours to conquer his obstinacy and worm his secret out of him. When their project was ripe, a day was fixed upon for the grand attempt; and Sendivogius was ready with a postchariot to convey him with all speed into Poland. By drugging some wine which he presented to the guards of the prison, he rendered them so drowsy that he easily found means to scale a wall unobserved, with Seton, and effect his escape. Seton's wife was in the chariot awaiting him, having safely in her possession a small packet of a black powder, which was, in fact, the philosopher's stone, or ingredient for the transmutation of iron and copper into gold. They all arrived in safety at Cracow; but the frame of Seton was so wasted by torture of body and starvation, to say nothing of the anguish of mind he had endured, that he did not long survive. He died in Cracow in 1603 or 1604, and was buried under the cathedral church of that city. Such is the story related of the author of the various works which bear the name of the Cosmopolite. A list of them may be found in the third volume of the "History of the Hermetic Philosophy."

SENDIVOGIUS.

On the death of Seton, Sendivogius married his widow, hoping to learn from her some of the secrets of her deceased lord in the art of transmutation. The ounce of black powder stood him, however, in better service; for the alchymists say that, by its means, he converted great quantities of quicksilver into the purest gold. It is also said that he performed this experiment successfully before the Emperor Rudolph II, at Prague; and that the Emperor, to commemorate the circumstance, caused a marble tablet to be affixed to the wall of the room in which it was performed, bearing this inscription, "Faciat hoc quispiam alius, quod fecit Sendivogius Polonus." M. Desnoyers, secretary to the Princess Mary of Gonzaga, Queen of Poland, writing from Warsaw in 1651, says that he saw this tablet, which existed at that time, and was often visited by the curious.

The after−life of Sendivogius is related in a Latin memoir of him by one Brodowski, his steward; and is inserted by Pierre Borel in his "Treasure of Gaulish Antiquities." The Emperor Rudolph, according to this authority, was so well pleased with his success, that he made him one of his counsellors of state, and invited him to fill a station in the royal household and inhabit the palace. But Sendivogius loved his liberty, and refused to become a courtier. He preferred to reside on his own patrimonial estate of Gravarna, where, for many years, he exercised a princely hospitality. His philosophic powder, which, his steward says, was red, and not black, he kept in a little box of gold; and with one grain of it he could make five hundred ducats, or a thousand rix−dollars. He generally made his projection upon quicksilver. When he travelled, he gave this box to his steward, who hung it round his neck by a gold chain next his skin. But the greatest part of the powder he used to hide in a secret place cut into the step of his chariot. He thought that, if attacked at any time by robbers, they would not search such a place as that. When he anticipated any danger, he would dress himself in his valet's clothes, and, mounting the coach−box, put the valet inside. He was induced to take these precautions, because it was no secret that he possessed the philosopher's stone; and many unprincipled adventurers were on the watch for an opportunity to plunder him. A German Prince, whose name Brodowski has not thought fit to chronicle, served him a scurvy trick, which ever afterwards put him on his guard. This prince went on his knees to Sendivogius, and entreated him in the most pressing terms to satisfy his curiosity by converting some quicksilver into gold before him. Sendivogius, wearied by his importunity, consented, upon a promise of inviolable secrecy. After his departure, the Prince called a German alchymist, named Muhlenfels, who resided in his house, and told him all that had been done. Muhlenfels entreated that he might have a dozen mounted horsemen at his command, that he might instantly ride after the philosopher, and either rob him of all his powder or force from him the secret of making it. The Prince desired nothing better; and Muhlenfels, being provided with twelve men well mounted and armed, pursued Sendivogius in hot haste. He came up with him at a lonely inn by the road−side, just as he was sitting down to dinner. He at first endeavoured to persuade him to divulge the secret; but, finding this of no avail, he caused his accomplices to strip the unfortunate Sendivogius and tie him naked to one of the pillars of the house.

He then took from him his golden box, containing a small quantity of the powder; a manuscript book on the philosopher's stone; a golden medal with its chain, presented to him by the Emperor Rudolph; and a rich cap ornamented with diamonds, of the value of one hundred thousand rix−dollars. With this booty he decamped, leaving Sendivogius still naked and firmly bound to the pillar. His servants had been treated in a similar manner; but the people of the inn released them all as soon as the robbers were out of sight.

Sendivogius proceeded to Prague, and made his complaint to the Emperor. An express was instantly sent off to the Prince, with orders that he should deliver up Muhlenfels and all his plunder. The Prince, fearful of the Emperor's wrath, caused three large gallows to be erected in his court−yard; on the highest of which he hanged Muhlenfels, with another thief on each side of him. He thus propitiated the Emperor, and got rid of an ugly witness against himself. He sent back, at the same time, the bejewelled hat, the medal and chain, and the treatise upon the philosopher's stone, which had been stolen from Sendivogius. As regarded the powder, he said he had not seen it, and knew nothing about it.

This adventure made Sendivogius more prudent; he would no longer perform the process of transmutation before any strangers, however highly recommended. He pretended, also, to be very poor; and sometimes lay in bed for weeks together, that people might believe he was suffering from some dangerous malady, and could not therefore by any possibility be the owner of the philosopher's stone. He would occasionally coin false money, and pass it off as gold; preferring to be esteemed a cheat rather than a successful alchymist.

Many other extraordinary tales are told of this personage by his steward Brodowski, but they are not worth repeating. He died in 1636, aged upwards of eighty, and was buried in his own chapel at Gravarna. Several works upon alchymy have been published under his name.

THE ROSICRUCIANS.

It was during the time of the last−mentioned author that the sect of the Rosicrucians first began to create a sensation in Europe. The influence which they exercised upon opinion during their brief career, and the permanent impression which they have left upon European literature, claim for them especial notice. Before their time, alchymy was but a grovelling delusion; and theirs is the merit of having spiritualised and refined it. They also enlarged its sphere, and supposed the possession of the philosopher's stone to be, not only the means of wealth, but of health and happiness; and the instrument by which man could command the services of superior beings, control the elements to his will, defy the obstructions of time and space, and acquire the most intimate knowledge of all the secrets of the universe. Wild and visionary as they were, they were not without their uses; if it were only for having purged the superstitions of Europe of the dark and disgusting forms with which the monks had peopled it, and substituted, in their stead, a race of mild, graceful, and beneficent beings.

They are said to have derived their name from Christian Rosencreutz, or "Rose−cross," a German philosopher, who travelled in the Holy Land towards the close of the fourteenth century. While dangerously ill at a place called Damcar, he was visited by some learned Arabs, who claimed him as their brother in science, and unfolded to him, by inspiration, all the secrets of his past life, both of thought and of action. They restored him to health by means of the philosopher's stone, and afterwards instructed him in all their mysteries. He returned to Europe in 1401, being then only twenty−three years of age; and drew a chosen number of his friends around him, whom he initiated into the new science, and bound by solemn oaths to keep it secret for a century. He is said to have lived eighty−three years after this period, and to have died in 1484.

Many have denied the existence of such a personage as Rosencreutz, and have fixed the origin of this sect at a much later epoch. The first dawning of it, they say, is to be found in the theories of Paracelsus, and the dreams of Dr. Dee, who, without intending it, became the actual, though never the recognised founders of the Rosicrucian philosophy. It is now difficult, and indeed impossible, to determine whether Dee and Paracelsus obtained their ideas from the then obscure and unknown Rosicrucians, or whether the Rosicrucians did but follow and improve upon them. Certain it is, that their existence was never suspected till the year 1605, when they began to excite attention in Germany. No sooner were their doctrines promulgated, than all the visionaries, Paracelsists, and alchymists, flocked around their standard, and vaunted Rosencreutz as the new regenerator of the human race. Michael Mayer, a celebrated physician of that day, and who had impaired his health and wasted his fortune in searching for the philosopher's stone, drew up a report of the tenets and ordinances of the new fraternity, which was published at Cologne, in the year 1615. They asserted, in the first place, "that the meditations of their

founders surpassed everything that had ever been imagined since the creation of the world, without even excepting the revelations of the Deity; that they were destined to accomplish the general peace and regeneration of man before the end of the world arrived; that they possessed all wisdom and piety in a supreme degree; that they possessed all the graces of nature, and could distribute them among the rest of mankind according to their pleasure; that they were subject to neither hunger, nor thirst, nor disease, nor old age, nor to any other inconvenience of nature; that they knew by inspiration, and at the first glance, every one who was worthy to be admitted into their society; that they had the same knowledge then which they would have possessed if they had lived from the beginning of the world, and had been always acquiring it; that they had a volume in which they could read all that ever was or ever would be written in other books till the end of time; that they could force to, and retain in their service the most powerful spirits and demons; that, by the virtue of their songs, they could attract pearls and precious stones from the depths of the sea or the bowels of the earth; that God had covered them with a thick cloud, by means of which they could shelter themselves from the malignity of their enemies, and that they could thus render themselves invisible from all eyes; that the eight first brethren of the "Rose−cross" had power to cure all maladies; that, by means of the fraternity, the triple diadem of the Pope would be reduced into dust; that they only admitted two sacraments, with the ceremonies of the primitive Church, renewed by them; that they recognised the Fourth Monarchy and the Emperor of the Romans as their chief and the chief of all Christians; that they would provide him with more gold, their treasures being inexhaustible, than the King of Spain had ever drawn from the golden regions of Eastern and Western Ind." This was their confession of faith. Their rules of conduct were six in number, and as follow:—

First. That, in their travels, they should gratuitously cure all diseases.

Secondly. That they should always dress in conformity to the fashion of the country in which they resided.

Thirdly. That they should, once every year, meet together in the place appointed by the fraternity, or send in writing an available excuse.

Fourthly. That every brother, whenever he felt inclined to die, should choose a person worthy to succeed him.

Fifthly. That the words "Rose−cross" should be the marks by which they should recognise each other.

Sixthly. That their fraternity should be kept secret for six times twenty years.

They asserted that these laws had been found inscribed in a golden book in the tomb of Rosencreutz, and that the six times twenty years from his death expired in 1604. They were consequently called upon, from that time forth, to promulgate their doctrine for the welfare of mankind. [The following legend of the tomb of Rosencreutz, written by Eustace Budgell, appears in No. 379 of the Spectator:— "A certain person, having occasion to dig somewhat deep in the ground where this philosopher lay interred, met with a small door, having a wall on each side of it. His curiosity, and the hope of finding some hidden treasure, soon prompted him to force open the door. He was immediately surprised by a sudden blaze of light, and discovered a very fair vault. At the upper end of it was a statue of a man in armour, sitting by a table, and leaning on his left arm. He held a truncheon in his right hand, and had a lamp burning before him. The man had no sooner set one foot within the vault, than the statue, erecting itself from its leaning posture, stood bolt upright; and, upon the fellow's advancing another step, lifted up the truncheon in his right hand. The man still ventured a third step; when the statue, with a furious blow, broke the lamp into a thousand pieces, and left his guest in sudden darkness. Upon the report of this adventure, the country people came with lights to the sepulchre, and discovered that the statue, which was made of brass, was nothing more than a piece of clock−work; that the floor of the vault was all loose, and underlaid with several springs, which, upon any man's entering, naturally produced that which had happened. Rosicreucius, say his disciples, made use of this method to show the world that he had re−invented the ever−burning lamps of the ancients, though he was resolved no one should reap any advantage from the discovery."]

For eight years these enthusiasts made converts in Germany; but they excited little or no attention in other parts of Europe. At last they made their appearance in Paris, and threw all the learned, all the credulous, and all the lovers of the marvellous into commotion. In the beginning of March 1623, the good folks of that city, when they arose one morning, were surprised to find all their walls placarded with the following singular manifesto:—

"We, the deputies of the principal College of the Brethren of the Rose−cross, have taken up our abode, visible and invisible, in this city, by the grace of the Most High, towards whom are turned the hearts of the just. We show and teach without books or signs, and speak all sorts of languages in the countries where we dwell, to draw mankind, our fellows, from error and from death."

For a long time this strange placard was the sole topic of conversation in all public places. Some few wondered; but the greater number only laughed at it. In the course of a few weeks two books were published, which raised the first alarm respecting this mysterious society, whose dwelling−place no one knew, and no members of which had ever been seen. The first was called a history of "The frightful Compacts entered into between the Devil and the pretended 'Invisibles;' with their damnable Instructions, the deplorable Ruin of their Disciples, and their miserable End." The other was called an "Examination of the new and unknown Cabala of the Brethren of the Rose−cross, who have lately inhabited the City of Paris; with the History of their Manners, the Wonders worked by them, and many other Particulars."

These books sold rapidly. Every one was anxious to know something of this dreadful and secret brotherhood. The badauds of Paris were so alarmed that they daily expected to see the arch−enemy walking in propria persona among them. It was said in these volumes, that the Rosicrucian society consisted of six−and−thirty persons in all, who had renounced their baptism and hope of resurrection. That it was not by means of good angels, as they pretended, that they worked their prodigies; but that it was the devil who gave them power to transport themselves from one end of the world to the other with the rapidity of thought; to speak all languages; to have their purses always full of money, however much they might spend; to be invisible, and penetrate into the most secret places, in spite of fastenings of bolts and bars; and to be able to tell the past and future. These thirty−six brethren were divided into bands or companies:− six of them only had been sent on the mission to Paris, six to Italy, six to Spain, six to Germany, four to Sweden, and two into Switzerland; two into Flanders, two into Lorraine, and two into Franche Comte. It was generally believed that the missionaries to France resided somewhere in the Marais du Temple. That quarter of Paris soon acquired a bad name; and people were afraid to take houses in it, lest they should be turned out by the six invisibles of the Rose−cross. It was believed by the populace, and by many others whose education should have taught them better, that persons of a mysterious aspect used to visit the inns and hotels of Paris, and eat of the best meats and drink of the best wines, and then suddenly melt away into thin air when the landlord came with the reckoning. That gentle maidens, who went to bed alone, often awoke in the night and found men in bed with them, of shape more beautiful than the Grecian Apollo, who immediately became invisible when an alarm was raised. It was also said that many persons found large heaps of pure gold in their houses, without knowing from whence they came. All Paris was in alarm. No man thought himself secure of his goods, no maiden of her virginity, or wife of her chastity, while these Rosicrucians were abroad. In the midst of the commotion, a second placard was issued to the following effect:—

"If any one desires to see the brethren of the Rose−cross from curiosity only, he will never communicate with us. But if his will really induces him to inscribe his name in the register of our brotherhood, we, who can judge of the thoughts of all men, will convince him of the truth of our promises. For this reason we do not publish to the world the place of our abode. Thought alone, in unison with the sincere will of those who desire to know us, is sufficient to make us known to them, and them to us."

Though the existence of such a society as that of the Rose−cross was problematical, it was quite evident that somebody or other was concerned in the promulgation of these placards, which were stuck up on every wall in Paris. The police endeavoured in vain to find out the offenders, and their want of success only served to increase the perplexity of the public. The church very soon took up the question; and the Abbe Gaultier, a Jesuit, wrote a book to prove that, by their enmity to the Pope, they could be no other than disciples of Luther, sent to promulgate his heresy. Their very name, he added, proved that they were heretics; a cross surmounted by a rose being the heraldic device of the arch−heretic Luther. One Garasse said they were a confraternity of drunken impostors; and that their name was derived from the garland of roses, in the form of a cross, hung over the tables of taverns in Germany as the emblem of secrecy, and from whence was derived the common saying, when one man communicated a secret to another, that it was said "under the rose." Others interpreted the letters F. R. C. to mean, not Brethren of the Rose−cross, but Fratres Roris Cocti, or Brothers of Boiled Dew; and explained this appellation by alleging that they collected large quantities of morning dew, and boiled it, in order to extract a very valuable ingredient in the composition of the philosopher's stone and the water of life.

The fraternity thus attacked defended themselves as well as they were able. They denied that they used magic of any kind, or that they consulted the devil. They said they were all happy; that they had lived more than a century, and expected to live many centuries more; and that the intimate knowledge which they possessed of all nature was communicated to them by God himself as a reward for their piety and utter devotion to his service.

Those were in error who derived their name from a cross of roses, or called them drunkards. To set the world right on the first point, they reiterated that they derived their name from Christian Rosencreutz, their founder; and, to answer the latter charge, they repeated that they knew not what thirst was, and had higher pleasures than those of the palate. They did not desire to meddle with the politics or religion of any man or set of men, although they could not help denying the supremacy of the Pope, and looking upon him as a tyrant. Many slanders, they said, had been repeated respecting them; the most unjust of which was, that they indulged in carnal appetites, and, under the cloak of their invisibility, crept into the chambers of beautiful maidens. They asserted, on the contrary, that the first vow they took on entering the society was a vow of chastity; and that any one among them who transgressed in that particular would immediately lose all the advantages he enjoyed, and be exposed once more to hunger, woe, disease, and death, like other men. So strongly did they feel on the subject of chastity, that they attributed the fall of Adam solely to his want of this virtue. Besides defending themselves in this manner, they entered into a further confession of their faith. They discarded for ever all the old tales of sorcery and witchcraft, and communion with the devil. They said there were no such horrid, unnatural, and disgusting beings as the incubi and succubi, and the innumerable grotesque imps that men had believed in for so many ages. Man was not surrounded with enemies like these, but with myriads of beautiful and beneficent beings, all anxious to do him service. The air was peopled with sylphs, the water with undines or naiads, the bowels of the earth with gnomes, and the fire with salamanders. All these beings were the friends of man, and desired nothing so much as that men should purge themselves of all uncleanness, and thus be enabled to see and converse with them. They possessed great power, and were unrestrained by the barriers of space or the obstructions of matter. But man was in one particular their superior. He had an immortal soul, and they had not. They might, however, become sharers in man's immortality, if they could inspire one of that race with the passion of love towards them. Hence it was the constant endeavour of the female spirits to captivate the admiration of men; and of the male gnomes, sylphs, salamanders, and undines, to be beloved by a woman. The object of this passion, in returning their love, imparted a portion of that celestial fire the soul; and from that time forth the beloved became equal to the lover, and both, when their allotted course was run, entered together into the mansions of felicity. These spirits, they said, watched constantly over mankind by night and day. Dreams, omens, and presentiments were all their works, and the means by which they gave warning of the approach of danger. But, though so well inclined to befriend man for their own sakes, the want of a soul rendered them at times capricious and revengeful: they took offence on slight causes, and heaped injuries instead of benefits on the heads of those who extinguished the light of reason that was in them, by gluttony, debauchery, and other appetites of the body.

The excitement produced in Paris by the placards of the brotherhood, and the attacks of the clergy, wore itself away after a few months. The stories circulated about them became at last too absurd even for that age of absurdity, and men began to laugh once more at those invisible gentlemen and their fantastic doctrines. Gabriel Naude at that conjuncture brought out his "Avis a la France sur les Freres de la Rose−croix," in which he very successfully exposed the folly of the new sect. This work, though not well written, was well timed. It quite extinguished the Rosicrucians of France; and, after that year, little more was heard of them. Swindlers, in different parts of the country, assumed the name at times to cloak their depredations; and now and then one of them was caught, and hanged for his too great ingenuity in enticing pearls and precious stones from the pockets of other people into his own, or for passing off lumps of gilded brass for pure gold, made by the agency of the philosopher's stone. With these exceptions, oblivion shrouded them.

The doctrine was not confined to a sphere so narrow as France alone; it still flourished in Germany, and drew many converts in England. The latter countries produced two great masters, in the persons of Jacob Bohmen and Robert Fludd; pretended philosophers, of whom it is difficult to say which was the more absurd and extravagant. It would appear that the sect was divided into two classes,— the brothers Roseae Crucis, who devoted themselves to the wonders of this sublunary sphere; and the brothers Aureae Crucis, who were wholly occupied in the contemplation of things Divine. Fludd belonged to the first class, and Bohmen to the second. Fludd may be called the father of the English Rosicrucians, and as such merits a conspicuous niche in the temple of Folly.

He was born in the year 1574, at Milgate, in Kent; and was the son of Sir Thomas Fludd, Treasurer of War to Queen Elizabeth. He was originally intended for the army; but he was too fond of study, and of a disposition too quiet and retiring to shine in that sphere. His father would not, therefore, press him to adopt a course of life for which he was unsuited, and encouraged him in the study of medicine, for which he early manifested a partiality.

At the age of twenty−five he proceeded to the Continent; and being fond of the abstruse, the marvellous, and the incomprehensible, he became an ardent disciple of the school of Paracelsus, whom he looked upon as the regenerator, not only of medicine, but of philosophy. He remained six years in Italy, France, and Germany; storing his mind with fantastic notions, and seeking the society of enthusiasts and visionaries. On his return to England, in 1605, he received the degree of Doctor of Medicine from the University of Oxford, and began to practice as a physician in London.

He soon made himself conspicuous. He Latinized his name from Robert Fludd into Robertus a Fluctibus, and began the promulgation of many strange doctrines. He avowed his belief in the philosopher's stone, the water of life, and the universal alkahest; and maintained that there were but two principles of all things, — which were, condensation, the boreal or northern virtue; and rarefaction, the southern or austral virtue. A number of demons, he said, ruled over the human frame, whom he arranged in their places in a rhomboid. Every disease had its peculiar demon who produced it, which demon could only be combated by the aid of the demon whose place was directly opposite to his in the rhomboidal figure. Of his medical notions we shall have further occasion to speak in another part of this book, when we consider him in his character as one of the first founders of the magnetic delusion, and its offshoot, animal magnetism, which has created so much sensation in our own day.

As if the doctrines already mentioned were not wild enough, he joined the Rosicrucians as soon as they began to make a sensation in Europe, and succeeded in raising himself to high consideration among them. The fraternity having been violently attacked by several German authors, and among others by Libavius, Fludd volunteered a reply, and published, in 1616, his defence of the Rosicrucian philosophy, under the title of the "Apologia, compendiaria, Fraternitatem de Rosea−cruce, Suspicionis et Infamiae maculis aspersam, abluens." This work immediately procured him great renown upon the Continent, and he was henceforth looked upon as one of the high−priests of the sect. Of so much importance was he considered, that Keppler and Gassendi thought it necessary to refute him; and the latter wrote a complete examination of his doctrine. Mersenne also, the friend of Descartes, and who had defended that philosopher when accused of having joined the Rosicrucians, attacked Dr. a Fluctibus, as he preferred to be called, and showed the absurdity of the brothers of the Rose−cross in general, and of Dr. a Fluctibus in particular. Fluctibus wrote a long reply, in which he called Mersenne an ignorant calumniator, and reiterated that alchymy was a profitable science, and the Rosicrucians worthy to be the regenerators of the world. This book was published at Frankfort, and was entitled "Summum Bonum, quod est Magiae, Cabalae, Alchimiae, Fratrum Roseae−Crucis verorum, et adversus Mersenium Calumniatorem." Besides this, he wrote several other works upon alchymy, a second answer to Libavius upon the Rosicrucians, and many medical works. He died in London in 1637.

After his time there was some diminution of the sect in England. They excited but little attention, and made no effort to bring themselves into notice. Occasionally, some obscure and almost incomprehensible work made its appearance, to show the world that the folly was not extinguished. Eugenius Philalethes, a noted alchymist, who has veiled his real name under this assumed one, translated "The Fame and Confession of the Brethren of the Rosie Cross," which was published in London in 1652. A few years afterwards, another enthusiast, named John Heydon, wrote two works on the subject: the one entitled "The Wise Man's Crown, or the Glory of the Rosie Cross ;" and the other, "The Holy Guide, leading the way to unite Art and Nature, with the Rosie Crosse uncovered." Neither of these attracted much notice. A third book was somewhat more successful: it was called "A New Method of Rosicrucian Physic; by John Heydon, the servant of God and the secretary of Nature." A few extracts will show the ideas of the English Rosicrucians about this period. Its author was an attorney, "practising (to use his own words) at Westminster Hall all term times as long as he lived, and in the vacations devoting himself to alchymical and Rosicrucian meditation." In his preface, called by him an Apologue for an Epilogue, he enlightens the public upon the true history and tenets of his sect. Moses, Elias, and Ezekiel were, he says, the most ancient masters of the Rosicrucian philosophy. Those few then existing in England and the rest of Europe, were as the eyes and ears of the great King of the universe, seeing and hearing all things; seraphically illuminated; companions of the holy company of unbodied souls and immortal angels; turning themselves, Proteus−like, into any shape, and having the power of working miracles. The most pious and abstracted brethren could slack the plague in cities, silence the violent winds and tempests, calm the rage of the sea and rivers, walk in the air, frustrate the malicious aspect of witches, cure all diseases, and turn all metals into gold. He had known in his time two famous brethren of the Rosie Cross, named Walfourd and Williams, who had worked miracles in his sight,

and taught him many excellent predictions of astrology and earthquakes. "I desired one of these to tell me," says he, "whether my complexion were capable of the society of my good genius. 'When I see you again,' said he, (which was when he pleased to come to me, for I knew not where to go to him,) 'I will tell you.' When I saw him afterwards, he said, 'You should pray to God; for a good and holy man can offer no greater or more acceptable service to God than the oblation of himself — his soul.' He said, also, that the good genii were the benign eyes of God, running to and fro in the world, and with love and pity beholding the innocent endeavours of harmless and single−hearted men, ever ready to do them good and to help them."

Heydon held devoutly true that dogma of the Rosicrucians which said that neither eating nor drinking was necessary to men. He maintained that any one might exist in the same manher as that singular people dwelling near the source of the Ganges, of whom mention was made in the travels of his namesake, Sir Christopher Heydon, who had no mouths, and therefore could not eat, but lived by the breath of their nostrils; except when they took a far journey, and then they mended their diet with the smell of flowers. He said that in really pure air "there was a fine foreign fatness," with which it was sprinkled by the sunbeams, and which was quite sufficient for the nourishment of the generality of mankind. Those who had enormous appetites he had no objection to see take animal food, since they could not do without it; but he obstinately insisted that there was no necessity why they should eat it. If they put a plaster of nicely−cooked meat upon their epigastrium, it would be sufficient for the wants of the most robust and voracious! They would by that means let in no diseases, as they did at the broad and common gate, the mouth, as any one might see by example of drink; for, all the while a man sat in water, he was never athirst. He had known, he said, many Rosicrucians, who, by applying wine in this manner, had fasted for years together. In fact, quoth Heydon, we may easily fast all our life, though it be three hundred years, without any kind of meat, and so cut off all danger of disease.

This "sage philosopher" further informed his wondering contemporaries that the chiefs of the doctrine always carried about with them to their place of meeting their symbol, called the R.C. which was an ebony cross, flourished and decked with roses of gold; the cross typifying Christ's sufferings upon the Cross for our sins, and the roses of gold the glory and beauty of his Resurrection. This symbol was carried alternately to Mecca, Mount Calvary, Mount Sinai, Haran, and to three other places, which must have been in mid−air, called Cascle, Apamia, and Chaulateau Virissa Caunuch, where the Rosicrucian brethren met when they pleased, and made resolution of all their actions. They always took their pleasures in one of these places, where they resolved all questions of whatsoever had been done, was done, or should be done, in the world, from the beginning to the end thereof. "And these," he concludes, "are the men called Rosicrucians

Towards the end of the seventeenth century, more rational ideas took possession of the sect, which still continued to boast of a few members. They appear to have considered that contentment was the true philosopher's stone, and to have abandoned the insane search for a mere phantom of the imagination. Addison, in "The Spectator," [No. 574. Friday, July 30th, 1714.] gives an account of his conversation with a Rosicrucian; from which it may be inferred that the sect had grown wiser in their deeds, though in their talk they were as foolish as ever. "I was once," says he, "engaged in discourse with a Rosicrucian about the great secret. He talked of the secret as of a spirit which lived within an emerald, and converted everything that was near it to the highest perfection that it was capable of. 'It gives a lustre,' says he, 'to the sun, and water to the diamond. It irradiates every metal, and enriches lead with all the properties of gold. It heightens smoke into flame, flame into light, and light into glory.' He further added 'that a single ray of it dissipates pain, and care, and melancholy from the person on whom it falls. In short,' says he, 'its presence naturally changes every place into a kind of heaven.' After he had gone on for some time in this unintelligible cant, I found that he jumbled natural and moral ideas together into the same discourse, and that his great secret was nothing else but content."

JACOB BOHMEN.

It is now time to speak of Jacob Bohmen, who thought he could discover the secret of the transmutation of metals in the Bible, and who invented a strange heterogeneous doctrine of mingled alchymy and religion, and founded upon it the sect of the Aurea−crucians. He was born at Gorlitz, in Upper Lusatia, in 1575; and followed, till his thirtieth year, the occupation of a shoemaker. In this obscurity he remained, with the character of a visionary and a man of unsettled mind, until the promulgation of the Rosicrucian philosophy in his part of Germany, toward the year 1607 or 1608. From that time he began to neglect his leather, and buried his brain

under the rubbish of metaphysics. The works of Paracelsus fell into his hands; and these, with the reveries of the Rosicrucians, so completely engrossed his attention that be abandoned his trade altogether, sinking, at the same time, from a state of comparative independence into poverty and destitution. But he was nothing daunted by the miseries and privations of the flesh; his mind was fixed upon the beings of another sphere, and in thought he was already the new apostle of the human race. In the year 1612, after a meditation of four years, he published his first work, entitled "Aurora; or, The Rising of the Sun;" embodying the ridiculous notions of Paracelsus, and worse confounding the confusion of that writer. The philosopher's stone might, he contended, be discovered by a diligent search of the Old and New Testaments, and more especially of the Apocalypse, which alone contained all the secrets of alchymy. He contended that the Divine Grace operated by the same rules, and followed the same methods, that the Divine Providence observed in the natural world; and that the minds of men were purged from their vices and corruptions in the very same manner that metals were purified from their dross, namely, by fire.

Besides the sylphs, gnomes, undines, and salamanders, he acknowledged various ranks and orders of demons. He pretended to invisibility and absolute chastity. He also said that, if it pleased him, he could abstain for years from meat and drink, and all the necessities of the body. It is needless, however, to pursue his follies any further. He was reprimanded for writing this work by the magistrates of Gorlitz, and commanded to leave the pen alone and stick to his wax, that his family might not become chargeable to the parish. He neglected this good advice, and continued his studies; burning minerals and purifying metals one day, and mystifying the Word of God on the next. He afterwards wrote three other works, as sublimely ridiculous as the first. The one was entitled "Metallurgia," and has the slight merit of being the least obscure of his compositions. Another was called "The Temporal Mirror of Eternity ;" and the last his "Theosophy revealed," full of allegories and metaphors,

"All strange and geason, Devoid of sense and ordinary reason."

Bohmen died in 1624, leaving behind him a considerable number of admiring disciples. Many of them became, during the seventeenth century, as distinguished for absurdity as their master; amongst whom may be mentioned Giffthеil, Wendenhagen, John Jacob Zimmermann, and Abraham Frankenberg. Their heresy rendered them obnoxious to the Church of Rome; and many of them suffered long imprisonment and torture for their faith. One, named Kuhlmann, was burned alive at Moscow, in 1684, on a charge of sorcery. Bohmen's works were translated into English, and published, many years afterwards by an enthusiast, named William Law.

MORMIUS.

Peter Mormius, a notorious alchymist, and contemporary of Bohmen, endeavoured, in 1630, to introduce the Rosicrucian philosophy into Holland. He applied to the States−General to grant him a public audience, that he might explain the tenets of the sect, and disclose a plan for rendering Holland the happiest and richest country on the earth, by means of the philosopher's' stone and the service of the elementary spirits. The States−General wisely resolved to have nothing to do with him. He thereupon determined to shame them by printing his book, which he did at Leyden the same year. It was entitled "The Book of the most Hidden Secrets of Nature," and was divided into three parts; the first treating of "perpetual motion," the second of the "transmutation of metals," and the third of the "universal medicine." He also published some German works upon the Rosicrucian philosophy, at Frankfort, in 1617.

Poetry and Romance are deeply indebted to the Rosicrucians for many a graceful creation. The literature of England, France, and Germany contains hundreds of sweet fictions, whose machinery has been borrowed from their day−dreams. The "delicate Ariel" of Shakspeare stands pre−eminent among the number. From the same source Pope drew the airy tenants of Belinda's dressing−room, in his charming "Rape of the Lock;" and La Motte Fouque, the beautiful and capricious water−nymph, Undine, around whom he has thrown more grace and loveliness, and for whose imaginary woes he has excited more sympathy, than ever were bestowed on a supernatural being. Sir Walter Scott also endowed the White Lady of Avenel with many of the attributes of the undines, or water−sprites. German romance and lyrical poetry teem with allusions to sylphs, gnomes, undines, and salamanders; and the French have not been behind in substituting them, in works of fiction, for the more cumbrous mythology of Greece and Rome. The sylphs, more especially, have been the favourites of the bards, and have become so familiar to the popular mind as to be, in a manner, confounded with that other race of ideal beings, the fairies, who can boast of an antiquity much more venerable in the annals of superstition. Having these

obligations to the Rosicrucians, no lover of poetry can wish, however absurd they were, that such a sect of philosophers had never existed.

BORRI.

Just at the time that Michael Mayer was making known to the world the existence of such a body as the Rosicrucians, there was born in Italy a man who was afterwards destined to become the most conspicuous member of the fraternity. The alchymic mania never called forth the ingenuity of a more consummate or more successful impostor than Joseph Francis Borri. He was born in 1616 according to some authorities, and in 1627 according to others, at Milan; where his father, the Signor Branda Borri, practised as a physician. At the age of sixteen, Joseph was sent to finish his education at the Jesuits' College in Rome, where he distinguished himself by his extraordinary memory. He learned everything to which he applied himself with the utmost ease. In the most voluminous works no fact was too minute for his retention, and no study was so abstruse but that he could master it; but any advantages he might have derived from this facility, were neutralized by his ungovernable passions and his love of turmoil and debauchery. He was involved in continual difficulty, as well with the heads of the college as with the police of Rome, and acquired so bad a character that years could not remove it. By the aid of his friends he established himself as a physician in Rome, and also obtained some situation in the Pope's household. In one of his fits of studiousness he grew enamoured of alchymy, and determined to devote his energies to the discovery of the philosopher's stone. Of unfortunate propensities he had quite sufficient, besides this, to bring him to poverty. His pleasures were as expensive as his studies, and both were of a nature to destroy his health and ruin his fair fame. At the age of thirty−seven he found that he could not live by the practice of medicine, and began to look about for some other employment. He became, in 1653, private secretary to the Marquis di Mirogli, the minister of the Archduke of Innspruk at the court of Rome. He continued in this capacity for two years; leading, however, the same abandoned life as heretofore, frequenting the society of gamesters, debauchees, and loose women, involving himself in disgraceful street quarrels, and alienating the patrons who were desirous to befriend him.

All at once a sudden change was observed in his conduct. The abandoned rake put on the outward sedateness of a philosopher; the scoffing sinner proclaimed that he had forsaken his evil ways, and would live thenceforth a model of virtue. To his friends this reformation was as pleasing as it was unexpected; and Borri gave obscure hints that it had been brought about by some miraculous manifestation of a superior power. He pretended that he held converse with beneficent spirits; that the secrets of God and nature were revealed to him; and that he had obtained possession of the philosopher's stone. Like his predecessor, Jacob Bohmen, he mixed up religious questions with his philosophical jargon, and took measures for declaring himself the founder of a new sect. This, at Rome itself, and in the very palace of the Pope, was a hazardous proceeding; and Borri just awoke to a sense of it in time to save himself from the dungeons of the Castle of St. Angelo. He fled to Innspruck, where he remained about a year, and then returned to his native city of Milan.

The reputation of his great sanctity had gone before him; and he found many persons ready to attach themselves to his fortunes. All who were desirous of entering into the new communion took an oath of poverty, and relinquished their possessions for the general good of the fraternity. Borri told them that he had received from the archangel Michael a heavenly sword, upon the hilt of which were engraven the names of the seven celestial Intelligences. "Whoever shall refuse," said he, "to enter into my new sheepfold, shall be destroyed by the papal armies, of whom God has predestined me to be the chief. To those who follow me, all joy shall be granted. I shall soon bring my chemical studies to a happy conclusion by the discovery of the philosopher's stone, and by this means we shall all have as much gold as we desire. I am assured of the aid of the angelic hosts, and more especially of the archangel Michael's. When I began to walk in the way of the spirit, I had a vision of the night, and was assured by an angelic voice that I should become a prophet. In sign of it I saw a palm−tree, surrounded with all the glory of Paradise. The angels come to me whenever I call, and reveal to me all the secrets of the universe. The sylphs and elementary spirits obey me, and fly to the uttermost ends of the world to serve me, and those whom I delight to honour." By force of continually repeating such stories as these, Borri soon found himself at the head of a very considerable number of adherents. As he figures in these pages as an alchymist, and not as a religious sectarian, it will be unnecessary to repeat the doctrines which he taught with regard to some of the dogmas of the Church of Rome, and which exposed him to the fierce resentment of the papal authority. They were

to the full as ridiculous as his philosophical pretensions. As the number of his followers increased, he appears to have cherished the idea of becoming one day a new Mahomet, and of founding, in his native city of Milan, a monarchy and religion of which he should be the king and the prophet. He had taken measures, in the year 1658, for seizing the guards at all the gates of that city, and formally declaring himself the monarch of the Milanese. Just as he thought the plan ripe for execution, it was discovered. Twenty of his followers were arrested, and he himself managed, with the utmost difficulty, to escape to the neutral territory of Switzerland, where the papal displeasure could not reach him.

The trial of his followers commenced forthwith, and the whole of them were sentenced to various terms of imprisonment. Borri's trial proceeded in his absence, and lasted for upwards of two years. He was condemned to death as a heretic and sorcerer in 1661, and was burned in effigy in Rome by the common hangman.

Borri, in the mean time, lived quietly in Switzerland, indulging himself in railing at the Inquisition and its proceedings. He afterwards went to Strasbourg, intending to fix his residence in that town. He was received with great cordiality, as a man persecuted for his religious opinions, and withal a great alchymist. He found that sphere too narrow for his aspiring genius, and retired in the same year to the more wealthy city of Amsterdam. He there hired a magnificent house, established an equipage which eclipsed in brilliancy those of the richest merchants, and assumed the title of Excellency. Where he got the money to live in this expensive style was long a secret: the adepts in alchymy easily explained it, after their fashion. Sensible people were of opinion that be had come by it in a less wonderful manner; for it was remembered that, among his unfortunate disciples in Milan, there were many rich men, who, in conformity with one of the fundamental rules of the sect, had given up all their earthly wealth into the hands of their founder. In whatever manner the money was obtained, Borri spent it in Holland with an unsparing hand, and was looked up to by the people with no little respect and veneration. He performed several able cures, and increased his reputation so much that he was vaunted as a prodigy. He continued diligently the operations of alchymy, and was in daily expectation that he should succeed in turning the inferior metals into gold. This hope never abandoned him, even in the worst extremity of his fortunes; and in his prosperity it led him into the most foolish expenses: but he could not long continue to live so magnificently upon the funds he had brought from Italy; and the philosopher's stone, though it promised all for the wants of the morrow, never brought anything for the necessities of to−day. He was obliged in a few months to retrench, by giving up his large house, his gilded coach, and valuable blood−horses, his liveried domestics, and his luxurious entertainments. With this diminution of splendour came a diminution of renown. His cures did not appear so miraculous, when he went out on foot to perform them, as they had seemed when "his Excellency" had driven to a poor man's door in his carriage with six horses. He sank from a prodigy into an ordinary man. His great friends showed him the cold shoulder, and his humble flatterers carried their incense to some other shrine. Borri now thought it high time to change his quarters. With this view he borrowed money wherever he could get it, and succeeded in obtaining two hundred thousand florins from a merchant, named De Meer, to aid, as he said, in discovering the water of life. He also obtained six diamonds, of great value, on pretence that he could remove the flaws from them without diminishing their weight. With this booty he stole away secretly by night, and proceeded to Hamburgh.

On his arrival in that city, he found the celebrated Christina, the ex−Queen of Sweden. He procured an introduction to her, and requested her patronage in his endeavour to discover the philosopher's stone. She gave him some encouragement; but Borri, fearing that the merchants of Amsterdam, who had connexions in Hamburgh, might expose his delinquencies if he remained in the latter city, passed over to Copenhagen, and sought the protection of Frederic III, the King of Denmark.

This Prince was a firm believer in the transmutation of metals. Being in want of money, he readily listened to the plans of an adventurer who had both eloquence and ability to recommend him. He provided Borri with the means to make experiments, and took a great interest in the progress of his operations. He expected every month to possess riches that would buy Peru; and, when he was disappointed, accepted patiently the excuses of Borri who, upon every failure, was always ready with some plausible explanation. He became, in time, much attached to him; and defended him from the jealous attacks of his courtiers, and the indignation of those who were grieved to see their monarch the easy dupe of a charlatan. Borri endeavoured, by every means in his power, to find aliment for this good opinion. His knowledge of medicine was useful to him in this respect, and often stood between him and disgrace. He lived six years in this manner at the court of Frederic; but that monarch dying in 1670, he was left without a protector.

As he had made more enemies than friends in Copenhagen, and had nothing to hope from the succeeding sovereign, he sought an asylum in another country. He went first to Saxony; but met so little encouragement, and encountered so much danger from the emissaries of the Inquisition, that he did not remain there many months. Anticipating nothing but persecution in every country that acknowledged the spiritual authority of the Pope, he appears to have taken the resolution to dwell in Turkey, and turn Mussulman. On his arrival at the Hungarian frontier, on his way to Constantinople, he was arrested on suspicion of being concerned in the conspiracy of the Counts Nadasdi and Frangipani, which had just been discovered. In vain he protested his innocence, and divulged his real name and profession. He was detained in prison, and a letter despatched to the Emperor Leopold to know what should be done with him. The star of his fortunes was on the decline. The letter reached Leopold at an unlucky moment. The Pope's Nuncio was closeted with his Majesty; and he no sooner heard the name of Joseph Francis Borri, than he demanded him as a prisoner of the Holy See. The request was complied with; and Borri, closely manacled, was sent under an escort of soldiers to the prison of the Inquisition at Rome. He was too much of an impostor to be deeply tinged with fanaticism, and was not unwilling to make a public recantation of his heresies if he could thereby save his life. When the proposition was made to him, he accepted it with eagerness. His punishment was to be commuted into the hardly less severe one of perpetual imprisonment; but he was too happy to escape the clutch of the executioner at any price, and he made the amende honorable in face of the assembled multitudes of Rome on the 27th of October 1672. He was then transferred to the prisons of the Castle of St. Angelo, where he remained till his death, twenty−three years afterwards. It is said that, towards the close of his life, considerable indulgence was granted him; that he was allowed to have a laboratory, and to cheer the solitude of his dungeon by searching for the philosopher's stone. Queen Christina, during her residence at Rome, frequently visited the old man, to converse with him upon chemistry and the doctrines of the Rosicrucians. She even obtained permission that he should leave his prison occasionally for a day or two, and reside in her palace, she being responsible for his return to captivity. She encouraged him to search for the great secret of the alchymists, and provided him with money for the purpose. It may well be supposed that Borri benefited most by this acquaintance, and that Christina got nothing but experience. It is not sure that she gained even that; for, until her dying day, she was convinced of the possibility of finding the philosopher's stone, and ready to assist any adventurer either zealous or impudent enough to pretend to it.

After Borri had been about eleven years in confinement, a small volume was published at Cologne, entitled "The Key of the Cabinet of the Chevalier Joseph Francis Borri; in which are contained many curious Letters upon Chemistry and other Sciences, written by him; together with a Memoir of his Life." This book contained a complete exposition of the Rosicrucian philosophy, and afforded materials to the Abbe de Villars for his interesting "Count de Gabalis," which excited so much attention at the close of the seventeenth century.

Borri lingered in the prison of St. Angelo till 1695, when he died in his eightieth year. Besides "The Key of the Cabinet," written originally in Copenhagen, in 1666, for the edification of King Frederic III, he published a work upon alchymy and the secret sciences, under the title of "The Mission of Romulus to the Romans."

INFERIOR ALCHYMISTS OF THE SEVENTEENTH CENTURY.

Besides the pretenders to the philosopher's stone whose lives have been already narrated, this and the preceding century produced a great number of writers, who inundated literature with their books upon the subject. In fact, most of the learned men of that age had some faith in it. Van Helmont, Borrichius, Kirchen, Boerhaave, and a score of others, though not professed alchymists, were fond of the science, and countenanced its professors. Helvetius, the grandfather of the celebrated philosopher of the same name, asserts that he saw an inferior metal turned into gold by a stranger, at the Hague, in 1666. He says that, sitting one day in his study, a man, who was dressed as a respectable burgher of North Holland, and very modest and simple in his appearance, called upon him, with the intention of dispelling his doubts relative to the philosopher's stone. He asked Helvetius if he thought he should know that rare gem if he saw it. To which Helvetius replied, that he certainly should not. The burgher immediately drew from his pocket a small ivory box, containing three pieces of metal, of the colour of brimstone, and extremely heavy; and assured Helvetius, that of them he could make as much as twenty tons of gold. Helvetius informs us, that he examined them very attentively; and seeing that they were very brittle, he took the opportunity to scrape off a very small portion with his thumb−nail. He then returned them to the stranger, with an entreaty that he would perform the process of transmutation before him. The stranger replied, that he was not

allowed to do so, and went away. After his departure, Helvetius procured a crucible and a portion of lead, into which, when in a state of fusion, he threw the stolen grain from the philosopher's stone. He was disappointed to find that the grain evaporated altogether, leaving the lead in its original state.

Some weeks afterwards, when he had almost forgotten the subject, he received another visit from the stranger. He again entreated him to explain the processes by which he pretended to transmute lead. The stranger at last consented, and informed him, that one grain was sufficient; but that it was necessary to envelope it in a ball of wax before throwing it on the molten metal; otherwise its extreme volatility would cause it to go off in vapour. They tried the experiment, and succeeded to their heart's content. Helvetius repeated the experiment alone, and converted six ounces of lead into very pure gold.

The fame of this event spread all over the Hague, and all the notable persons of the town flocked to the study of Helvetius to convince themselves of the fact. Helvetius performed the experiment again, in the presence of the Prince of Orange, and several times afterwards, until he exhausted the whole of the powder he had received from the stranger, from whom, it is necessary to state, he never received another visit; nor did he ever discover his name or condition. In the following year Helvetius published his "Golden Calf," ["Vitulus Aureus quem Mundus adorat et orat, in quo tractatur de naturae miraculo transmutandi metalla."—Hagae, 1667.] in which he detailed the above circumstances.

About the same time, the celebrated Father Kircher published his "Subterranean World," in which he called the alchymists a congregation of knaves and impostors, and their science a delusion. He admitted that he had himself been a diligent labourer in the field, and had only come to this conclusion after mature consideration and repeated fruitless experiments. All the alchymists were in arms immediately, to refute this formidable antagonist. One Solomon de Blauenstein was the first to grapple with him, and attempted to convict him of wilful misrepresentation, by recalling to his memory the transmutations by Sendivogius, before the Emperor Frederic III. and the Elector of Mayence; all performed within a recent period. Zwelfer and Glauber also entered into the dispute, and attributed the enmity of Father Kircher to spite and jealousy against adepts who had been more successful than himself.

It was also pretended that Gustavus Adolphus transmuted a quantity of quicksilver into pure gold. The learned Borrichius relates, that he saw coins which had been struck of this gold; and Lenglet du Fresnoy deposes to the same circumstance. In the Travels of Monconis the story is told in the following manner:— "A merchant of Lubeck, who carried on but little trade, but who knew how to change lead into very good gold, gave the King of Sweden a lingot which he had made, weighing, at least, one hundred pounds. The King immediately caused it to be coined into ducats; and because he knew positively that its origin was such as had been stated to him, he had his own arms graven upon the one side, and emblematical figures of Mercury and Venus on the other. "I," continued Monconis, "have one of these ducats in my possession; and was credibly informed, that, after the death of the Lubeck merchant, who had never appeared very rich, a sum of no less than one million seven hundred thousand crowns was found in his coffers." [Voyages de Monconis, tome ii. p. 379.]

Such stories as these, confidently related by men high in station, tended to keep up the infatuation of the alchymists in every country of Europe. It is astonishing to see the number of works which were written upon the subject during the seventeenth century alone, and the number of clever men who sacrificed themselves to the delusion. Gabriel de Castaigne, a monk of the order of St. Francis, attracted so much notice in the reign of Louis XIII, that that monarch secured him in his household, and made him his Grand Almoner. He pretended to find the elixir of life; and Louis expected, by his means, to have enjoyed the crown for a century. Van Helmont also pretended to have once performed with success the process of transmuting quicksilver; and was, in consequence, invited by the Emperor Rudolph II. to fix his residence at the court of Vienna. Glauber, the inventor of the salts which still bear his name, and who practised as a physician at Amsterdam about the middle of the seventeenth century, established a public school in that city for the study of alchymy, and gave lectures himself upon the science. John Joachim Becher, of Spire, acquired great reputation at the same period; and was convinced that much gold might be made out of flint stones by a peculiar process, and the aid of that grand and incomprehensible substance, the philosopher's stone. He made a proposition to the Emperor Leopold of Austria, to aid him in these experiments; but the hope of success was too remote, and the present expense too great to tempt that monarch; and he therefore gave Becher much of his praise, but none of his money. Becher afterwards tried the States−General of Holland, with no better success.

With regard to the innumerable tricks by which impostors persuaded the world that they had succeeded in making gold, and of which so many stories were current about this period, a very satisfactory report was read by M. Geoffroy, the elder, at the sitting of the Royal Academy of Sciences, at Paris, on the 15th of April, 1722. As it relates principally to the alchymic cheats of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, the following abridgment of it may not be out of place in this portion of our history:— The instances of successful transmutation were so numerous, and apparently so well authenticated, that nothing short of so able an exposure as that of M. Geoffroy could disabuse the public mind. The trick to which they oftenest had recourse, was to use a double−bottomed crucible, the under surface being of iron or copper, and the upper one of wax, painted to resemble the same metal. Between the two they placed as much gold or silver dust as was necessary for their purpose. They then put in their lead, quicksilver, or other ingredients, and placed their pot upon the fire. Of course, when the experiment was concluded, they never failed to find a lump of gold at the bottom. The same result was produced in many other ways. Some of them used a hollow wand, filled with gold or silver dust, and stopped at the ends with wax or butter. With this they stirred the boiling metal in their crucibles, taking care to accompany the operation with many ceremonies, to divert attention from the real purpose of the manoeuvre. They also drilled holes in lumps of lead, into which they poured molten gold, and carefully closed the aperture with the original metal. Sometimes they washed a piece of gold with quicksilver. When in this state they found no difficulty in palming it off upon the uninitiated as an inferior metal, and very easily transmuted it into fine sonorous gold again, with the aid of a little aquafortis.

Others imposed by means of nails, half iron and half gold or silver. They pretended that they really transmuted the precious half from iron, by dipping it in a strong alcohol. M. Geoffroy produced several of these nails to the Academy of Sciences, and showed how nicely the two parts were soldered together. The golden or silver half was painted black to resemble iron, and the colour immediately disappeared when the nail was dipped into aquafortis. A nail of this description was, for a long time, in the cabinet of the Grand Duke of Tuscany. Such also, said M. Geoffroy, was the knife presented by a monk to Queen Elizabeth of England; the blade of which was half gold and half steel. Nothing at one time was more common than to see coins, half gold and half silver, which had been operated upon by alchymists, for the same purposes of trickery. In fact, says M. Geoffroy, in concluding his long report, there is every reason to believe that all the famous histories which have been handed down to us, about the transmutation of metals into gold or silver, by means of the powder of projection, or philosophical elixirs, are founded upon some successful deception of the kind above narrated. These pretended philosophers invariably disappeared after the first or second experiment, or their powders or elixirs have failed to produce their effect, either because attention being excited they have found no opportunity to renew the trick without being discovered, or because they have not had sufficient gold dust for more than one trial.

The disinterestedness of these would−be philosopher looked, at first sight, extremely imposing. Instances were not rare, in which they generously abandoned all the profits of their transmutations − even the honour of the discovery! But this apparent disinterestedness was one of the most cunning of their manoeuvres. It served to keep up the popular expectation; it showed the possibility of discovering the philosopher's stone, and provided the means of future advantages, which they were never slow to lay hold of — such as entrances into royal households, maintenance at the public expense, and gifts from ambitious potentates, too greedy after the gold they so easily promised.

It now only remains to trace the progress of the delusion from the commencement of the eighteenth century until the present day. It will be seen, that until a very recent period, there were but slight signs of a return to reason.

JEAN DELISLE.

In the year 1705, there was much talk in France of a blacksmith, named Delisle, who had discovered the philosopher's stone, and who went about the country turning lead into gold. He was a native of Provence, from which place his fame soon spread to the capital. His early life is involved in obscurity; but Longlet du Fresnoy has industriously collected some particulars of his later career, which possess considerable interest. He was a man without any education, and had been servant in his youth to an alchymist, from whom he learned many of the tricks of the fraternity. The name of his master has never been discovered; but it is pretended that he rendered himself in some manner obnoxious to the government of Louis XIV, and was obliged, in consequence, to take

refuge in Switzerland. Delisle accompanied him as far as Savoy, and there, it is said, set upon him in a solitary mountain−pass, and murdered and robbed him. He then disguised himself as a pilgrim, and returned to France. At a lonely inn, by the road−side, where he stopped for the night, he became acquainted with a woman, named Aluys; and so sudden a passion was enkindled betwixt them, that she consented to leave all, follow him, and share his good or evil fortune wherever he went. They lived together for five or six years in Provence, without exciting any attention, apparently possessed of a decent independence. At last, in 1706, it was given out that he was the possessor of the philosopher's stone; and people, from far and near, came flocking to his residence, at the Chateau de la Palu, at Sylanez, near Barjaumont, to witness the wealth he could make out of pumps and fire shovels. The following account of his operations is given in a letter addressed by M. de Cerisy, the Prior of Chateauneuf, in the Diocese of Riez, in Provence, to the Vicar of St. Jacques du Hautpas, at Paris, and dated the 18th of November 1706:—

"I have something to relate to you, my dear cousin, which will be interesting to you and your friends. The philosopher's stone, which so many persons have looked upon as a chimera, is at last found. It is a man named Delisle, of the parish of Sylanez, and residing within a quarter of a league of me, that has discovered this great secret. He turns lead into gold, and iron into silver, by merely heating these metals red hot, and pouring upon them, in that state, some oil and powder he is possessed of; so that it would not be impossible for any man to make a million a day, if he had sufficient of this wondrous mixture. Some of the pale gold which he had made in this manner, he sent to the jewellers of Lyons, to have their opinion on its quality. He also sold twenty pounds weight of it to a merchant of Digne, named Taxis. All the jewellers say they never saw such fine gold in their lives. He makes nails, part gold, part iron, and part silver. He promised to give me one of them, in a long conversation which I had with him the other day, by order of the Bishop of Sends, who saw his operations with his own eyes, and detailed all the circumstances to me.

"The Baron and Baroness de Rheinwald showed me a lingot of gold made out of pewter before their eyes by M. Delisle. My brother−in−law Sauveur, who has wasted fifty years of his life in this great study, brought me the other day a nail which he had seen changed into gold by Delisle, and fully convinced me that all his previous experiments were founded on an erroneous principle. This excellent workman received, a short time ago, a very kind letter from the superintendent of the royal household, which I read. He offered to use all his influence with the ministers to prevent any attempts upon his liberty, which has twice been attacked by the agents of government. It is believed that the oil he makes use of, is gold or silver reduced to that state. He leaves it for a long time exposed to the rays of the sun. He told me that it generally took him six months to make all his preparations. I told him that, apparently, the King wanted to see him. He replied that he could not exercise his art in every place, as a certain climate and temperature were absolutely necessary to his success. The truth is, that this man appears to have no ambition. He only keeps two horses and two men−servants. Besides, he loves his liberty, has no politeness, and speaks very bad French; but his judgment seems to be solid. He was formerly no more than a blacksmith, but excelled in that trade without having been taught it. All the great lords and seigneurs from far and near come to visit him, and pay such court to him, that it seems more like idolatry than anything else. Happy would France be if this man would discover his secret to the King, to whom the superintendent has already sent some lingots! But the happiness is too great to be hoped for; for I fear that the workman and his secret will expire together. There is no doubt that this discovery will make a great noise in the kingdom, unless the character of the man, which I have just depicted to you, prevent it. At all events, posterity will hear of him."

In another letter to the same person, dated the 27th of January 1707, M. de Cerisy says, "My dear cousin, I spoke to you in my last letter of the famous alchymist of Provence, M. Delisle. A good deal of that was only hearsay, but now I am enabled to speak from my own experience. I have in my possession a nail, half iron and half silver, which I made myself. That great and admirable workman also bestowed a still greater privilege upon me — he allowed me to turn a piece of lead which I had brought with me into pure gold, by means of his wonderful oil and powder. All the country have their eyes upon this gentleman: some deny loudly, others are incredulous; but those who have seen acknowledge the truth. I have read the passport that has been sent to him from Court, with orders that he should present himself at Paris early in the spring. He told me that he would go willingly, and that it was himself who fixed the spring for his departure; as he wanted to collect his materials, in order that, immediately on his introduction to the King, he might make an experiment worthy of his Majesty, by converting a large quantity of lead into the finest gold. I sincerely hope that he will not allow his secret to die with

him, but that he will communicate it to the King. As I had the honour to dine with him on Thursday last, the 20th of this month, being seated at his side, I told him in a whisper that he could, if he liked, humble all the enemies of France. He did not deny it, but began to smile. In fact, this man is the miracle of art. Sometimes he employs the oil and powder mixed, sometimes the powder only, but in so small a quantity that, when the lingot which I made was rubbed all over with it, it did not show at all."

This soft−headed priest was by no means the only person in the neighbourhood who lost his wits in hopes of the boundless wealth held out by this clever impostor. Another priest, named De Lions, a chanter in the cathedral of Grenoble, writing on the 30th January 1707, says, — "M. Mesnard, the curate of Montier, has written to me, stating that there is a man, about thirty−five years of age, named Delisle, who turns lead and iron into gold and silver; and that this transmutation is so veritable and so true, that the goldsmiths affirm that his gold and silver are the purest and finest they ever saw. For five years, this man was looked upon as a madman or a cheat; but the public mind is now disabused with respect to him. He now resides with M. de la Palu, at the chateau of the same name. M. de la Palu is not very easy in his circumstances, and wants money to portion his daughters, who have remained single till middle age, no man being willing to take them without a dowry. M. Delisle has promised to make them the richest girls in the province before he goes to Court, having been sent for by the King. He has asked for a little time before his departure, in order that he may collect powder enough to make several quintals of gold before the eyes of his Majesty, to whom he intends to present them. The principal matter of his wonderful powder is composed of simples, principally the herbs Lunaria major and minor. There is a good deal of the first planted by him in the gardens of La Palu; and he gets the other from the mountains, that stretch about two leagues from Montier. What I tell you now is not a mere story invented for your diversion: M. Mesnard can bring forward many witnesses to its truth; among others, the Bishop of Senes, who saw these surprising operations performed; and M. de Cerisy, whom you know well. Delisle transmutes his metals in public. He rubs the lead or iron with his powder, and puts it over burning charcoal. In a short time it changes colour; the lead becomes yellow, and is found to be converted into excellent gold: the iron becomes white, and is found to be pure silver. Delisle is altogether an illiterate person. M. de St. Auban endeavoured to teach him to read and write, but he profited very little by his lessons. He is unpolite, fantastic, and a dreamer, and acts by fits and starts."

Delisle, it would appear, was afraid of venturing to Paris. He knew that his sleight of hand would be too narrowly watched in the royal presence; and upon some pretence or other, he delayed the journey for more than two years. Desmarets, the Minister of Finance to Louis XIV, thinking the "philosopher" dreaded foul play, twice sent him a safe conduct under the King's seal; but Delisle still refused. Upon this, Desmarets wrote to the Bishop of Sends for his real opinion as to these famous transmutations. The following was the answer of that prelate:—

"Copy of a report addressed to M. Desmarets, Comptroller−General of
the Finances to His Majesty Louis XIV, by the Bishop of Senes,
dated March 1709.

"SIR,

"A twelvemonth ago, or a little more, I expressed to you my joy at hearing of your elevation to the ministry; I have now the honour to write you my opinion of the Sieur Delisle, who has been working at the transmutation of metals in my diocese. I have, during the last two years, spoken of him several times to the Count de Pontchartrain, because he asked me; but I have not written to you, sir, or to M. de Chamillart, because you neither of you requested my opinion upon the subject. Now, however, that you have given me to understand that you wish to know my sentiments on the matter, I will unfold myself to you in all sincerity, for the interests of the King and the glory of your ministry.

"There are two things about the Sieur Delisle which, in my opinion, should be examined without prejudice: the one relates to his secret; the other, to his person; that is to say, whether his transmutations are real, and whether his conduct has been regular. As regards the secret of the philosopher's stone, I deemed it impossible, for a long time; and for more than three years, I was more mistrustful of the pretensions of this Sieur Delisle than of any other person. During this period I afforded him no countenance; I even aided a person, who was highly recommended to me by an influential family of this province, to prosecute Delisle for some offence or other which it was alleged he had committed. But this person, in his anger against him, having told me that he had himself been several times the bearer of gold and silver to the goldsmiths of Nice, Aix, and Avignon, which had been transmuted by Delisle from lead and iron, I began to waver a little in my opinions respecting him. I

afterwards met Delisle at the house of one of my friends. To please me, the family asked Delisle to operate before me, to which he immediately consented. I offered him some iron nails, which he changed into silver in the chimney−place before six or seven credible witnesses. I took the nails thus transmuted, and sent them by my almoner to Irabert, the jeweller of Aix, who, having subjected them to the necessary trial, returned them to me, saying they were very good silver. Still, however, I was not quite satisfied. M. de Pontchartrain having hinted to me, two years previously, that I should do a thing agreeable to his Majesty if I examined into this business of Delisle, I resolved to do so now. I therefore summoned the alchymist to come to me at Castellane. He came; and I had him escorted by eight or ten vigilant men, to whom I had given notice to watch his hands strictly. Before all of us he changed two pieces of lead into gold and silver. I sent them both to M. de Pontchartrain; and he afterwards informed me by a letter, now lying before me, that he had shown them to the most experienced goldsmiths of Paris, who unanimously pronounced them to be gold and silver of the very purest quality, and without alloy. My former bad opinion of Delisle was now indeed shaken. It was much more so when he performed transmutation five or six times before me at Senes, and made me perform it myself before him without his putting his hand to anything. You have seen, sir, the letter of my nephew, the Pere Berard, of the Oratoire at Paris, on the experiment that he performed at Castellane, and the truth of which I hereby attest. Another nephew of mine, the Sieur Bourget, who was here three weeks ago, performed the same experiment in my presence, and will detail all the circumstances to you personally at Paris. A hundred persons in my diocese have been witnesses of these things. I confess to you, sir, that, after the testimony of so many spectators and so many goldsmiths, and after the repeatedly successful experiments that I saw performed, all my prejudices vanished. My reason was convinced by my eyes; and the phantoms of impossibility which I had conjured up were dissipated by the work of my own hands.

"It now only remains for me to speak to you on the subject of his person and conduct. Three suspicions have been excited against him: the first, That he was implicated in some criminal proceeding at Cisteron, and that he falsified the coin of the realm; the second, That the King sent him two safe−conducts without effect; and the third, That he still delays going to court to operate before the King. You may see, sir, that I do not hide or avoid anything. As regards the business at Cisteron, the Sieur Delisle has repeatedly assured me that there was nothing against him which could reasonably draw him within the pale of justice, and that he had never carried on any calling injurious to the King's service. It was true that, six or seven years ago, he had been to Cisteron to gather herbs necessary for his powder, and that he had lodged at the house of one Pelouse, whom he thought an honest man. Pelouse was accused of clipping Louis d'ors; and as he had lodged with him, he was suspected of being his accomplice. This mere suspicion, without any proof whatever, had caused him to be condemned for contumacy; a common case enough with judges, who always proceed with much rigour against those who are absent. During my own sojourn at Aix, it was well known that a man, named Andre Aluys, had spread about reports injurious to the character of Delisle, because he hoped thereby to avoid paying him a sum of forty Louis that he owed him. But permit me, sir, to go further, and to add that, even if there were well−founded supicions against Delisle, we should look with some little indulgence on the faults of a man who possesses a secret so useful to the state. As regards the two safe−conducts sent him by the King, I think I can answer certainly that it was through no fault of his that he paid so little attention to them. His year, strictly speaking, consists only of the four summer months; and when by any means he is prevented from making the proper use of them, he loses a whole year. Thus the first safe−conduct became useless by the irruption of the Duke of Savoy in 1707; and the second had hardly been obtained, at the end of June 1708, when the said Delisle was insulted by a party of armed men, pretending to act under the authority of the Count de Grignan, to whom he wrote several letters of complaint, without receiving any answer, or promise that his safety would be attended to. What I have now told you, sir, removes the third objection, and is the reason why, at the present time, he cannot go to Paris to the King, in fulfilment of his promises made two years ago. Two, or even three, summers have been lost to him, owing to the continual inquietude he has laboured under. He has, in consequence, been unable to work, and has not collected a sufficient quantity of his oil and powder, or brought what he has got to the necessary degree of perfection. For this reason also he could not give the Sieur de Bourget the portion he promised him for your inspection. If the other day he changed some lead into gold with a few grains of his powder, they were assuredly all he had; for he told me that such was the fact long before he knew my nephew was coming. Even if he had preserved this small quantity to operate before the King, I am sure that, on second thoughts, he would never have adventured with so little;

because the slightest obstacles in the metals (their being too hard or too soft, which is only discovered in operating) would have caused him to be looked upon as an impostor, if, in case his first powder had proved ineffectual, he had not been possessed of more to renew the experiment and surmount the difficulty.

"Permit me, sir, in conclusion, to repeat that such an artist as this should not be driven to the last extremity, nor forced to seek an asylum offered to him in other countries, but which he has despised, as much from his own inclinations as from the advice I have given him. You risk nothing in giving him a little time, and in hurrying him you may lose a great deal. The genuineness of his gold can no longer be doubted, after the testimony of so many jewellers of Aix, Lyons, and Paris in its favour. As it is not his fault that the previous safe−conducts sent to him have been of no service, it will be necessary to send him another; for the success of which I will be answerable, if you will confide the matter to me, and trust to my zeal for the service of his Majesty, to whom I pray you to communicate this letter, that I may be spared the just reproaches he might one day heap upon me if he remained ignorant of the facts I have now written to you. Assure him, if you please, that, if you send me such a safe−conduct, I will oblige the Sieur Delisle to depose with me such precious pledges of his fidelity, as shall enable me to be responsible myself to the King. These are my sentiments, and I submit them to your superior knowledge; and have the honour to remain, with much respect,

"* JOHN, Bishop of Senes."

"To M. Desmarets, Minister of State, and

"Comptroller−General of the Finances, at Paris."

That Delisle was no ordinary impostor, but a man of consummate cunning and address, is very evident from this letter. The Bishop was fairly taken in by his clever legerdemain, and when once his first distrust was conquered, appeared as anxious to deceive himself as even Delisle could have wished. His faith was so abundant that he made the case of his protege his own, and would not suffer the breath of suspicion to be directed against him. Both Louis and his minister appear to have been dazzled by the brilliant hopes he had excited, and a third pass, or safe−conduct, was immediately sent to the alchymist, with a command from the King that he should forthwith present himself at Versailles, and make public trial of his oil and powder. But this did not suit the plans of Delisle: in the provinces he was regarded as a man of no small importance; the servile flattery that awaited him wherever he went was so grateful to his mind that he could not willingly relinquish it and run upon certain detection at the court of the Monarch. Upon one pretext or another he delayed his journey, notwithstanding the earnest solicitations of his good friend the Bishop. The latter had given his word to the minister, and pledged his honour that he would induce Delisle to go, and he began to be alarmed when he found he could not subdue the obstinacy of that individual. For more than two years he continued to remonstrate with him, and was always met by some excuse, that there was not sufficient powder, or that it had not been long enough exposed to the rays of the sun. At last his patience was exhausted; and fearful that he might suffer in the royal estimation by longer delay, he wrote to the King for a lettre de cachet, in virtue of which the alchymist was seized at the castle of La Palu, in the month of June 1711, and carried off to be imprisoned in the Bastille.

The gendarmes were aware that their prisoner was supposed to be the lucky possessor of the philosopher's stone, and on the road they conspired to rob and murder him. One of them pretended to be touched with pity for the misfortunes of the philosopher, and offered to give him an opportunity of escape whenever he could divert the attention of his companions. Delisle was profuse in his thanks, little dreaming of the snare that was laid for him. His treacherous friend gave notice of the success of the stratagem so far; and it was agreed that Delisle should be allowed to struggle with and overthrow one of them while the rest were at some distance. They were then to pursue him and shoot him through the heart; and after robbing the corpse of the philosopher's stone, convey it to Paris on a cart, and tell M. Desmarets that the prisoner had attempted to escape, and would have succeeded, if they had not fired after him and shot him through the body. At a convenient place the scheme was executed. At a given signal from the friendly gendarme Delisle fled, while another gendarme took aim and shot him through the thigh. Some peasants arriving at the instant, they were prevented from killing him as they intended; and he was transported to Paris, maimed and bleeding. He was thrown into a dungeon in the Bastille, and obstinately tore away the bandages which the surgeons applied to his wound. He never afterwards rose from his bed.

The Bishop of Senes visited him in prison, and promised him his liberty if he would transmute a certain quantity of lead into gold before the King. The unhappy man had no longer the means of carrying on the

deception; he had no gold, and no double−bottomed crucible or hollow wand to conceal it in, even if he had. He would not, however, confess that he was an impostor; but merely said he did not know how to make the powder of projection, but had received a quantity from an Italian philosopher, and had used it all in his various transmutations in Provence. He lingered for seven or eight months in the Bastille, and died from the effects of his wound, in the forty−first year of his age.

ALBERT ALUYS.

This pretender to the philosopher's stone, was the son, by a former husband, of the woman Aluys, with whom Delisle became acquainted at the commencement of his career, in the cabaret by the road side, and whom he afterwards married. Delisle performed the part of a father towards him, and thought he could show no stronger proof of his regard, than by giving him the necessary instructions to carry on the deception which had raised himself to such a pitch of greatness. The young Aluys was an apt scholar, and soon mastered all the jargon of the alchymists. He discoursed learnedly upon projections, cimentations, sublimations, the elixir of life, and the universal alkahest; and on the death of Delisle gave out that the secret of that great adept had been communicated to him, and to him only. His mother aided in the fraud, with the hope they might both fasten themselves, in the true alchymical fashion, upon some rich dupe, who would entertain them magnificently while the operation was in progress. The fate of Delisle was no inducement for them to stop in France. The Provencals, it is true, entertained as high an opinion as ever of his skill, and were well inclined to believe the tales of the young adept on whom his mantle had fallen; but the dungeons of the Bastille were yawning for their prey, and Aluys and his mother decamped with all convenient expedition. They travelled about the Continent for several years, sponging upon credulous rich men, and now and then performing successful transmutations by the aid of double−bottomed crucibles and the like. In the year 1726, Aluys, without his mother, who appears to have died in the interval, was at Vienna, where he introduced himself to the Duke de Richelieu, at that time ambassador from the court of France. He completely deceived this nobleman; he turned lead into gold (apparently) on several occasions, and even made the ambassador himself turn an iron nail into a silver one. The Duke afterwards boasted to Lenglet du Fresnoy of his achievements as an alchymist, and regretted that be had not been able to discover the secret of the precious powder by which he performed them.

Aluys soon found that, although he might make a dupe of the Duke de Richelieu, he could not get any money from him. On the contrary, the Duke expected all his pokers and fire shovels to be made silver, and all his pewter utensils gold; and thought the honour of his acquaintance was reward sufficient for a roturier, who could not want wealth since he possessed so invaluable a secret. Aluys seeing that so much was expected of him, bade adieu to his Excellency, and proceeded to Bohemia, accompanied by a pupil, and by a young girl who had fallen in love with him in Vienna. Some noblemen in Bohemia received him kindly, and entertained him at their houses for months at a time. It was his usual practice to pretend that he possessed only a few grains of his powder, with which he would operate in any house where he intended to fix his quarters for the season. He would make the proprietor a present of the piece of gold thus transmuted, and promise him millions, if he could only be provided with leisure to gather his lunaria major and minor on their mountain tops, and board, lodging, and loose cash for himself, his wife, and his pupil in the interval.

He exhausted in this manner the patience of some dozen of people, when, thinking that there was less danger for him in France, under the young king Louis XV, than under his old and morose predecessor, he returned to Provence. On his arrival at Aix, he presented himself before M. le Bret, the President of the province, a gentleman who was much attached to the pursuits of alchymy, and had great hopes of being himself able to find the philosopher's stone. M. le Bret, contrary to his expectation, received him very coolly, in consequence of some rumours that were spread abroad respecting him; and told him to call upon him on the morrow. Aluys did not like the tone of the voice, or the expression of the eye of the learned President, as that functionary looked down upon him. Suspecting that all was not right, he left Aix secretly the same evening, and proceeded to Marseilles. But the police were on the watch for him; and he had not been there four−and−twenty hours, before he was arrested on a charge of coining, and thrown into prison.

As the proofs against him were too convincing to leave him much hope of an acquittal, he planned an escape from durance. It so happened that the gaoler had a pretty daughter, and Aluys soon discovered that she was tender−hearted. He deavoured to gain her in his favour, and succeeded. The damsel, unaware that he was a

married man, conceived and encouraged a passion for him, and generously provided him with the means of escape. After he had been nearly a year in prison he succeeded in getting free, leaving the poor girl behind, to learn that be was already married, and to lament in solitude that she had given her heart to an ungrateful vagabond.

When he left Marseilles, he had not a shoe to his foot, or a decent garment to his back, but was provided with some money and clothes by his wife in a neighbouring town. They then found their way to Brussels, and by dint of excessive impudence, brought themselves into notice. He took a house, fitted up a splendid laboratory, and gave out that he knew the secret of transmutation. In vain did M. Percel, the brother−in−law of Lenglet du Fresnoy, who resided in that city, expose his pretensions, and hold him up to contempt as an ignorant impostor: the world believed him not. They took the alchymist at his word, and besieged his doors, to see and wonder at the clever legerdemain by which he turned iron nails into gold and silver. A rich greffier paid him a large sum of money that he might be instructed in the art, and Aluys gave him several lessons on the most common principles of chemistry. The greffier studied hard for a twelvemonth, and then discovered that his master was a quack. He demanded his money back again; but Aluys was not inclined to give it him, and the affair was brought before the civil tribunal of the province. In the mean time, however, the greffier died suddenly; poisoned, according to the popular rumour, by his debtor, to avoid repayment. So great an outcry arose in the city, that Aluys, who may have been innocent of the crime, was nevertheless afraid to remain and brave it. He withdrew secretly in the night, and retired to Paris. Here all trace of him is lost. He was never heard of again; but Lenglet du Fresnoy conjectures, that he ended his days in some obscure dungeon, into which he was cast for coining, or other malpracticcs.

THE COUNT DE ST. GERMAIN

This adventurer was of a higher grade than the last, and played a distinguished part at the court of Louis XV. He pretended to have discovered the elixir of life, by means of which he could make any one live for centuries; and allowed it to be believed that his own age was upwards of two thousand years. He entertained many of the opinions of the Rosicrucians; boasted of his intercourse with sylphs and salamanders; and of his power of drawing diamonds from the earth, and pearls from the sea, by the force of his incantations. He did not lay claim to the merit of having discovered the philosopher's stone; but devoted so much of his time to the operations of alchymy, that it was very generally believed, that, if such a thing as the philosopher's stone had ever existed, or could be called into existence, he was the man to succeed in finding it.

It has never yet been discovered what was his real name, or in what country he was born. Some believed, from the Jewish cast of his handsome countenance, that he was the "wandering Jew;" others asserted, that he was the issue of an Arabian princess, and that his father was a salamander; while others, more reasonable, affirmed him to be the son of a Portuguese Jew, established at Bourdeaux. He first carried on his imposture in Germany, where he made considerable sums by selling an elixir to arrest the progress of old age. The Marechal de Belle−Isle purchased a dose of it; and was so captivated with the wit, learning, and good manners of the charlatan, and so convinced of the justice of his most preposterous pretensions, that he induced him to fix his residence in Paris. Under the Marshal's patronage, he first appeared in the gay circles of that capital. Every one was delighted with the mysterious stranger; who, at this period of his life, appears to have been about seventy years of age, but did not look more than forty−five. His easy assurance imposed upon most people. His reading was extensive, and his memory extraordinarily tenacious of the slightest circumstances. His pretension to have lived for so many centuries naturally exposed him to some puzzling questions, as to the appearance, life, and conversation of the great men of former days; but he was never at a loss for an answer. Many who questioned him for the purpose of scoffing at him, refrained in perplexity, quite bewildered by his presence of mind, his ready replies, and his astonishing accuracy on every point mentioned in history. To increase the mystery by which he was surrounded, he permitted no person to know how he lived. He dressed in a style of the greatest magnificence; sported valuable diamonds in his hat, on his fingers, and in his shoe−buckles; and sometimes made the most costly presents to the ladies of the court. It was suspected by many that he was a spy, in the pay of the English ministry; but there never was a tittle of evidence to support the charge. The King looked upon him with marked favour, was often closeted with him for hours together, and would not suffer anybody to speak disparagingly of him. Voltaire constantly turned him into ridicule; and, in one of his letters to the King of Prussia, mentions him as "un comte pour fire;" and states, that he pretended to have dined with the holy fathers, at the Council of Trent!

In the "Memoirs of Madame du Hausset," chamber−woman to Madame du Pompadour, there are some amusing anecdotes of this personage. Very soon after his arrival in Paris, he had the entree of her dressing−room; a favour only granted to the most powerful lords at the court of her royal lover. Madame was fond of conversing with him; and, in her presence, he thought fit to lower his pretensions very considerably: but he often allowed her to believe that he had lived two or three hundred years, at least. "One day," says Madame du Hausset, "Madame said to him, in my presence, 'What was the personal appearance of Francis I? He was a King I should have liked.' 'He was, indeed, very captivating,' replied St. Germain; and he proceeded to describe his face and person, as that of a man whom he had accurately observed. 'It is a pity he was too ardent. I could have given him some good advice, which would have saved him from all his misfortunes: but he would not have followed it; for it seems as if a fatality attended princes, forcing them to shut their ears to the wisest counsel.' 'Was his court very brilliant?' inquired Madame du Pompadour. 'Very,' replied the Count; 'but those of his grandsons surpassed it. In the time of Mary Stuart and Margaret of Valois, it was a land of enchantment — a temple sacred to pleasures of every kind.' Madame said, laughing, 'You seem to have seen all this.' 'I have an excellent memory,' said he, 'and have read the history of France with great care. I sometimes amuse myself, not by making, but by letting, it be believed that I lived in old times.'

"'But you do not tell us your age,' said Madame du Pompadour to him on another occasion; 'and yet you pretend you are very old. The Countess de Gergy, who was, I believe, ambassadress at Vienna some fifty years ago, says she saw you there, exactly the same as you now appear.'

"'It is true, Madam,' replied St. Germain; 'I knew Madame de Gergy many years ago.'

"'But, according to her account, you must be more than a hundred years old?'

"'That is not impossible,' said he, laughing; 'but it is much more possible that the good lady is in her dotage.'

"'You gave her an elixir, surprising for the effects it produced; for she says, that during a length of time, she only appeared to be eighty−four; the age at which she took it. Why don't you give it to the King ?'

"'0 Madam !' he exclaimed, 'the physicians would have me broken on the wheel, were I to think of drugging his Majesty.'"

When the world begins to believe extraordinary things of an individual, there is no telling where its extravagance will stop. People, when once they have taken the start, vie with each other who shall believe most. At this period all Paris resounded with the wonderful adventures of the Count de St. Germain; and a company of waggish young men tried the following experiment upon its credulity:− A clever mimic, who, on account of the amusement he afforded, was admitted into good society, was taken by them, dressed as the Count de St. Germain, into several houses in the Rue du Marais. He imitated the Count's peculiarities admirably, and found his auditors open−mouthed to believe any absurdity he chose to utter. NO fiction was too monstrous for their all−devouring credulity. He spoke of the Saviour of the world in terms of the greatest familiarity; said he had supped with him at the marriage in Canaan of Galilee, where the water was miraculously turned into wine. In fact, he said he was an intimate friend of his, and had often warned him to be less romantic and imprudent, or he would finish his career miserably. This infamous blasphemy, strange to say, found believers; and, ere three days had elapsed, it was currently reported that St. Germain was born soon after the deluge, and that he would never die!

St. Germain himself was too much a man of the world to assert anything so monstrous; but he took no pains to contradict the story. In all his conversations with persons of rank and education, he advanced his claims modestly, and as if by mere inadvertency; and seldom pretended to a longevity beyond three hundred years; except when he found he was in company with persons who would believe anything. He often spoke of Henry VIII, as if he had known him intimately; and of the Emperor Charles V, as if that monarch had delighted in his society. He would describe conversations which took place with such an apparent truthfulness, and be so exceedingly minute and particular as to the dress and appearance of the individuals, and even the weather at the time, and the furniture of the room, that three persons out of four were generally inclined to credit him. He had constant applications from rich old women for an elixir to make them young again; and, it would appear, gained large sums in this manner. To those whom he was pleased to call his friends, he said, his mode of living and plan of diet were far superior to any elixir; and that anybody might attain a patriarchal age, by refraining from drinking at meals, and very sparingly at any other time. The Baron de Gleichen followed this system, and took great quantities of senna leaves, expecting to live for two hundred years. He died, however, at seventy−three. The Duchess de Choiseul was desirous of following the same system; but the Duke her husband, in much wrath, forbade her to follow any

system prescribed by a man who had so equivocal a reputation as M. de St. Germain.

Madame du Hausset says, she saw St. Germain, and conversed with him several times. He appeared to her to be about fifty years of age, was of the middle size, and had fine expressive features. His dress was always simple, but displayed much taste. He usually wore diamond rings of great value; and his watch and snuff−box were ornamented with a profusion of precious stones. One day, at Madame du Pompadour's apartments, where the principal courtiers were assembled, St. Germain made his appearance in diamond knee and shoe buckles, of so fine a water, that Madame said, she did not think the King had any equal to them. He was entreated to pass into the antechamber, and undo them; which he did, and brought them to Madame, for closer inspection. M. de Gontant, who was present, said their value could not be less than two hundred thousand livres, or upwards of eight thousand pounds sterling. The Baron de Gleichen, in his "Memoirs," relates, that the Count one day showed him so many diamonds, that he thought he saw before him all the treasures of Aladdin's lamp; and adds, that he had had great experience in precious stones, and was convinced that all those possessed by the Count were genuine. On another occasion, St. Germain showed Madame du Pompadour a small box, containing topazes, emeralds, and diamonds, worth half a million of livres. He affected to despise all this wealth, to make the world more easily believe that he could, like the Rosicrucians, draw precious stones out of the earth by the magic of his song. He gave away a great number of these jewels to the ladies of the court; and Madame du Pompadour was so charmed with his generosity, that she gave him a richly−enamelled snuff−box, as a token of her regard; on the lid of which was beautifully painted a portrait of Socrates, or some other Greek sage, to whom she compared him. He was not only lavish to the mistresses, but to the maids. Madame du Hausset says, — "The Count came to see Madame du Pompadour, who was very ill, and lay on the sofa. He showed her diamonds enough to furnish a king's treasury. Madame sent for me to see all those beautiful things. I looked at them with an air of the utmost astonishment; but I made signs to her, that I thought them all false. The Count felt for something in a pocket−book about twice as large as a spectacle−case; and, at length, drew out two or three little paper packets, which he unfolded, and exhibited a superb ruby. He threw on the table, with a contumptuous air, a little cross of green and white stones. I looked at it, and said it was not to be despised. I then put it on, and admired it greatly. The Count begged me to accept it. I refused. He urged me to take it. At length, he pressed so warmly, that Madame, seeing it could not be worth more than a thousand livres, made me a sign to accept it. I took the cross, much pleased with the Count's politeness."

How the adventurer obtained his wealth remains a secret. He could not have made it all by the sale of his elixir vitae in Germany; though, no doubt, some portion of it was derived from that source. Voltaire positively says, he was in the pay of foreign governments; and in his letter to the King of Prussia, dated the 5th of April 1758, says, that he was initiated in all the secrets of Choiseul, Kaunitz, and Pitt. Of what use he could be to any of those ministers, and to Choiseul especially, is a mystery of mysteries.

There appears no doubt that he possessed the secret of removing spots from diamonds; and, in all probability, he gained considerable sums by buying, at inferior prices, such as had flaws in them, and afterwards disposing of them at a profit of cent. per cent. Madame du Hausset relates the following anecdote on this particular:— "The King," says she, "ordered a middling−sized diamond, which had a flaw in it, to be brought to him. After having it weighed, his Majesty said to the Count, 'The value of this diamond, as it is, and with the flaw in it, is six thousand livres; without the flaw, it would be worth, at least, ten thousand. Will you undertake to make me a gainer of four thousand livres?' St. Germain examined it very attentively, and said, 'It is possible; it may be done. I will bring it you again in a month.' At the time appointed, the Count brought back the diamond, without a spot, and gave it to the King. It was wrapped in a cloth of amianthos, which he took off. The King had it weighed immediately, and found it very little diminished. His Majesty then sent it to his jeweller, by M. de Gonrant, without telling him of anything that had passed. The jeweller gave nine thousand six hundred livres for it. The King, however, sent for the diamond back again, and said he would keep it as a curiosity. He could not overcome his surprise; and said M. de St. Germain must be worth millions; especially if he possessed the secret of making large diamonds out of small ones. The Count neither said that he could, or could not; but positively asserted, that he knew how to make pearls grow, and give them the finest water. The King paid him great attention, and so did Madame du Pompadour. M. du Quesnoy once said, that St. Germain was a quack; but the King reprimanded him. In fact, his Majesty appears infatuated by him; and sometimes talks of him as if his descent were illustrious."

St. Germain had a most amusing vagabond for a servant, to whom he would often appeal for corrobation,

when relating some wonderful event that happened centuries before. The fellow, who was not without ability, generally corroborated him in a most satisfactory manner. Upon one occasion, his master was telling a party of ladies and gentlemen, at dinner, some conversation he had had in Palestine, with King Richard I. of England, whom he described as a very particular friend of his. Signs of astonishment and incredulity were visible on the faces of the company; upon which St. Germain very coolly turned to his servant, who stood behind his chair, and asked him if he had not spoken truth? "I really cannot say," replied the man, without moving a muscle; "you forget, sir, I have only been five hundred years in your service!" "Ah! true," said his master; "I remember now; it was a little before your time!" Occasionally, when with men whom he could not so easily dupe, he gave utterance to the contempt with which he could scarcely avoid regarding such gaping credulity. "These fools of Parisians," said he, to the Baron de Gleichen, "believe me to be more than five hundred years old; and, since they will have it so, I confirm them in their idea. Not but that I really am much older than I appear."

Many other stories are related of this strange impostor; but enough have been quoted to show his character and pretensions. It appears that he endeavoured to find the philosopher's stone; but never boasted of possessing it. The Prince of Hesse Cassel, whom he had known years before, in Germany, wrote urgent letters to him, entreating him to quit Paris, and reside with him. St. Germain at last consented. Nothing further is known of his career. There were no gossipping memoir−writers at the court of Hesse Cassel to chronicle his sayings and doings. He died at Sleswig, under the roof of his friend the Prince, in the year 1784.

CAGLIOSTRO,

This famous charlatan, the friend and successor of St. Germain, ran a career still more extraordinary. He was the arch−quack of his age, the last of the great pretenders to the philosopher's stone and the water of life, and during his brief season of prosperity one of the most conspicuous characters of Europe.

His real name was Joseph Balsamo. He was born at Palermo about the year 1743, of humble parentage. He had the misfortune to lose his father during his infancy, and his education was left in consequence to some relatives of his mother, the latter being too poor to afford him any instruction beyond mere reading and writing. He was sent in his fifteenth year to a monastery, to be taught the elements of chemistry and physic; but his temper was so impetuous, his indolence so invincible, and his vicious habits so deeply rooted, that he made no progress. After remaining some years, he left it with the character of an uninformed and dissipated young man, with good natural talents but a bad disposition. When he became of age, he abandoned himself to a life of riot and debauchery, and entered himself, in fact, into that celebrated fraternity, known in France and Italy as the "Knights of Industry," and in England as the "Swell Mob." He was far from being an idle or unwilling member of the corps. The first way in which he distinguished himself was by forging orders of admission to the theatres. He afterwards robbed his uncle, and counterfeited a will. For acts like these, he paid frequent compulsory visits to the prisons of Palermo. Somehow or other he acquired the character of a sorcerer − of a man who had failed in discovering the secrets of alchymy, and had sold his soul to the devil for the gold which he was not able to make by means of transmutation. He took no pains to disabuse the popular mind on this particular, but rather encouraged the belief than otherwise. He at last made use of it to cheat a silversmith, named Marano, of about sixty ounces of gold, and was in consequence obliged to leave Palermo. He persuaded this man that he could show him a treasure hidden in a cave, for which service he was to receive the sixty ounces of gold, while the silversmith was to have all the treasure for the mere trouble of digging it up. They went together at midnight to an excavation in the vicinity of Palermo, where Balsamo drew a magic circle, and invoked the devil to show his treasures. Suddenly there appeared half a dozen fellows, the accomplices of the swindler, dressed to represent devils, with horns on their heads, claws to their fingers, and vomiting apparently red and blue flame. They were armed with pitchforks, with which they belaboured poor Marano till he was almost dead, and robbed him of his sixty ounces of gold and all the valuables he carried about his person. They then made off, accompanied by Balsamo, leaving the unlucky silversmith to recover or die at his leisure. Nature chose the former course; and soon after daylight he was restored to his senses, smarting in body from his blows and in spirit for the deception of which he had been the victim. His first impulse was to denounce Balsamo to the magistrates of the town; but on further reflection he was afraid of the ridicule that a full exposure of all the circumstances would draw upon him: he therefore took the truly Italian resolution of being revenged on Balsamo by murdering him at the first convenient opportunity. Having given utterance to this threat in the hearing of a friend of Balsamo, it was reported to the latter, who

immediately packed up his valuables and quitted Europe.

He chose Medina, in Arabia, for his future dwelling−place, and there became acquainted with a Greek named Altotas, a man exceedingly well versed in all the languages of the East, and an indefatigable student of alchymy. He possessed an invaluable collection of Arabian manuscripts on his favourite science, and studied them with such unremitting industry that he found he had not sufficient time to attend to his crucibles and furnaces without neglecting his books. He was looking about for an assistant when Balsamo opportunely presented himself, and made so favourable an impression that he was at once engaged in that capacity. But the relation of master and servant did not long subsist between them; Balsamo was too ambitious and too clever to play a secondary part, and within fifteen days of their first acquaintance they were bound together as friends and partners. Altotas, in the course of a long life devoted to alchymy, had stumbled upon some valuable discoveries in chemistry, one of which was an ingredient for improving the manufacture of flax, and imparting to goods of that material a gloss and softness almost equal to silk. Balsamo gave him the good advice to leave the philosopher's stone for the present undiscovered, and make gold out of their flax. The advice was taken, and they proceeded together to Alexandria to trade, with a large stock of that article. They stayed forty days in Alexandria, and gained a considerable sum by their venture. They afterwards visited other cities in Egypt, and were equally successful. They also visited Turkey, where they sold drugs and amulets. On their return to Europe, they were driven by stress of weather into Malta, and were hospitably received by Pinto, the Grand Master of the Knights, and a famous alchymist. They worked in his laboratory for some months, and tried hard to change a pewter−platter into a silver one. Balsamo, having less faith than his companions, was sooner wearied; and obtaining from his host many letters of introduction to Rome and Naples, he left him and Altotas to find the philosopher's stone and transmute the pewter−platter without him.

He had long since dropped the name of Balsamo on account of the many ugly associations that clung to it; and during his travels had assumed at least half a score others, with titles annexed to them. He called himself sometimes the Chevalier de Fischio, the Marquis de Melissa, the Baron de Belmonte, de Pelligrini, d'Anna, de Fenix, de Harat, but most commonly the Count de Cagliostro. Under the latter title he entered Rome, and never afterwards changed it. In this city he gave himself out as the restorer of the Rosicrucian philosophy; said he could transmute all metals into gold; that he could render himself invisible, cure all diseases, and administer an elixir against old age and decay. His letters from the Grand Master Pinto procured him an introduction into the best families. He made money rapidly by the sale of his elixir vitae; and, like other quacks, performed many remarkable cures by inspiring his patients with the most complete faith and reliance upon his powers; an advantage which the most impudent charlatans often possess over the regular practitioner.

While thus in a fair way of making his fortune he became acquainted with the beautiful Lorenza Feliciana, a young lady of noble birth, but without fortune. Cagliostro soon discovered that she possessed accomplishments that were invaluable. Besides her ravishing beauty, she had the readiest wit, the most engaging manners, the most fertile imagination, and the least principle of any of the maidens of Rome. She was just the wife for Cagliostro, who proposed himself to her, and was accepted. After their marriage, he instructed his fair Lorenza in all the secrets of his calling − taught her pretty lips to invoke angels, and genii, sylphs, salamanders, and undines, and, when need required, devils and evil spirits. Lorenza was an apt scholar: she soon learned all the jargon of the alchymists and all the spells of the enchanters; and thus accomplished the hopeful pair set out on their travels, to levy contributions on the superstitious and the credulous.

They first went to Sleswig on a visit to the Count de St. Germain, their great predecessor in the art of making dupes, and were received by him in the most magnificent manner. They no doubt fortified their minds for the career they had chosen, by the sage discourse of that worshipful gentleman; for immediately after they left him, they began their operations. They travelled for three or four years in Russia, Poland, and Germany, transmuting metals, telling fortunes, raising spirits, and selling the elixir vitae wherever they went; but there is no record of their doings from whence to draw a more particular detail. It was not until they made their appearance in England in 1776, that the names of the Count and Countess di Cagliostro began to acquire a European reputation. They arrived in London in the July of that year, possessed of property in plate, jewels, and specie to the amount of about three thousand pounds. They hired apartments in Whitcombe−street, and lived for some months quietly. In the same house there lodged a Portuguese woman named Blavary, who, being in necessitous circumstances, was engaged by the Count as interpreter. She was constantly admitted into his laboratory, where he spent much of his

time in search of the philosopher's stone. She spread abroad the fame of her entertainer in return for his hospitality, and laboured hard to impress everybody with as full a belief in his extraordinary powers as she felt herself. But as a female interpreter of the rank and appearance of Madame Blavary did not exactly correspond with the Count's notions either of dignity or decorum, he hired a person named Vitellini, a teacher of languages, to act in that capacity. Vitellini was a desperate gambler; a man who had tried almost every resource to repair his ruined fortunes, including among the rest the search for the philosopher's stone. Immediately that he saw the Count's operations, he was convinced that the great secret was his, and that the golden gates of the palace of fortune were open to let him in. With still more enthusiasm than Madame Blavary, he held forth to his acquaintance, and in all public places, that the Count was an extraordinary man, a true adept, whose fortune was immense, and who could transmute into pure and solid gold, as much lead, iron, and copper as he pleased. The consequence was, that the house of Cagliostro was besieged by crowds of the idle, the credulous, and the avaricious, all eager to obtain a sight of the "philosopher," or to share in the boundless wealth which he could call into existence.

Unfortunately for Cagliostro, he had fallen into evil hands; instead of duping the people of England as he might have done, he became himself the victim of a gang of swindlers, who, with the fullest reliance on his occult powers, only sought to make money of him. Vitellini introduced to him a ruined gambler like himself, named Scot, whom he represented as a Scottish nobleman, attracted to London solely by his desire to see and converse with the extraordinary man whose fame had spread to the distant mountains of the north. Cagliostro received him with great kindness and cordiality; and "Lord" Scot thereupon introduced a woman named Fry, as Lady Scot, who was to act as chaperone to the Countess di Cagliostro, and make her acquainted with all the noble families of Britain. Thus things went swimmingly. "His lordship," whose effects had not arrived from Scotland, and who had no banker in London, borrowed two hundred pounds of the Count; they were lent without scruple, so flattered was Cagliostro by the attentions they paid him, the respect, nay, veneration they pretended to feel for him, and the complete deference with which they listened to every word that fell from his lips.

Superstitious, like all desperate gamesters, Scot had often tried magical and cabalistic numbers, in the hope of discovering lucky numbers in the lottery, or at the roulette tables. He had in his possession a cabalistic manuscript, containing various arithmetical combinations of the kind, which he submitted to Cagliostro, with an urgent request that he would select a number. Cagliostro took the manuscript and studied it; but, as he himself informs us, with no confidence in its truth. He however predicted twenty as the successful number for the 6th of November following. Scot ventured a small sum upon this number, out of the two hundred pounds he had borrowed, and won. Cagliostro, incited by this success, prognosticated number twenty−five for the next drawing. Scot tried again, and won a hundred guineas. The numbers fifty−five and fifty−seven were announced with equal success for the 18th of the same month, to the no small astonishment and delight of Cagliostro, who thereupon resolved to try fortune for himself, and not for others. To all the entreaties of Scot and his lady that he would predict more numbers for them, he turned a deaf ear, even while he still thought him a lord and a man of honour. But when he discovered that he was a mere swindler, and the pretended Lady Scot an artful woman of the town, he closed his door upon them and on all their gang.

Having complete faith in the supernatural powers of the Count, they were in the deepest distress at having lost his countenance. They tried by every means their ingenuity could suggest, to propitiate him again; they implored, they threatened, and endeavoured to bribe him. But all was vain. Cagliostro would neither see nor correspond with them. In the mean time they lived extravagantly; and in the hope of future, exhausted all their present gains. They were reduced to the last extremity, when Miss Fry obtained access to the Countess, and received a guinea from her on the representation that she was starving. Miss Fry, not contented with this, begged her to intercede with her husband, that for the last time he would point out a lucky number in the lottery. The Countess promised to exert her influence, and Cagliostro thus entreated, named the number eight, at the same time reiterating his determination to have no more to do with any of them. By an extraordinary hazard, which filled Cagliostro with surprise and pleasure, number eight was the greatest prize in the lottery. Miss Fry and her associates cleared fifteen hundred guineas by the adventure; and became more than ever convinced of the occult powers of Cagliostro, and strengthened in their determination never to quit him until they had made their fortunes. Out of the proceeds, Miss Fry bought a handsome necklace at a pawnbrokers for ninety guineas. She then ordered a richly chased gold box, having two compartments, to be made at a jeweller's, and putting the necklace in the one,

filled the other with a fine aromatic snuff. She then sought another interview with Madame di Cagliostro, and urged her to accept the box as a small token of her esteem and gratitude, without mentioning the valuable necklace that was concealed in it. Madame di Cagliostro accepted the present, and was from that hour exposed to the most incessant persecution from all the confederates, Blavary, Vitellini, and the pretended Lord and Lady Scot. They flattered themselves they had regained their lost footing in the house, and came day after day to know lucky numbers in the lottery; sometimes forcing themselves up the stairs, and into the Count's laboratory, in spite of the efforts of the servants to prevent them. Cagliostro, exasperated at their pertinacity, threatened to call in the assistance of the magistrates; and taking Miss Fry by the shoulders, pushed her into the street.

From that time may be dated the misfortunes of Cagliostro. Miss Fry, at the instigation of her paramour, determined on vengeance. Her first act was to swear a debt of two hundred pounds against Cagliostro, and to cause him to be arrested for that sum. While he was in custody in a sponging house, Scot, accompanied by a low attorney, broke into his laboratory, and carried off a small box, containing, as they believed, the powder of transmutation, and a number of cabalistic manuscripts and treatises upon alchymy. They also brought an action against him for the recovery of the necklace; and Miss Fry accused both him and his Countess of sorcery and witchcraft, and of foretelling numbers in the lottery by the aid of the devil. This latter charge was actually heard before Mr. Justice Miller. The action of trover for the necklace was tried before the Lord Chief Justice of the Common Pleas, who recommended the parties to submit to arbitration. In the mean time Cagliostro remained in prison for several weeks, till having procured bail, he was liberated. He was soon after waited upon by an attorney named Reynolds, also deep in the plot, who offered to compromise all the actions upon certain conditions. Scot, who had accompanied him, concealed himself behind the door, and suddenly rushing out, presented a pistol at the heart of Cagliostro, swearing he would shoot him instantly, if he would not tell him truly the art of predicting lucky numbers, and of transmuting metals. Reynolds pretending to be very angry, disarmed his accomplice, and entreated the Count to satisfy them by fair means, and disclose his secrets, promising that if he would do so, they would discharge all the actions, and offer him no further molestation. Cagliostro replied, that threats and entreaties were alike useless; that he knew no secrets; and that the powder of transmutation of which they had robbed him, was of no value to anybody but himself. He offered, however, if they would discharge the actions, and return the powder and the manuscripts, he would forgive them all the money they had swindled him out of. These conditions were refused; and Scot and Reynolds departed, swearing vengeance against him.

Cagliostro appears to have been quite ignorant of the forms of law in England, and to have been without a friend to advise him as to the best course he should pursue. While he was conversing with his Countess on the difficulties that beset them, one of his bail called, and invited him to ride in a hackney coach to the house of a person who would see him righted. Cagliostro consented, and was driven to the King's Bench prison, where his friend left him. He did not discover for several hours that he was a prisoner, or in fact understand the process of being surrendered by one's bail.

He regained his liberty in a few weeks; and the arbitrators between him and Miss Fry, made their award against him. He was ordered to pay the two hundred pounds she had sworn against him, and to restore the necklace and gold box which had been presented to the Countess. Cagliostro was so disgusted, that he determined to quit England. His pretensions, besides, had been unmercifully exposed by a Frenchman, named Morande, the Editor of the Courier de l'Europe, published in London. To add to his distress, he was recognised in Westminster Hall, as Joseph Balsamo, the swindler of Palermo. Such a complication of disgrace was not to be borne. He and his Countess packed up their small effects, and left England with no more than fifty pounds, out of the three thousand they had brought with them.

They first proceeded to Brussels, where fortune was more auspicious. They sold considerable quantities of the elixir of life, performed many cures, and recruited their finances. They then took their course through Germany to Russia, and always with the same success. Gold flowed into their coffers faster than they could count it. They quite forgot all the woes they had endured in England, and learned to be more circumspect in the choice of their acquaintance.

In the year 1780, they made their appearance in Strasbourg. Their fame had reached that city before them. They took a magnificent hotel, and invited all the principal persons of the place to their table. Their wealth appeared to be boundless, and their hospitality equal to it. Both the Count and Countess acted as physicians, and gave money, advice, and medicine to all the necessitous and suffering of the town. Many of the cures they

performed, astonished those regular practitioners who did not make sufficient allowance for the wonderful influence of imagination in certain cases. The Countess, who at this time was not more than five−and−twenty, and all radiant with grace, beauty, and cheerfulness, spoke openly of her eldest son as a fine young man of eight−and−twenty, who had been for some years a captain in the Dutch service. The trick succeeded to admiration. All the ugly old women in Strasbourg, and for miles around, thronged the saloon of the Countess to purchase the liquid which was to make them as blooming as their daughters; the young women came in equal abundance that they might preserve their charms, and when twice as old as Ninon de L'Enclos, be more captivating than she; while men were not wanting fools enough to imagine, that they might keep off the inevitable stroke of the grim foe, by a few drops of the same incomparable elixir. The Countess, sooth to say, looked like an incarnation of immortal loveliness, a very goddess of youth and beauty; and it is possible that the crowds of young men and old, who at all convenient seasons haunted the perfumed chambers of this enchantress, were attracted less by their belief in her occult powers than from admiration of her languishing bright eyes and sparkling conversation. But amid all the incense that was offered at her shrine, Madame di Cagliostro was ever faithful to her spouse. She encouraged hopes, it is true, but she never realised them; she excited admiration, yet kept it within bounds; and made men her slaves, without ever granting a favour of which the vainest might boast.

In this city they made the acquaintance of many eminent persons, and among others, of the Cardinal Prince de Rohan, who was destined afterwards to exercise so untoward an influence over their fate. The Cardinal, who seems to have had great faith in him as a philosopher, persuaded him to visit Paris in his company, which he did, but remained only thirteen days. He preferred the society of Strasbourg, and returned thither, with the intention of fixing his residence far from the capital. But he soon found that the first excitement of his arrival had passed away. People began to reason with themselves, and to be ashamed of their own admiration. The populace, among whom he had lavished his charity with a bountiful hand, accused him of being the Antichrist, the Wandering Jew, the man of fourteen hundred years of age, a demon in human shape, sent to lure the ignorant to their destruction; while the more opulent and better informed called him a spy in the pay of foreign governments, an agent of the police, a swindler, and a man of evil life. The outcry grew at last so strong, that he deemed it prudent to try his fortune elsewhere.

He went first to Naples, but that city was too near Palermo; he dreaded recognition from some of his early friends, and after a short stay, returned to France. He chose Bordeaux as his next dwelling−place, and created as great a sensation there as he had done in Strasbourg. He announced himself as the founder of a new school of medicine and philosophy, boasted of his ability to cure all diseases, and invited the poor and suffering to visit him, and he would relieve the distress of the one class, and cure the ailings of the other. All day long the street opposite his magnificent hotel was crowded by the populace; the halt and the blind, women with sick babes in their arms, and persons suffering under every species of human infirmity flocked to this wonderful doctor. The relief he afforded in money more than counterbalanced the failure of his nostrums; and the affluence of people from all the surrounding country became so great, that the jurats of the city granted him a military guard, to be stationed day and night before his door, to keep order. The anticipations of Cagliostro were realised. The rich were struck with admiration of his charity and benevolence, and impressed with a full conviction of his marvellous powers. The sale of the elixir went on admirably. His saloons were thronged with wealthy dupes who came to purchase immortality. Beauty, that would endure for centuries, was the attraction for the fair sex; health and strength for the same period were the baits held out to the other. His charming Countess in the meantime brought grist to the mill, by telling fortunes and casting nativities, or granting attendant sylphs to any ladies who would pay sufficiently for their services. What was still better, as tending to keep up the credit of her husband, she gave the most magnificent parties in Bordeaux.

But as at Strasbourg the popular delusion lasted for a few months only, and burned itself out; Cagliostro forgot, in the intoxication of success, that there was a limit to quackery, which once passed, inspired distrust. When he pretended to call spirits from the tomb, people became incredulous. He was accused of being an enemy to religion − of denying Christ, and of being the Wandering Jew. He despised these rumours as long as they were confined to a few; but when they spread over the town — when he received no more fees — when his parties were abandoned, and his acquaintance turned away when they met him in the street, he thought it high time to shift his quarters.

He was by this time wearied of the provinces, and turned his thoughts to the capital. On his arrival, he

announced himself as the restorer of Egyptian Freemasonry and the founder of a new philosophy. He immediately made his way into the best society by means of his friend the Cardinal de Rohan. His success as a magician was quite extraordinary: the most considerable persons of the time visited him. He boasted of being able, like the Rosicrucians, to converse with the elementary spirits; to invoke the mighty dead from the grave, to transmute metals, and to discover occult things, by means of the special protection of God towards him. Like Dr. Dee, he summoned the angels to reveal the future; and they appeared, and conversed with him in crystals and under glass bells. [See the Abbe Fiard, and "Anecdotes of the Reign of Louis XVI." p. 400.] "There was hardly," says the Biographie des Contemporains, "a fine lady in Paris who would not sup with the shade of Lucretius in the apartments of Cagliostro — a military officer who would not discuss the art of war with Cesar, Hannibal, or Alexander; or an advocate or counsellor who would not argue legal points with the ghost of Cicero." These interviews with the departed were very expensive; for, as Cagliostro said, the dead would not rise for nothing. The Countess, as usual, exercised all her ingenuity to support her husband's credit. She was a great favourite with her own sex; to many a delighted and wondering auditory of whom she detailed the marvellous powers of Cagliostro. She said he could render himself invisible, traverse the world with the rapidity of thought, and be in several places at the same time. ["Biographie des Contemporains," article "Cagliostro." See also "Histoire de la Magie en France," par M. Jules Garinet, p. 284.]

He had not been long at Paris before he became involved in the celebrated affair of the Queen's necklace. His friend, the Cardinal de Rohan, enamoured of the charms of Marie Antoinette, was in sore distress at her coldness, and the displeasure she had so often manifested against him. There was at that time a lady, named La Motte, in the service of the Queen, of whom the Cardinal was foolish enough to make a confidant. Madame de la Motte, in return, endeavoured to make a tool of the Cardinal, and succeeded but too well in her projects. In her capacity of chamber−woman, or lady of honour to the Queen, she was present at an interview between her Majesty and M. Boehmer, a wealthy jeweller of Paris, when the latter offered for sale a magnificent diamond necklace, valued at 1,600,000 francs, or about 64,000 pounds sterling. The Queen admired it greatly, but dismissed the jeweller, with the expression of her regret that she was too poor to purchase it. Madame de la Motte formed a plan to get this costly ornament into her own possession, and determined to make the Cardinal de Rohan the instrument by which to effect it. She therefore sought an interview with him, and pretending to sympathise in his grief for the Queen's displeasure, told him she knew a way by which he might be restored to favour. She then mentioned the necklace, and the sorrow of the Queen that she could not afford to buy it. The Cardinal, who was as wealthy as he was foolish, immediately offered to purchase the necklace, and make a present of it to the Queen. Madame de la Motte told him by no means to do so, as he would thereby offend her Majesty. His plan would be to induce the jeweller to give her Majesty credit, and accept her promissory note for the amount at a certain date, to be hereafter agreed upon. The Cardinal readily agreed to the proposal, and instructed the jeweller to draw up an agreement, and he would procure the Queen's signature. He placed this in the hands of Madame de la Motte, who returned it shortly afterwards, with the words, "Bon, bon − approuve — Marie Antoinette," written in the margin. She told him at the same time that the Queen was highly pleased with his conduct in the matter, and would appoint a meeting with him in the gardens of Versailles, when she would present him with a flower, as a token of her regard. The Cardinal showed the forged document to the jeweller, obtained the necklace, and delivered it into the hands of Madame de la Motte. So far all was well. Her next object was to satisfy the Cardinal, who awaited impatiently the promised interview with his royal mistress. There was at that time in Paris a young woman named D'Oliva, noted for her resemblance to the Queen; and Madame de la Motte, on the promise of a handsome reward, found no difficulty in persuading her to personate Marie Antoinette, and meet the Cardinal de Rohan at the evening twilight in the gardens of Versailles. The meeting took place accordingly. The Cardinal was deceived by the uncertain light, the great resemblance of the counterfeit, and his own hopes; and having received the flower from Mademoiselle D'Oliva, went home with a lighter heart than had beat in his bosom for many a day. [The enemies of the unfortunate Queen of France, when the progress of the Revolution embittered their animosity against her. maintained that she was really a party in this transaction; that she, and not Mademoiselle D'Oliva, met the Cardinal and rewarded him with the flower; and that the story above related was merely concocted between her, La Motte, and others to cheat the jeweller of his 1,600,000 francs.]

In the course of time the forgery of the Queen's signature was discovered. Boehmer the jeweller immediately named the Cardinal de Rohan and Madame de la Motte as the persons with whom he had negotiated, and they

were both arrested and thrown into the Bastille. La Motte was subjected to a rigorous examination, and the disclosures she made implicating Cagliostro, he was seized, along with his wife, and also sent to the Bastille, A story involving so much scandal necessarily excited great curiosity. Nothing was to be heard of in Paris but the Queen's necklace, with surmises of the guilt or innocence of the several parties implicated. The husband of Madame de la Motte escaped to England, and in the opinion of many took the necklace with him, and there disposed of it to different jewellers in small quantities at a time. But Madame de la Motte insisted that she had entrusted it to Cagliostro, who had seized and taken it to pieces, to "swell the treasures of his immense unequalled fortune." She spoke of him as "an empiric, a mean alchymist, a dreamer on the philosopher's stone, a false prophet, a profaner of the true worship, the self−dubbed Count Cagliostro!" She further said that he originally conceived the project of ruining the Cardinal de Rohan; that he persuaded her, by the exercise of some magic influence over her mind, to aid and abet the scheme; and that he was a robber, a swindler, and a sorcerer!

After all the accused parties had remained for upwards of six months in the Bastille, the trial commenced. The depositions of the witnesses having been heard, Cagliostro, as the principal culprit, was first called upon for his defence. He was listened to with the most breathless attention. He put himself into a theatrical attitude, and thus began:— "I am oppressed! — I am accused! — I am calumniated! Have I deserved this fate? I descend into my conscience, and I there find the peace that men refuse me! I have travelled a great deal — I am known over all Europe, and a great part of Asia and Africa. I have everywhere shown myself the friend of my fellow−creatures. My knowledge, my time, my fortune have ever been employed in the relief of distress! I have studied and practised medicine, but I have never degraded that most noble and most consoling of arts by mercenary speculations of any kind. Though always giving, and never receiving, I have preserved my independence. I have even carried my delicacy so far as to refuse the favours of kings. I have given gratuitously my remedies and my advice to the rich: the poor have received from me both remedies and money. I have never contracted any debts, and my manners are pure and uncorrupted." After much more self−laudation of the same kind, he went on to complain of the great hardships he had endured in being separated for so many months from his innocent and loving wife, who, as he was given to understand, had been detained in the Bastille, and perhaps chained in an unwholesome dungeon. He denied unequivocally that he had the necklace, or that he had ever seen it; and to silence the rumours and accusations against him, which his own secrecy with regard to the events of his life had perhaps originated, he expressed himself ready to satisfy the curiosity of the public, and to give a plain and full account of his career. He then told a romantic and incredible tale, which imposed upon no one. He said he neither knew the place of his birth nor the name of his parents, but that he spent his infancy in Medina in Arabia, and was brought up under the name of Acharat. He lived in the palace of the Great Muphti in that city, and always had three servants to wait upon him, besides his preceptor, named Althotas. This Althotas was very fond of him, and told him that his father and mother, who were Christians and nobles, died when he was three months old, and left him in the care of the Muphti. He could never, he said, ascertain their names, for whenever he asked Althotas the question, he was told that it would be dangerous for him to know. Some incautious expressions dropped by his preceptor gave him reason to think they were from Malta. At the age of twelve he began his travels, and learned the various languages of the East. He remained three years in Mecca, where the Cherif, or governor, showed him so much kindness, and spoke to him so tenderly and affectionately, that he sometimes thought that personage was his father. He quitted this good man with tears in his eyes, and never saw him afterwards; but he was convinced that he was, even at that moment, indebted to his care for all the advantages he enjoyed. Whenever he arrived in any city, either of Europe or Asia, he found an account opened for him at the principal bankers' or merchants'. He could draw upon them to the amount of thousands and hundreds of thousands; and no questions were ever asked beyond his name. He had only to mention the word Acharat, and all his wants were supplied. He firmly believed that the Cherif of Mecca was the friend to whom all was owing. This was the secret of his wealth, and he had no occasion to resort to swindling for a livelihood. It was not worth his while to steal a diamond necklace when he had wealth enough to purchase as many as he pleased, and more magnificent ones than had ever been worn by a Queen of France. As to the other charges brought against him by Madame de la Motte, he had but a short answer to give. She had called him an empiric. He was not unfamiliar with the word. If it meant a man who, without being a physician, had some knowledge of medicine, and took no fees — who cured both rich and poor, and took no money from either, he confessed that he was such a man, that he was an empiric. She had also called him a mean alchymist. Whether he were an alchymist or not, the epithet mean could only be applied to those who

begged and cringed, and he had never done either. As regarded his being a dreamer about the philosopher's stone, whatever his opinions upon that subject might be, he had been silent, and had never troubled the public with his dreams. Then, as to his being a false prophet, he had not always been so; for he had prophesied to the Cardinal de Rohan that Madame de la Motte would prove a dangerous woman, and the result had verified the prediction. He denied that he was a profaner of the true worship, or that he had ever striven to bring religion into contempt; on the contrary, he respected every man's religion, and never meddled with it. He also denied that he was a Rosicrucian, or that he had ever pretended to be three hundred years of age, or to have had one man in his service for a hundred and fifty years. In conclusion, he said every statement that Madame de la Motte had made regarding him was false, and that she was mentiris impudentissime, which two words he begged her counsel to translate for her, as it was not polite to tell her so in French.

Such was the substance of his extraordinary answer to the charges against him; an answer which convinced those who were before doubtful that he was one of the most impudent impostors that had ever run the career of deception. Counsel were then heard on behalf of the Cardinal de Rohan and Madame de la Motte. It appearing clearly that the Cardinal was himself the dupe of a vile conspiracy; and there being no evidence against Cagliostro, they were both acquitted. Madame de la Motte was found guilty, and sentenced to be publicly whipped, and branded with a hot iron on the back.

Cagliostro and his wife were then discharged from custody. On applying to the officers of the Bastille for the papers and effects which had been seized at his lodgings, he found that many of them had been abstracted. He thereupon brought an action against them for the recovery of his MSS. and a small portion of the powder of transmutation. Before the affair could be decided, he received orders to quit Paris within four−and−twenty hours. Fearing that if he were once more inclosed in the dungeons of the Bastille he should never see daylight again, he took his departure immediately and proceeded to England. On his arrival in London he made the acquaintance of the notorious Lord George Gordon, who espoused his cause warmly, and inserted a letter in the public papers, animadverting upon the conduct of the Queen of France in the affair of the necklace, and asserting that she was really the guilty party. For this letter Lord George was exposed to a prosecution at the instance of the French Ambassador − found guilty of libel, and sentenced to fine and a long imprisonment.

Cagliostro and the Countess afterwards travelled in Italy, where they were arrested by the Papal Government in 1789, and condemned to death. The charges against him were, that he was a freemason, a heretic, and a sorcerer. This unjustifiable sentence was afterwards commuted into one of perpetual imprisonment in the Castle of St. Angelo. His wife was allowed to escape severer punishment by immuring herself in a nunnery. Cagliostro did not long survive. The loss of liberty preyed upon his mind — accumulated misfortunes had injured his health and broken his spirit, and he died early in 1790. His fate may have been no better than he deserved, but it is impossible not to feel that his sentence for the crimes assigned was utterly disgraceful to the government that pronounced it.

PRESENT STATE OF ALCHYMY.

We have now finished the list of the persons who have most distinguished themselves in this foolish and unprofitable pursuit. Among them are men of all ranks, characters, and conditions; the truthseeking, but erring philosopher; the ambitious prince and the needy noble, who have believed in it; as well as the designing charlatan, who has not believed in it, but has merely made the pretension to it the means of cheating his fellows, and living upon their credulity. One or more of all these classes will be found in the foregoing pages. It will be seen, from the record of their lives, that the delusion, humiliating as it was to human intellect, was not altogether without its uses. Men, in striving to gain too much, do not always overreach themselves: if they cannot arrive at the inaccessible mountain−top, they may, perhaps, get half way towards it, and pick up some scraps of wisdom and knowledge on the road. The useful science of chemistry is not a little indebted to its spurious brother of alchymy. Many valuable discoveries have been made in that search for the impossible, which might otherwise have been hidden for centuries yet to come. Roger Bacon, in searching for the philosopher's stone, discovered gunpowder, a still more extraordinary substance. Van Helmont, in the same pursuit, discovered the properties of gas; Geber made discoveries in chemistry which were equally important; and Paracelsus, amidst his perpetual visions of the transmutation of metals, found that mercury was a remedy for one of the most odious and excruciating of all the diseases that afflict humanity.

In our day, no mention is made in Europe of any new devotees of the science. The belief in witchcraft, which is scarcely more absurd, still lingers in the popular mind: but none are so credulous as to believe that any elixir could make man live for centuries, or turn all our iron and pewter into gold. Alchymy, in Europe, may be said to be wholly exploded; but in the East it still flourishes in as great repute as ever. Recent travellers make constant mention of it, especially in China, Hindostan, Persia, Tartary, Egypt, and Arabia.

BOOK II. FORTUNE TELLING.

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And men still grope t' anticipate
The cabinet designs of Fate;
Apply to wizards to foresee
What shall and what shall never be.
        Hudibras, part iii. canto 3.
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In accordance with the plan laid down in the introduction to this volume, we proceed to the consideration of the follies into which men have been led by their eager desire to pierce the thick darkness of futurity. God himself, for his own wise purposes, has more than once undrawn the impenetrable veil which shrouds those awful secrets; and, for purposes just as wise, he has decreed that, except in these instances, ignorance shall be our lot for ever. It is happy for man that he does not know what the morrow is to bring forth; but, unaware of this great blessing, he has, in all ages of the world, presumptuously endeavoured to trace the events of unborn centuries, and anticipate the march of time. He has reduced this presumption into a study. He has divided it into sciences and systems without number, employing his whole life in the vain pursuit. Upon no subject has it been so easy to deceive the world as upon this. In every breast the curiosity exists in a greater or less degree, and can only be conquered by a long course of self−examination, and a firm reliance that the future would not be hidden from our sight, if it were right that we should be acquainted with it.

An undue opinion of our own importance in the scale of creation is at the bottom of all our unwarrantable notions in this respect. How flattering to the pride of man to think that the stars in their courses watch over him, and typify, by their movements and aspects, the joys or the sorrows that await him! He, less in proportion to the universe than the all but invisible insects that feed in myriads on a summer's leaf, are to this great globe itself, fondly imagines that eternal worlds were chiefly created to prognosticate his fate. How we should pity the arrogance of the worm that crawls at our feet, if we knew that it also desired to know the secrets of futurity, and imagined that meteors shot athwart the sky to warn it that a tom−tit was hovering near to gobble it up; that storms and earthquakes, the revolutions of empires, or the fall of mighty monarchs, only happened to, predict its birth, its progress, and its decay! Not a whit less presuming has man shown himself; not a whit less arrogant are the sciences, so called, of astrology, augury, necromancy, geomancy, palmistry, and divination of every kind.

Leaving out of view the oracles of pagan antiquity and religious predictions in general, and confining ourselves solely to the persons who, in modern times, have made themselves most conspicuous in foretelling the future, we shall find that the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries were the golden age of these impostors. Many of them have been already mentioned in their character of alchymists. The union of the two pretensions is not at all surprising. It was to be expected that those who assumed a power so preposterous as that of prolonging the life of man for several centuries, should pretend, at the same time, to foretell the events which were to mark that preternatural span of existence. The world would as readily believe that they had discovered all secrets, as that they had only discovered one. The most celebrated astrologers of Europe, three centuries ago, were alchymists. Agrippa, Paracelsus, Dr. Dee, and the Rosicrucians, all laid as much stress upon their knowledge of the days to come, as upon their pretended possession of the philosopher's stone and the elixir of life. In their time, ideas of the wonderful, the diabolical, and the supernatural, were rifer than ever they were before. The devil or the stars were universally believed to meddle constantly in the affairs of men; and both were to be consulted with proper ceremonies. Those who were of a melancholy and gloomy temperament betook themselves to necromancy and sorcery; those more cheerful and aspiring, devoted themselves to astrology. The latter science was encouraged by all the monarchs and governments of that age. In England, from the time of Elizabeth to that of William and Mary, judicial astrology was in high repute. During that period flourished Drs. Dee, Lamb, and Forman; with Lilly, Booker, Gadbury, Evans, and scores of nameless impostors in every considerable town and village in the country, who made it their business to cast nativities, aid in the recovery of stolen goods, prognosticate happy or unhappy marriages, predict whether journeys would be prosperous, and note lucky moments for the commencement of any enterprise, from the setting up of a cobler's shop to the marching of an army. Men who, to use the words of Butler, did

"Deal in Destiny's dark counsel, And sage opinion of the moon sell; To whom all people far and near On deep importance did repair, When brass and pewter pots did stray, And linen slunk out of the way."

In Lilly's Memoirs of his Life and Times, there are many notices of the inferior quacks who then abounded, and upon whom he pretended to look down with supreme contempt; not because they were astrologers, but because they debased that noble art by taking fees for the recovery of stolen property. From Butler's Hudibras and its curious notes, we may learn what immense numbers of these fellows lived upon the credulity of mankind in that age of witchcraft and diablerie. Even in our day how great is the reputation enjoyed by the almanac−makers, who assume the name of Francis Moore. But in the time of Charles I. and the Commonwealth, the most learned, the most noble, and the most conspicuous characters did not hesitate to consult astrologers in the most open manner. Lilly, whom Butler has immortalized under the name of Sydrophel, relates, that he proposed to write a work called "An Introduction to Astrology," in which he would satisfy the whole kingdom of the lawfulness of that art. Many of the soldiers were for it, he says, and many of the Independent party, and abundance of worthy men in the House of Commons, his assured friends, and able to take his part against the Presbyterians, who would have silenced his predictions if they could. He afterwards carried his plan into execution, and when his book was published, went with another astrologer named Booker to the headquarters of the parliamentary army at Windsor, where they were welcomed and feasted in the garden where General Fairfax lodged. They were afterwards introduced to the general, who received them very kindly, and made allusion to some of their predictions. He hoped their art was lawful and agreeable to God's word; but he did not understand it himself. He did not doubt, however, that the two astrologers feared God, and therefore he had a good opinion of them. Lilly assured him that the art of astrology was quite consonant to the Scriptures; and confidently predicted from his knowledge of the stars, that the parliamentary army would overthrow all its enemies. In Oliver's Protectorate, this quack informs us that he wrote freely enough. He became an Independent, and all the soldiery were his friends. When he went to Scotland, he saw a soldier standing in front of the army, with a book of prophecies in his hand, exclaiming to the several companies as they passed by him, "Lo! hear what Lilly saith: you are in this month promised victory! Fight it out, brave boys! and then read that month's prediction!"

After the great fire of London, which Lilly said he had foretold, he was sent for by the committee of the House of Commons appointed to inquire into the causes of the calamity. In his "Monarchy or no Monarchy," published in 1651, he had inserted an hieroglyphical plate, representing on one side persons in winding sheets digging graves; and on the other a large city in flames. After the great fire some sapient member of the legislature bethought him of Lilly's book, and having mentioned it in the house, it was agreed that the astrologer should be summoned. Lilly attended accordingly, when Sir Robert Brooke told him the reason of his summons, and called upon him to declare what he knew. This was a rare opportunity for the vain−glorious Lilly to vaunt his abilities; and he began a long speech in praise of himself and his pretended science. He said, that after the execution of Charles I, he was extremely desirous to know what might from that time forth happen to the parliament and to the nation in general. He, therefore, consulted the stars and satisfied himself. The result of his judgment he put into emblems and hieroglyphics, without any commentary, so that the true meaning might be concealed from the vulgar, and made manifest only to the wise; imitating in this the example of many wise philosophers who had done the like.

"Did you foresee the year of the fire?" said a member. "No!" quoth Lilly, "nor was I desirous: of that I made no scrutiny." After some further parley the house found they could make nothing of the astrologer, and dismissed him with great civility.

One specimen of the explanation of a prophecy given by Lilly, and related by him with much complacency, will be sufficient to show the sort of trash by which he imposed upon the million. "In the year 1588," says he, "there was a prophecy printed in Greek characters, exactly deciphering the long troubles of the English nation from 1641 to 1660;" and it ended thus:— "And after him shall come a dreadful dead man, and with him a royal G, of the best blood in the world, and he shall have the crown, and shall set England on the right way, and put out all heresies." The following is the explanation of this oracular absurdity:—

"Monkery being extinguished above eighty or ninety years, and the Lord General's name being Monk, is the dead man. The royal G. or C, [it is gamma in the Greek, intending C. in the Latin, being the third letter in the Alphabet] is Charles II, who for his extraction may be said to be of the best blood of the world."

In France and Germany astrologers met even more encouragement than they received in England. In very

early ages, Charlemagne and his successors fulminated their wrath against them in common with sorcerers. Louis XI, that most superstitious of men, entertained great numbers of them at his court; and Catherine de Medicis, that most superstitious of women, hardly ever took any affair of importance without consulting them. She chiefly favoured her own countrymen; and during the time she governed France, the land was overrun by Italian conjurors, necromancers, and fortune−tellers of every kind. But the chief astrologer of that day, beyond all doubt, was the celebrated Nostradamus, physician to her husband, King Henry II. He was born in 1503, at the town of St. Remi, in Provence, where his father was a notary. He did not acquire much fame till he was past his fiftieth year, when his famous "Centuries," a collection of verses, written in obscure and almost unintelligible language, began to excite attention. They were so much spoken of in 1556, that Henry II. resolved to attach so skilful a man to his service, and appointed him his physician. In a biographical notice of him prefixed to the edition of his "Vraies Centuries," published at Amsterdam in 1668, we are informed that he often discoursed with his royal master on the secrets of futurity, and received many great presents as his reward, besides his usual allowance for medical attendance. After the death of Henry, he retired to his native place, where Charles IX. paid him a visit in 1564, and was so impressed with veneration for his wondrous knowledge of the things that were to be, not in France only, but in the whole world for hundreds of years to come, that he made him a counsellor of state, and his own physician, besides treating him in other matters with a royal liberality. "In fine," continues his biographer, "I should be too prolix were I to tell all the honours conferred upon him, and all the great nobles and learned men that arrived at his house, from the very ends of the earth, to see and converse with him as if he had been an oracle. Many strangers, in fact, came to France for no other purpose than to consult him."

The prophecies of Nostradamus consist of upwards of a thousand stanzas, each of four lines, and are to the full as obscure as the oracles of They take so great a latitude, both as to time and space, that they are almost sure to be fulfilled somewhere or other in the course of a few centuries; A little ingenuity like that evinced by Lilly, in his explanation about General Monk and the dreadful dead man, might easily make events to fit some of them.

Let us try. In his second century, prediction 66, he says,— '

"From great dangers the captive is escaped.
A little time, great fortune changed.
In the palace the people are caught.
By good augury the city is besieged."

"What is this," a believer might exclaim, "but the escape of Napoleon from Elba — his changed fortune, and the occupation of Paris by the allied armies?" — Let us try again. In his third century, prediction 98, he says,—

"Two royal brothers will make fierce war on each other;
So mortal shall be the strife between them,
That each one shall occupy a fort against the other;
For their reign and life shall be the quarrel."

Some Lillius Redivivus would find no difficulty in this prediction. To use a vulgar phrase, it is as clear as a pikestaff. Had not the astrologer in view Don Miguel and Don Pedro when he penned this stanza, so much less obscure and oracular than the rest?

He is to this day extremely popular in France and the Walloon country of Belgium, where old farmer−wives consult him with great confidence and assiduity.

Catherine di Medicis was not the only member of her illustrious house who entertained astrologers. At the beginning of the fifteenth century, there was a man named Basil, residing in Florence, who was noted over all Italy for his skill in piercing the darkness of futurity. It is said that he foretold to Cosmo di Medicis, then a private citizen, that he would attain high dignity, inasmuch as the ascendant of his nativity was adorned with the same propitious aspects as those of Augustus Caesar and the Emperor Charles V. [Hermippus Redivivus, p. 142.] Another astrologer foretold the death of Prince Alexander di Medicis; and so very minute and particular was be in all the circumstances, that he was suspected of being chiefly instrumental in fulfilling his own prophecy; a very common resource with these fellows, to keep up their credit. He foretold confidently that the Prince should die by the hand of his own familiar friend, a person of a slender habit of body, a small face, a swarthy complexion, and of most remarkable taciturnity. So it afterwards happened; Alexander having been murdered in his chamber by his cousin Lorenzo, who corresponded exactly with the above description. [Jovii Elog. p. 320.] The author of Hermippus Redivivus, in relating this story, inclines to the belief that the astrologer was guiltless of any

participation in the crime, but was employed by some friend of Prince Alexander, to warn him of his danger.

A much more remarkable story is told of an astrologer, who lived in Romagna, in the fifteenth century, and whose name was Antiochus Tibertus. [Les Anecdotes de Florence ou l'Histoire secrete de la Maison di Medicis, p. 318.] At that time nearly all the petty sovereigns of Italy retained such men in their service; and Tibertus having studied the mathematics with great success at Paris, and delivered many predictions, some of which, for guesses, were not deficient in shrewdness, was taken into the household of Pandolfo di Malatesta, the sovereign of Rimini. His reputation was so great, that his study was continually thronged, either with visitors who were persons of distinction, or with clients who came to him for advice, and in a short time he acquired a considerable fortune. Notwithstanding all these advantages he passed his life miserably, and ended it on the scaffold. The following story afterwards got into circulation, and has been often triumphantly cited by succeeding astrologers as an irrefragable proof of the truth of their science. It was said, that long before he died he uttered three remarkable prophecies; one relating to himself, another to his friend, and the third to his patron, Pandolfo di Malatesta. The first delivered was that relating to his friend, Guido di Bogni, one of the greatest captains of the time. Guido was exceedingly desirous to know his fortune, and so importuned Tibertus, that the latter consulted the stars, and the lines on his palm, to satisfy him. He afterwards told him with a sorrowful face, that according to all the rules of astrology and palmistry, he should be falsely suspected by his best friend, and should lose his life in consequence. Guido then asked the astrologer if he could foretell his own fate; upon which Tibertus again consulted the stars, and found that it was decreed from all eternity that he should end his days on the scaffold. Malatesta, when he heard these predictions, so unlikely, to all present appearance, to prove true, desired his astrologer to predict his fate also; and to hide nothing from him, however unfavourable it might be. Tibertus complied, and told his patron, at that time one of the most flourishing and powerful princes of Italy, that he should suffer great want, and die at last, like a beggar, in the common hospital of Bologna: and so it happened in all three cases. Guido di Bogni was accused by his own father−in−law, the Count di Bentivoglio, of a treasonable design to deliver up the city of Rimini to the papal forces, and was assassinated afterwards, by order of the tyrant Malatesta, as he sat at the supper−table, to which he had been invited in all apparent friendship. The astrologer was, at the same time, thrown into prison, as being concerned in the treason of his friend. He attempted to escape, and had succeeded in letting himself down from his dungeon window into a moat, when he was discovered by the sentinels. This being reported to Malatesta, he gave orders for his execution on the following morning.

Malatesta had, at this time, no remembrance of the prophecy; and his own fate gave him no uneasiness: but events were silently working its fulfilment. A conspiracy had been formed, though Guido di Bogni was innocent of it, to deliver up Rimini to the Pope; and all the necessary measures having been taken, the city was seized by the Count de Valentinois. In the confusion, Malatesta had barely time to escape from his palace in disguise. He was pursued from place to place by his enemies, abandoned by all his former friends, and, finally, by his own children. He at last fell ill of a languishing disease, at Bologna; and, nobody caring to afford him shelter, he was carried to the hospital, where he died. The only thing that detracts from the interest of this remarkable story is the fact, that the prophecy was made after the event.

For some weeks before the birth of Louis XIV, an astrologer from Germany, who had been sent for by the Marshal de Bassompierre and other noblemen of the court, had taken up his residence in the palace, to be ready, at a moment's notice, to draw the horoscope of the future sovereign of France. When the Queen was taken in labour, he was ushered into a contiguous apartment, that he might receive notice of the very instant the child was born. The result of his observations were the three words, diu, dure, feliciter; meaning, that the new−born Prince should live and reign long, with much labour, and with great glory. No prediction less favourable could have been expected from an astrologer, who had his bread to get, and who was at the same time a courtier. A medal was afterwards struck in commemoration of the event; upon one side of which was figured the nativity of the Prince, representing him as driving the chariot of Apollo, with the inscription "Ortus solis Gallici," — the rising of the Gallic sun.

The best excuse ever made for astrology was that offered by the great astronomer, Keppler, himself an unwilling practiser of the art. He had many applications from his friends to cast nativities for them, and generally gave a positive refusal to such as he was not afraid of offending by his frankness. In other cases he accommodated himself to the prevailing delusion. In sending a copy of his "Ephemerides" to Professor Gerlach, he wrote that they were nothing but worthless conjectures; but he was obliged to devote himself to them, or he would have

starved. "Ye overwise philosophers," he exclaimed, in his "Tertius Interveniens;" "ye censure this daughter of astronomy beyond her deserts! Know ye not that she must support her mother by her charms? The scanty reward of an astronomer would not provide him with bread, if men did not entertain hopes of reading the future in the heavens."

NECROMANCY was, next to astrology, the pretended science most resorted to, by those who wished to pry into the future. The earliest instance upon record is that of the Witch of Endor and the spirit of Samuel. Nearly all the nations of antiquity believed in the possibility of summoning departed ghosts to disclose the awful secrets that God made clear to the disembodied. Many passages in allusion to this subject, will at once suggest themselves to the classical reader; but this art was never carried on openly in any country. All governments looked upon it as a crime of the deepest dye. While astrology was encouraged, and its professors courted and rewarded, necromancers were universally condemned to the stake or the gallows. Roger Bacon, Albertus Magnus, Arnold of Villeneuve, and many others, were accused, by the public opinion of many centuries, of meddling in these unhallowed matters. So deep−rooted has always been the popular delusion with respect to accusations of this kind, that no crime was ever disproved with such toil and difficulty. That it met great encouragement, nevertheless, is evident from the vast numbers of pretenders to it; who, in spite of the danger, have existed in all ages and countries.

GEOMANCY, or the art of foretelling the future by means of lines and circles, and other mathematical figures drawn on the earth, is still extensively practised in Asiatic countries, but is almost unknown in Europe.

AUGURY, from the flight or entrails of birds, so favourite a study among the Romans, is, in like manner, exploded in Europe. Its most assiduous professors, at the present day, are the abominable Thugs of India.

DIVINATION, of which there are many kinds, boasts a more enduring reputation. It has held an empire over the minds of men from the earliest periods of recorded history, and is, in all probability, coeval with time itself. It was practised alike by the Jews, the Egyptians, the Chaldeans, the Persians, the Greeks, and the Romans; is equally known to all modern nations, in every part of the world; and is not unfamiliar to the untutored tribes that roam in the wilds of Africa and America. Divination, as practised in civilized Europe at the present day, is chiefly from cards, the tea−cup, and the lines on the palm of the hand. Gipsies alone make a profession of it; but there are thousands and tens of thousands of humble families in which the good−wife, and even the good−man, resort to the grounds at the bottom of their teacups, to know whether the next harvest will be abundant, or their sow bring forth a numerous litter; and in which the young maidens look to the same place to know when they are to be married, and whether the man of their choice is to be dark or fair, rich or poor, kind or cruel. Divination by cards, so great a favourite among the moderns, is, of course, a modern science; as cards do not yet boast an antiquity of much more than four hundred years. Divination by the palm, so confidently believed in by half the village lasses in Europe, is of older date, and seems to have been known to the Egyptians in the time of the patriarchs; as well as divination by the cup, which, as we are informed in Genesis, was practised by Joseph. Divination by the rod was also practised by the Egyptians. In comparatively recent times, it was pretended that by this means hidden treasures could be discovered. It now appears to be altogether exploded in Europe. Onomancy, or the foretelling a man's fate by the letters of his name, and the various transpositions of which they are capable, is a more modern sort of divination; but it reckons comparatively few believers.

The following list of the various species of Divination formerly in use, is given by Gaule, in his "Magastromancer," and quoted in Hone's "Year Book," p. 1517.

Stareomancy, or divining by the elements. Aeromancy, or divining by the air. Pyromancy, by fire. Hydromancy, by water. Geomancy, by earth. Theomancy, pretending to divine by the revelation of

the Spirit, and by the Scriptures, or word of God. Demonomancy, by the aid of devils and evil spirits. Idolomancy, by idols, images, and figures. Psychomancy, by the soul, affections, or dispositions

of men. Antinopomancy, by the entrails of human beings. Theriomancy, by beasts. Ornithomancy, by birds. Icthyomancy, by fishes. Botanomancy, by herbs. Lithomancy, by stones. Kleromancy, by lots. Oneiromancy, by dreams. Onomancy, by names. Arithmancy, by numbers. Logarithmancy, by logarithms. Sternomancy, by the marks from the breast to the belly. Gastromancy, by the sound of, or marks upon, the belly. Omphelomancy, by the navel. Chiromancy, by the hands. Paedomancy, by thee feet. Onchyomancy, by the nails. Cephaleonomancy, by asses' heads. Tuphramancy, by ashes. Kapnomancy, by smoke. Livanomancy, by the burning of incense. Keromancy, by the melting of wax. Lecanomancy, by basins of water. Katoxtromancy, by looking−glasses.

Chartomancy, by writing in papers, and by Valentines. Macharomancy, by knives and swords. Crystallomancy, by crystals. Dactylomancy, by rings. Koseinomancy, by sieves. Axinomancy, by saws. Kaltabomancy, by vessels of brass, or other metal. Spatalamancy, by skins, bones, Roadomancy, by stars. Sciomancy, by shadows. Astragalomancy, by dice. Oinomancy, by the lees of wine. Sycomancy, by figs. Typomancy, by cheese. Alphitomancy, by meal, flour, or bran. Krithomancy, by corn or grain. Alectromancy, by cocks. Gyromancy, by circles. Lampadomancy, by candles and lamps.

ONEIRO−CRITICISM, or the art of interpreting dreams, is a relic of the most remote ages, which has subsisted through all the changes that moral or physical revolutions have operated in the world. The records of five thousand years bear abundant testimony to the universal diffusion of the belief, that the skilful could read the future in dreams. The rules of the art, if any existed in ancient times, are not known; but in our day, one simple rule opens the whole secret. Dreams, say all the wiseacres in Christendom, are to be interpreted by contraries. Thus, if you dream of filth, you will acquire something valuable; if you dream of the dead, you will hear news of the living; if you dream of gold and silver, you run a risk of being without either; and if you dream you have many friends, you will be persecuted by many enemies. The rule, however, does not hold good in all cases. It is fortunate to dream of little pigs, but unfortunate to dream of big bullocks. If you dream you have lost a tooth, you may be sure that you will shortly lose a friend; and if you dream that your house is on fire, you will receive news from a far country. If you dream of vermin, it is a sign that there will be sickness in your family; and if you dream of serpents, you will have friends who, in the course of time, will prove your bitterest enemies; but, of all dreams, it is most fortunate if you dream that you are wallowing up to your neck in mud and mire. Clear water is a sign of grief; and great troubles, distress, and perplexity are predicted, if you dream that you stand naked in the public streets, and know not where to find a garment to shield you from the gaze of the multitude.

In many parts of Great Britain, and the continents of Europe and America, there are to be found elderly women in the villages and country−places whose interpretations of dreams are looked upon with as much reverence as if they were oracles. In districts remote from towns it is not uncommon to find the members of a family regularly every morning narrating their dreams at the breakfast−table, and becoming happy or miserable for the day according to their interpretation. There is not a flower that blossoms, or fruit that ripens, that, dreamed of, is not ominous of either good or evil to such people. Every tree of the field or the forest is endowed with a similar influence over the fate of mortals, if seen in the night−visions. To dream of the ash, is the sign of a long journey; and of an oak, prognosticates long life and prosperity. To dream you strip the bark off any tree, is a sign to a maiden of an approaching loss of a character; to a married woman, of a family bereavement; and to a man, of an accession of fortune. To dream of a leafless tree, is a sign of great sorrow; and of a branchless trunk, a sign of despair and suicide. The elder−tree is more auspicious to the sleeper; while the fir−tree, better still, betokens all manner of comfort and prosperity. The lime−tree predicts a voyage across the ocean; while the yew and the alder are ominous of sickness to the young and of death to the old.

It is quite astonishing to see the great demand there is, both in England and France, for dream−books, and other trash of the same kind. Two books in England enjoy an extraordinary popularity, and have run through upwards of fifty editions in as many years in London alone, besides being reprinted in Manchester, Edinburgh, Glasgow, and Dublin. One is "Mother Bridget's Dream−book and Oracle of Fate;" the other is the "Norwood Gipsy." It is stated on the authority of one who, is curious in these matters, that there is a demand for these works, which are sold at sums varying from a penny to sixpence, chiefly to servant−girls and imperfectly−educated people, all over the country, of upwards of eleven thousand annually; and that at no period during the last thirty years has the average number sold been less than this. The total number during this period would thus amount to 330,000.

Among the flowers and fruits charged with messages for the future, the following is a list of the most important, arranged from approved sources, in alphabetical order:−

Asparagus, gathered and tied up in bundles, is an omen of tears. If you see it growing in your dreams, it is a sign of good fortune.

Aloes, without a flower, betoken long life: in flower, betoken a legacy.

Artichokes. This vegetable is a sign that you will receive, in a short time, a favour from the hands of those from whom you would least expect it.

Agrimony. This herb denotes that there will be sickness in your house.

Anemone, predicts love.

Auriculas, in beds, denote luck; in pots, marriage: while to gather them, foretells widowhood.

Bilberries, predict a pleasant excursion.

Broom−flowers, an increase of family.

Cauliflowers, predict that all your friends will slight you, or that you will fall into poverty and find no one to pity you.

Dock−leaves, a present from the country.

Daffodils. Any maiden who dreams of daffodils is warned by her good angel to avoid going into a wood with her lover, or into any dark or retired place where she might not be able to make people hear her if she cried out. Alas! for her if she pay no attention to the warning! She shall be rifled of the precious flower of chastity, and shall never again have right to wear the garland of virginity.

"Never again shall she put garland on;
Instead of it, she'll wear sad cypress now,
And bitter elder broken from the bough."

Figs, if green, betoken embarrassment; if dried, money to the poor and mirth to the rich.

Heart's−ease, betokens heart's pain.

Lilies, predict joy; water−lilies, danger from the sea.

Lemons, betoken a separation.

Pomegranates, predict happy wedlock to those who are single, and reconciliation to those who are married and have disagreed.

Quinces, prognosticate pleasant company.

Roses, denote happy love, not unmixed with sorrow from other sources.

Sorrel, To dream of this herb is a sign that you will shortly have occasion to exert all your prudence to overcome some great calamity.

Sunflowers, show that your pride will be deeply wounded.

Violets, predict evil to the single and joy to the married.

Yellow−flowers of any kind predict jealousy.

Yew−berries, predict loss of character to both sexes.

It should be observed that the rules for the interpretation of dreams are far from being universal. The cheeks of the peasant girl of England glow with pleasure in the morning after she has dreamed of a rose, while the paysanne of Normandy dreads disappointment and vexation for the very same reason. The Switzer who dreams of an oaktree does not share in the Englishman's joy; for he imagines that the vision was a warning to him that, from some trifling cause, an overwhelming calamity will burst over him. Thus do the ignorant and the credulous torment themselves; thus do they spread their nets to catch vexation, and pass their lives between hopes which are of no value and fears which are a positive evil.

OMENS. — Among the other means of self−annoyance upon which men have stumbled, in their vain hope of discovering the future, signs and omens hold a conspicuous place. There is scarcely an occurrence in nature which, happening at a certain time, is not looked upon by some persons as a prognosticator either of good or evil. The latter are in the greatest number, so much more ingenious are we in tormenting ourselves than in discovering reasons for enjoyment in the things that surround us. We go out of our course to make ourselves uncomfortable; the cup of life is not bitter enough to our palate, and we distil superfluous poison to put into it, or conjure up hideous things to frighten ourselves at, which would never exist if we did not make them. "We suffer," says Addison, ["Spectator," No. 7, March 8th, 1710−11.] "as much from trifling accidents as from real evils. I have known the shooting of a star spoil a night's rest, and have seen a man in love grow pale and lose his appetite upon the plucking of a merrythought. A screech−owl at midnight has alarmed a family more than a band of robbers; nay, the voice of a cricket has struck more terror than the roaring of a lion. There is nothing so inconsiderable which may not appear dreadful to an imagination that is filled with omens and prognostics. A rusty nail or a crooked pin shoot up into prodigies."

The century and a quarter that has passed away since Addison wrote has seen the fall of many errors. Many fallacies and delusions have been crushed under the foot of time since then; but this has been left unscathed, to frighten the weakminded and embitter their existence. A belief in omens is not confined to the humble and

uninformed. A general, who led an army with credit, has been known to feel alarmed at a winding−sheet in the candle; and learned men, who had honourably and fairly earned the highest honours of literature, have been seen to gather their little ones around them, and fear that one would be snatched away, because,

"When stole upon the time the dead of night, And heavy sleep had closed up mortal eyes,"

a dog in the street was howling at the moon. Persons who would acknowledge freely that the belief in omens was unworthy of a man of sense, have yet confessed at the same time that, in spite of their reason, they have been unable to conquer their fears of death when they heard the harmless insect called the death−watch ticking in the wall, or saw an oblong hollow coal fly out of the fire.

Many other evil omens besides those mentioned above alarm the vulgar and the weak. If a sudden shivering comes over such people, they believe that, at that instant, an enemy is treading over the spot that will one day be their grave. If they meet a sow when they first walk abroad in the morning, it is an omen of evil for that day. To meet an ass, is in like manner unlucky. It is also very unfortunate to walk under a ladder; to forget to eat goose on the festival of St. Michael; to tread upon a beetle, or to eat the twin nuts that are sometimes found in one shell. Woe, in like manner, is predicted to that wight who inadvertently upsets the salt; each grain that is overthrown will bring to him a day of sorrow. If thirteen persons sit at table, one of them will die within the year; and all of them will be unhappy. Of all evil omens, this is the worst. The facetious Dr. Kitchener used to observe that there was one case in which he believed that it was really unlucky for thirteen persons to sit down to dinner, and that was when there was only dinner enough for twelve. Unfortunately for their peace of mind, the great majority of people do not take this wise view of the matter. In almost every country of Europe the same superstition prevails, and some carry it so far as to look upon the number thirteen as in every way ominous of evil; and if they find thirteen coins in their purse, cast away the odd one like a polluted thing. The philosophic Beranger, in his exquisite song, "Thirteen at Table," has taken a poetical view of this humiliating superstition, and mingled, as is his wont, a lesson of genuine wisdom in his lay. Being at dinner, he overthrows the salt, and, looking round the room, discovers that he is the thirteenth guest. While he is mourning his unhappy fate, and conjuring up visions of disease and suffering, and the grave, he is suddenly startled by the apparition of Death herself, not in the shape of a grim foe, with skeleton ribs and menacing dart, but of an angel of light, who shows the folly of tormenting ourselves with the dread of her approach, when she is the friend, rather than the enemy, of man, and frees us from the fetters which bind us to the dust.

If men could bring themselves to look upon Death in this manner, living well and wisely till her inevitable approach, how vast a store of grief and vexation would they spare themselves!

Among good omens, one of the most conspicuous is to meet a piebald horse. To meet two of these animals is still more fortunate; and if on such an occasion you spit thrice, and form any reasonable wish, it will be gratified within three days. It is also a sign of good fortune if you inadvertently put on your stocking wrong side out. If you wilfully wear your stocking in this fashion, no good will come of it. It is very lucky to sneeze twice; but if you sneeze a third time, the omen loses its power, and your good fortune will be nipped in the bud. If a strange dog follow you, and fawn on you, and wish to attach itself to you, it is a sign of very great prosperity. Just as fortunate is it if a strange male cat comes to your house and manifests friendly intentions towards your family. If a she eat, it is an omen, on the contrary, of very great misfortune. If a swarm of bees alight in your garden, some very high honour and great joys await you.

Besides these glimpses of the future, you may know something of your fate by a diligent attention to every itching that you may feel in your body. Thus, if the eye or the nose itches, it is a sign you will be shortly vexed; if the foot itches you will tread upon strange ground; and if the elbow itches, you will change your bedfellow. Itching of the right−hand prognosticates that you will soon have a sum of money; and of the left, that you will be called upon to disburse it.

These are but a few of the omens which are generally credited in modern Europe. A complete list of them would fatigue from its length, and sicken from its absurdity. It would be still more unprofitable to attempt to specify the various delusions of the same kind which are believed among Oriental nations. Every reader will remember the comprehensive formula of cursing preserved in "Tristram Shandy:" — curse a man after any fashion you remember or can invent, you will be sure to find it there. The Oriental creed of omens is not less comprehensive. Every movement of the body, every emotion of the mind, is at certain times an omen. Every form and object in nature, even the shape of the clouds and the changes of the weather; every colour, every sound,

whether of men or animals, or birds or insects, or inanimate things, is an omen. Nothing is too trifling or inconsiderable to inspire a hope which is not worth cherishing, or a fear which is sufficient to embitter existence.

From the belief in omens springs the superstition that has, from very early ages, set apart certain days, as more favourable than others, for prying into the secrets of futurity. The following, copied verbatim from the popular "Dream and Omen Book" of Mother Bridget, will show the belief of the people of England at the present day. Those who are curious as to the ancient history of these observances, will find abundant aliment in the "Every−day Book."

"The 1st of January. — If a young maiden drink, on going to bed, a pint of cold spring−water, in which is beat up an amulet, composed of the yolk of a pullet's egg, the legs of a spider, and the skin of an eel pounded, her future destiny will be revealed to her in a dream. This charm fails of its effect if tried any other day of the year.

"Valentine Day. — Let a single woman go out of her own door very early in the morning, and if the first person she meets be a woman, she will not be married that year: if she meet a man, she will be married within three months.

"Lady Day. — The following charm may be tried this day with certain success: — String thirty−one nuts on a string, composed of red worsted mixed with blue silk, and tie it round your neck on going to bed, repeating these lines —

'Oh, I wish ! oh, I wish to see
Who my true love is to be !'

Shortly after midnight, you will see your lover in a dream, and be informed at the same time of all the principal events of your future life.

"St. Swithin's Eve. — Select three things you most wish to know; write them down with a new pen and red ink on a sheet of fine−wove paper, from which you must previously cut off all the corners and burn them. Fold the paper into a true−lover's knot, and wrap round it three hairs from your head. Place the paper under your pillow for three successive nights, and your curiosity to know the future will be satisfied.

"St. Mark's Eve. — Repair to the nearest churchyard as the clock strikes twelve, and take from a grave on the south−side of the church three tufts of grass (the longer and ranker the better), and on going to bed place them under your pillow, repeating earnestly three several times,

'The Eve of St. Mark by prediction is blest,
Set therefore my hopes and my fears all to rest:
Let me know my fate, whether weal or woe;
Whether my rank's to be high or low;
Whether to live single, or be a bride,
And the destiny my star doth provide.'

Should you have no dream that night, you will be single and miserable all your life. If you dream of thunder and lightning, your life will be one of great difficulty and sorrow.

"Candlemas Eve. — On this night (which is the purification of the Virgin Mary), let three, five, seven, or nine, young maidens assemble together in a square chamber. Hang in each corner a bundle of sweet herbs, mixed with rue and rosemary. Then mix a cake of flour, olive−oil, and white sugar; every maiden having an equal share in the making and the expense of it. Afterwards, it must be cut into equal pieces, each one marking the piece as she cuts it with the initials of her name. It is then to be baked one hour before the fire, not a word being spoken the whole time, and the maidens sitting with their arms and knees across. Each piece of cake is then to be wrapped up in a sheet of paper, on which each maiden shall write the love part of Solomon's Songs. If she put this under her pillow, she will dream true. She will see her future husband and every one of her children, and will know, besides, whether her family will be poor or prosperous — a comfort to her, or the contrary.

"Midsummer. — Take three roses, smoke them with sulphur, and exactly at three in the day, bury one of the roses under a yew tree; the second in a newly−made grave, and put the third under your pillow for three nights, and at the end of that period burn it in a fire of charcoal. Your dreams during that time will be prophetic of your future destiny, and, what is still more curious and valuable (Mother Bridget loquitur), the man whom you are to wed, will know no peace till he comes and visits you. Besides this, you will perpetually haunt his dreams.

"St. John's Eve. — Make a new pincushion of the very best black velvet (no inferior quality will answer the purpose), and on one side stick your name in full length with the very smallest pins that can be bought (none other

will do). On the other side, make a cross with some very large pins, and surround it with a circle. Put this into your stocking when you take it off at night, and hang it up at the foot of the bed. All your future life will pass before you in a dream.

"First New Moon of the Year. — On the first new moon in the year, take a pint of clear springwater and infuse into it the white of an egg laid by a white hen, a glass of white wine, three almonds peeled white, and a tablespoonful of white rose−water. Drink this on going to bed, not making more nor less than three draughts of it; repeating the following verses three several times in a clear distinct voice, but not so loud as to be overheard by anybody:—

' If I dream of water pure Before the coming morn, 'Tis a sign I shall be poor, And unto wealth not born. If I dream of tasting beer, Middling then will be my cheer− Chequer'd with the good and bad, Sometimes joyful, sometimes sad; But should I dream of drinking wine, Wealth and pleasure will be mine. The stronger the drink, the better the cheer− Dreams of my destiny, appear, appear!'

"Twenty−ninth of February. — This day, as it only occurs once in four years, is peculiarly auspicious to those who desire to have a glance at futurity, especially to young maidens burning with anxiety to know the appearance and complexion of their future lords. The charm to be adopted is the following: Stick twenty−seven of the smallest pins that are made, three by three, into a tallow candle. Light it up at the wrong end, and then place it in a candlestick made out of clay, which must be drawn from a virgin's grave. Place this on the chimney−place, in the left−hand corner, exactly as the clock strikes twelve, and go to bed immediately. When the candle is burnt out, take the pins and put them into your left−shoe; and before nine nights have elapsed your fate will be revealed to you."

We have now taken a hasty review of the various modes of seeking to discover the future, especially as practised in modern times. The main features of the folly appear essentially the same in all countries. National character and peculiarities operate some difference of interpretation. The mountaineer makes the natural phenomena which he most frequently witnesses prognosticative of the future. The dweller in the plains, in a similar manner, seeks to know his fate among the signs of the things that surround him, and tints his superstition with the hues of his own clime. The same spirit animates them all — the same desire to know that which Infinite Mercy has concealed. There is but little probability that the curiosity of mankind in this respect will ever be wholly eradicated. Death and ill−fortune are continual bugbears to the weak−minded, the irreligious, and the ignorant; and while such exist in the world, divines will preach upon its impiety and philosophers discourse upon its absurdity in vain. Still, it is evident that these follies have greatly diminished. Soothsayers and prophets have lost the credit they formerly enjoyed, and skulk in secret now where they once showed their faces in the blaze of day. So far there is manifest improvement.

BOOK III. THE MAGNETISERS.

Some deemed them wondrous wise, and some believed them mad.
Beattie's Minstrel.

The wonderful influence of imagination in the cure of diseases is well known. A motion of the hand, or a glance of the eye, will throw a weak and credulous patient into a fit; and a pill made of bread, if taken with sufficient faith, will operate a cure better than all the drugs in the pharmacopoeia. The Prince of Orange, at the siege of Breda, in 1625, cured all his soldiers who were dying of the scurvy, by a philanthropic piece of quackery, which he played upon them with the knowledge of the physicians, when all other means had failed. [See Van der Mye's account of the siege of Breda. The garrison, being afflicted with scurvy, the Prince of Orange sent the physicians two or three small phials, containing a decoction of camomile, wormwood, and camphor, telling them to pretend that it was a medicine of the greatest value and extremest rarity, which had been procured with very much danger and difficulty from the East; and so strong, that two or three drops would impart a healing virtue to a gallon of water. The soldiers had faith in their commander; they took the medicine with cheerful faces, and grew well rapidly. They afterwards thronged about the Prince in groups of twenty and thirty at a time, praising his skill, and loading him with protestations of gratitude.] Many hundreds of instances, of a similar kind, might be related, especially from the history of witchcraft. The mummeries, strange gesticulations, and barbarous jargon of witches and sorcerers, which frightened credulous and nervous women, brought on all those symptoms of hysteria and other similar diseases, so well understood now, but which were then supposed to be the work of the devil, not only by the victims and the public in general, but by the operators themselves.

In the age when alchymy began to fall into some disrepute, and learning to lift up its voice against it, a new delusion, based upon this power of imagination, suddenly arose, and found apostles among all the alchymists. Numbers of them, forsaking their old pursuits, made themselves magnetisers. It appeared first in the shape of mineral, and afterwards of animal, magnetism, under which latter name it survives to this day, and numbers its dupes by thousands.

The mineral magnetisers claim the first notice, as the worthy predecessors of the quacks of the present day. The honour claimed for Paracelsus of being the first of the Rosicrucians has been disputed; but his claim to be considered the first of the magnetisers can scarcely be challenged. It has been already mentioned of him, in the part of this work which treats of alchymy, that, like nearly all the distinguished adepts, he was a physician; and pretended, not only to make gold and confer immortality, but to cure all diseases. He was the first who, with the latter view, attributed occult and miraculous powers to the magnet. Animated apparently by a sincere conviction that the magnet was the philosopher's stone, which, if it could not transmute metals, could soothe all human suffering and arrest the progress of decay, he travelled for many years in Persia and Arabia, in search of the mountain of adamant, so famed in oriental fables. When he practised as a physician at Basle, he called one of his nostrums by the name of azoth — a stone or crystal, which, he said, contained magnetic properties, and cured epilepsy, hysteria, and spasmodic affections. He soon found imitators. His fame spread far and near; and thus were sown the first seeds of that error which has since taken root and flourished so widely. In spite of the denial of modern practitioners, this must be considered the origin of magnetism; for we find that, beginning with Paracelsus, there was a regular succession of mineral magnetisers until Mesmer appeared, and gave a new feature to the delusion.

Paracelsus boasted of being able to transplant diseases from the human frame into the earth, by means of the magnet. He said there were six ways by which this might be effected. One of them will be quite sufficient, as a specimen. "If a person suffer from disease, either local or general, let the following remedy be tried. Take a magnet, impregnated with mummy [Mummies were of several kinds, and were all of great use in magnetic medicines. Paracelsus enumerates six kinds of mummies; the first four only differing in the composition used by different people for preserving their dead, are the Egyptian, Arabian, Pisasphaltos, and Lybian. The fifth mummy of peculiar power was made from criminals that had been hanged; "for from such there is a gentle siccation, that expungeth the watery humour, without destroying the oil and spirituall, which is cherished by the heavenly luminaries, and strengthened continually by the affluence and impulses of the celestial spirits; whence it may be

properly called by the name of constellated or celestial mummie." The sixth kind of mummy was made of corpuscles, or spiritual effluences, radiated from the living body; though we cannot get very clear ideas on this head, or respecting the manner in which they were caught. — "Medicina Diatastica; or, Sympathetical Mummie, abstracted from the Works of Paracelsus, and translated out of the Latin, by Fernando Parkhurst, Gent." London, 1653. pp. 2.7. Quoted by the "Foreign Quarterly Review," vol. xii. p. 415.] and mixed with rich earth. In this earth sow some seeds that have a congruity or homogeneity with the disease: then let this earth, well sifted and mixed with mummy, be laid in an earthen vessel; and let the seeds committed to it be watered daily with a lotion in which the diseased limb or body has been washed. Thus will the disease be transplanted from the human body to the seeds which are in the earth. Having done this, transplant the seeds from the earthen vessel to the ground, and wait till they begin to sprout into herbs: as they increase, the disease will diminish; and when they have arrived at their full growth, it will disappear altogether."

Kircher the Jesuit, whose quarrel with the alchymists was the means of exposing many of their impostures, was a firm believer in the efficacy of the magnet. Having been applied to by a patient afflicted with hernia, he directed the man to swallow a small magnet reduced to powder, while he applied, at the same time, to the external swelling a poultice, made of filings of iron. He expected that by this means the magnet, when it got to the corresponding place inside, would draw in the iron, and with it the tumour; which would thus, he said, be safely and expeditiously reduced.

As this new doctrine of magnetism spread, it was found that wounds inflicted with any metallic substance could be cured by the magnet. In process of time the delusion so increased, that it was deemed sufficient to magnetise a sword, to cure any hurt which that sword might have inflicted! This was the origin of the celebrated "weapon−salve," which excited so much attention about the middle of the seventeenth century. The following was the recipe given by Paracelsus for the cure of any wounds inflicted by a sharp weapon, except such as had penetrated the heart, the brain, or the arteries. "Take of moss growing on the head of a thief who has been hanged and left in the air; of real mummy; of human blood, still warm — of each, one ounce; of human suet, two ounces; of linseed oil, turpentine, and Armenian bole — of each, two drachms. Mix all well in a mortar, and keep the salve in an oblong, narrow urn." With this salve the weapon, after being dipped in the blood from the wound, was to be carefully anointed, and then laid by in a cool place. In the mean time, the wound was to be duly washed with fair clean water, covered with a clean, soft, linen rag, and opened once a day to cleanse off purulent or other matter. Of the success of this treatment, says the writer of the able article on Animal Magnetism, in the twelfth volume of the "Foreign Quarterly Review," there cannot be the least doubt; "for surgeons at this moment follow exactly the same method, except anointing the weapon!

The weapon salve continued to be much spoken of on the Continent, and many eager claimants appeared for the honour of the invention. Dr. Fludd, or A Fluctibus, the Rosicrucian, who has been already mentioned in a previous part of this volume, was very zealous in introducing it into England. He tried it with great success in several cases; and no wonder; for, while he kept up the spirits of his patients by boasting of the great efficacy of the salve, he never neglected those common, but much more important remedies, of washing, bandaging, which the experience of all ages had declared sufficient for the purpose. Fludd, moreover, declared, that the magnet was a remedy for all diseases, if properly applied; but that man having, like the earth, a north and a south pole, magnetism could only take place when his body was in a boreal position! In the midst of his popularity, an attack was made upon him and his favourite remedy, the salve; which, however, did little or nothing to diminish the belief in its efficacy. One "Parson Foster" wrote a pamphlet, entitled "Hyplocrisma Spongus; or, a Spunge to wipe away the Weapon−Salve ;" in which he declared, that it was as bad as witchcraft to use or recommend such an unguent; that it was invented by the devil, who, at the last day, would seize upon every person who had given it the slightest encouragement. "In fact," said Parson Foster, "the devil himself gave it to Paracelsus; Paracelsus to the Emperor; the Emperor to the courtier; the courtier to Baptista Porta; and Baptista Porta to Dr. Fludd, a doctor of physic, yet living and practising in the famous city of London, who now stands tooth and nail for it." Dr. Fludd, thus assailed, took up the pen in defence of his unguent, in a reply called "The Squeezing of Parson Foster's Spunge; wherein the Spunge−Bearer's immodest Carriage and Behaviour towards his Brethren is detected; the bitter Flames of his slanderous Reports are, by the sharp Vinegar of Truth, corrected and quite extinguished; and, lastly, the virtuous Validity of his Spunge in wiping away the Weapon−Salve, is crushed out and clean abolished."

Shortly after this dispute a more distinguished believer in the weapon−salve made his appearance, in the

person of Sir Kenelm Digby, the son of Sir Everard Digby, who was executed for his participation in the Gunpowder Plot. This gentleman, who, in other respects, was an accomplished scholar and an able man, was imbued with all the extravagant notions of the alchymists. He believed in the philosopher's stone, and wished to engage Descartes to devote his energies to the discovery of the elixir of life, or some other means by which the existence of man might be prolonged to an indefinite period. He gave his wife, the beautiful Venetia Anastasia Stanley, a dish of capons, fed upon vipers, according to the plan supposed to have been laid down by Arnold of Villeneuve, in the hope that she might thereby preserve her loveliness for a century. If such a man once took up the idea of the weapon−salve, it was to be expected that he would make the most of it. In his hands, however, it was changed from an unguent into a powder, and was called the powder of sympathy. He pretended that he had acquired the knowledge of it from a Carmelite friar, who had learned it in Persia or Armenia, from an oriental philosopher of great renown. King James, the Prince of Wales, the Duke of Buckingham, and many other noble personages, believed in its efficacy. The following remarkable instance of his mode of cure was read by Sir Kenelm to a society of learned men at Montpellier. Mr. James Howell, the well−known author of the "Dendrologia," and of various letters, coming by chance as two of his best friends were fighting a duel, rushed between them, and endeavoured to part them. He seized the sword of one of the combatants by the hilt, while, at the same time, he grasped the other by the blade. Being transported with fury one against the other, they struggled to rid themselves of the hindrance caused by their friend; and in so doing, the one whose sword was held by the blade by Mr. Howell, drew it away roughly, and nearly cut his hand off, severing the nerves and muscles, and penetrating to the bone. The other, almost at the same instant, disengaged his sword, and aimed a blow at the head of his antagonist, which Mr. Howell observing, raised his wounded hand with the rapidity of thought, to prevent the blow. The sword fell on the back of his already wounded hand, and cut it severely. "It seemed," said Sir Kenelm Digby, "as if some unlucky star raged over them, that they should have both shed the blood of that dear friend, for whose life they would have given their own, if they had been in their proper mind at the time." Seeing Mr. Howell's face all besmeared with blood from his wounded hand, they both threw down their swords and embraced him, and bound up his hand with a garter, to close the veins, which were cut, and bled profusely. They then conveyed him home, and sent for a surgeon. King James, who was much attached to Mr. Howell, afterwards sent his own surgeon to attend him. We must continue the narrative in the words of Sir Kenelm Digby:− "It was my chance," says he, "to be lodged hard by him: and, four or five days after, as I was making myself ready, he came to my house, and prayed me to view his wounds; 'for I understand,' said he, 'that you have extraordinary remedies on such occasions; and my surgeons apprehend some fear, that it may grow to a gangrene, and so the hand must be cut off.' In effect, his countenance discovered that he was in much pain, which, he said, was insupportable, in regard of the extreme inflammation. I told him I would willingly serve him; but if, haply, he knew the manner how I could cure him, without touching or seeing him, it might be that he would not expose himself to my manner of curing; because he would think it, peradventure, either ineffectual or superstitious. He replied, 'The many wonderful things which people have related unto me of your way of medicinement, makes me nothing doubt at all of its efficacy; and all that I have to say unto you is comprehended in the Spanish proverb, Hagase el milagro y hagalo Mahoma — Let the miracle be done, though Mahomet do it.'

"I asked him then for anything that had the blood upon it: so he presently sent for his garter, wherewith his hand was first bound; and, as I called for a basin of water, as if I would wash my hands, I took a handful of powder of vitriol, which I had in my study, and presently dissolved it. As soon as the bloody garter was brought me, I put it in the basin, observing, in the interim, what Mr. Howell did, who stood talking with a gentleman in a corner of my chamber, not regarding at all what I was doing. He started suddenly, as if he had found some strange alteration in himself. I asked him what he ailed? 'I know not what ails me; but I find that I feel no more pain. Methinks that a pleasing kind of freshness, as it were a wet cold napkin, did spread over my hand, which hath taken away the inflammation that tormented me before.' I replied, 'Since, then, you feel already so much good of my medicament, I advise you to cast away all your plasters; only keep the wound clean, and in a moderate temper, betwixt heat and cold.' This was presently reported to the Duke of Buckingham, and a little after, to the King, who were both very curious to know the circumstances of the business; which was, that after dinner, I took the garter out of the water, and put it to dry before a great fire. It was scarce dry before Mr. Howell's servant came running, and saying that his master felt as much burning as ever he had done, if not more; for the heat was such as if his hand were betwixt coals of fire. I answered, that although that had happened at present, yet he should find ease in

a short time; for I knew the reason of this new accident, and would provide accordingly; for his master should be free from that inflammation, it might be, before he could possibly return to him: but, in case he found no ease, I wished him to come presently back again; if not, he might forbear coming. Thereupon he went; and, at the instant, I did put the garter again into the water; thereupon he found his master without any pain at all. To be brief, there was no sense of pain afterwards; but within five or six days, the wounds were cicatrised and entirely healed."

Such is the marvellous story of Sir Kenelm Digby. Other practitioners of that age were not behind him in absurdity. It was not always necessary to use either the powder of sympathy, or the weapon−salve, to effect a cure. It was sufficient to magnetise the sword with the hand (the first faint dawn of the animal theory), to relieve any pain the same weapon had caused. They pretended, that if they stroked the sword upwards with their fingers, the wounded person would feel immediate relief; but if they stroked it downwards, he would feel intolerable pain.[Reginald Scott, quoted by Sir Walter Scott, in the notes to the "Lay of the Last Minstrel," c. iii. v. xxiii.]

Another very strange notion of the power and capabilities of magnetism was entertained at the same time. It was believed that a sympathetic alphabet could be made on the flesh, by means of which persons could correspond with each other, and communicate all their ideas with the rapidity of volition, although thousands of miles apart. From the arms of two persons a piece of flesh was cut, and mutually transplanted, while still warm and bleeding. The piece so severed grew to the new arm on which it was placed; but still retained so close a sympathy with its native limb, that its old possessor was always sensible of any injury done to it. Upon these transplanted pieces were tattooed the letters of the alphabet; so that, when a communication was to be made, either of the persons, though the wide Atlantic rolled between them, had only to prick his arm with a magnetic needle, and straightway his friend received intimation that the telegraph was at work. Whatever letter he pricked on his own arm pained the same letter on the arm of his correspondent. ["Foreign Quarterly Review," vol. xii. p. 417.] Who knows but this system, if it had received proper encouragement, might not have rendered the Post−Office unnecessary, and even obviated much of the necessity for railroads? Let modern magnetisers try and bring it to perfection. It is not more preposterous than many of their present notions; and, if carried into effect, with the improvement of some stenographical expedient for diminishing the number of punctures, would be much more useful than their plan of causing persons to read with their great toes, [Wirth's "Theorie des Somnambulismes," p. 79.] or seeing, with their eyes shut, into other people's bodies, and counting the number of arteries therein. ["Report of the Academic Royale de Medicine," — case of Mademoiselle Celine Sauvage, p. 186.]

Contemporary with Sir Kenelm Digby, was the no less famous Mr. Valentine Greatraks who, without mentioning magnetism, or laying claim to any theory, practised upon himself and others a deception much more akin to the animal magnetism of the present day, than the mineral magnetism it was then so much the fashion to study. He was the son of an Irish gentleman, of good education and property, in the county of Cork. He fell, at an early age, into a sort of melancholy derangement. After some time, he had an impulse, or strange persuasion in his mind, which continued to present itself, whether he were sleeping or waking, that God had given him the power of curing the king's evil. He mentioned this persuasion to his wife, who very candidly told him that he was a fool! He was not quite sure of this, notwithstanding the high authority from which it came, and determined to make trial of the power that was in him. A few days afterwards, he went to one William Maher, of Saltersbridge, in the parish of Lismore, who was grievously afflicted with the king's evil in his eyes, cheek, and throat. Upon this man, who was of abundant faith, he laid his hands, stroked him, and prayed fervently. He had the satisfaction to see him heal considerably in the course of a few days; and, finally, with the aid of other remedies, to be quite cured. This success encouraged him in the belief that he had a divine mission. Day after day he had further impulses from on high, that he was called upon to cure the ague also. In the course of time he extended his powers to the curing of epilepsy, ulcers, aches, and lameness. All the county of Cork was in a commotion to see this extraordinary physician, who certainly operated some very great benefit in cases where the disease was heightened by hypochondria and depression of spirits. According to his own account, [Greatraks' Account of himself, in a letter to the Honourable Robert Boyle.] such great multitudes resorted to him from divers places, that he had no time to follow his own business, or enjoy the company of his family and friends. He was obliged to set aside three days in the week, from six in the morning till six at night, during which time only he laid hands upon all that came. Still the crowds which thronged around him were so great, that the neighbouring towns were not able to accommodate them. He thereupon left his house in the country, and went to Youghal, where the resort of

sick people, not only from all parts of Ireland, but from England, continued so great, that the magistrates were afraid they would infect the place by their diseases. Several of these poor credulous people no sooner saw him than they fell into fits, and he restored them by waving his hand in their faces, and praying over them. Nay, he affirmed, that the touch of his glove had driven pains away, and, on one occasion, cast out from a woman several devils, or evil spirits, who tormented her day and night. "Every one of these devils," says Greatraks, "was like to choke her, when it came up into her throat." It is evident, from this, that the woman's complaint was nothing but hysteria.

The clergy of the diocese of Lismore, who seem to have had much clearer notions of Greatraks' pretensions than their parishioners, set their faces against the new prophet and worker of miracles. He was cited to appear in the Dean's Court, and prohibited from laying on his hands for the future: but he cared nothing for the church. He imagined that he derived his powers direct from Heaven, and continued to throw people into fits, and bring them to their senses again, as usual, almost exactly after the fashion of modern magnetisers. His reputation became, at last, so great, that Lord Conway sent to him from London, begging−that he would come over immediately, to cure a grievous head−ache which his lady had suffered for several years, and which the principal physicians of England had been unable to relieve.

Greatraks accepted the invitation, and tried his manipulations and prayers upon Lady Conway. He failed, however, in affording any relief. The poor lady's head−ache was excited by causes too serious to allow her any help, even from faith and a lively imagination. He lived for some months in Lord Conway's house, at Ragley, in Warwickshire, operating cures similar to those he had performed in Ireland. He afterwards removed to London, and took a house in Lincoln's Inn Fields, which soon became the daily resort of all the nervous and credulous women of the metropolis. A very amusing account of Greatraks at this time (1665), is given in the second volume of the "Miscellanies of St. Evremond," under the title of the Irish prophet. It is the most graphic sketch ever made of this early magnetiser. Whether his pretensions were more or less absurd than those of some of his successors, who have lately made their appearance among us, would be hard to say.

"When M. de Comminges," says St. Evremond, "was ambassador from his most Christian Majesty to the King of Great Britain, there came to London an Irish prophet, who passed himself off as a great worker of miracles. Some persons of quality having begged M. de Comminges to invite him to his house, that they might be witnesses of some of his miracles, the ambassador promised to satisfy them, as much from his own curiosity as from courtesy to his friends; and gave notice to Greatraks that he would be glad to see him.

"A rumour of the prophet's coming soon spread all over the town, and the hotel of M. de Comminges was crowded by sick persons, who came full of confidence in their speedy cure. The Irishman made them wait a considerable time for him, but came at last, in the midst of their impatience, with a grave and simple countenance, that showed no signs of his being a cheat. Monsieur de Comminges prepared to question him strictly, hoping to discourse with him on the matters that he had read of in Van Helmont and Bodinus; but he was not able to do so, much to his regret, for the crowd became so great, and cripples and others pressed around so impatiently to be the first cured, that the servants were obliged to use threats, and even force, before they could establish order among them, or place them in proper ranks.

"The prophet affirmed that all diseases were caused by evil spirits. Every infirmity was with him a case of diabolical possession. The first that was presented to him was a man suffering from gout and rheumatism, and so severely that the physicians had been unable to cure him. 'Ah,' said the miracle−worker, 'I have seen a good deal of this sort of spirits when I was in Ireland. They are watery spirits, who bring on cold shivering, and excite an overflow of aqueous humours in our poor bodies.' Then addressing the man, he said, 'Evil spirit, who hast quitted thy dwelling in the waters to come and afflict this miserable body, I command thee to quit thy new abode, and to return to thine ancient habitation!' This said, the sick man was ordered to withdraw, and another was brought forward in his place. This new comer said he was tormented by the melancholy vapours. In fact, he looked like a hypochondriac; one of those persons diseased in imagination, and who but too often become so in reality. 'Aerial spirit,' said the Irishman, 'return, I command thee, into the air! — exercise thy natural vocation of raising tempests, and do not excite any more wind in this sad unlucky body!' This man was immediately turned away to make room for a third patient, who, in the Irishman's opinion, was only tormented by a little bit of a sprite, who could not withstand his command for an instant. He Pretended that he recognized this sprite by some marks which were invisible to the company, to whom he turned with a smile, and said, 'This sort of spirit does not often do

much harm, and is always very diverting.' To hear him talk, one would have imagined that he knew all about spirits — their names, their rank, their numbers, their employment, and all the functions they were destined to; and he boasted of being much better acquainted with the intrigues of demons than he was with the affairs of men. You can hardly imagine what a reputation he gained in a short time. Catholics and Protestants visited him from every part, all believing that power from Heaven was in his hands."

After relating a rather equivocal adventure of a husband and wife, who implored Greatraks to cast out the devil of dissension which had crept in between them, St. Evremond thus sums up the effect he produced on the popular mind: — "So great was the confidence in him, that the blind fancied they saw the light which they did not see — the deaf imagined that they heard — the lame that they walked straight, and the paralytic that they had recovered the use of their limbs. An idea of health made the sick forget for a while their maladies; and imagination, which was not less active in those merely drawn by curiosity than in the sick, gave a false view to the one class, from the desire of seeing, as it operated a false cure on the other from the strong desire of being healed. Such was the power of the Irishman over the mind, and such was the influence of the mind upon the body. Nothing was spoken of in London but his prodigies; and these prodigies were supported by such great authorities, that the bewildered multitude believed them almost without examination, while more enlightened people did not dare to reject them from their own knowledge. The public opinion, timid and enslaved, respected this imperious and, apparently, well−authenticated error. Those who saw through the delusion kept their opinion to themselves, knowing how useless it was to declare their disbelief to a people filled with prejudice and admiration."

About the same time that Valentine Greatraks was thus magnetising the people of London, an Italian enthusiast, named Francisco Bagnone, was performing the same tricks in Italy, and with as great success. He had only to touch weak women with his hands, or sometimes (for the sake of working more effectively upon their fanaticism)with a relic, to make them fall into fits and manifest all the symptoms of magnetism.

Besides these, several learned men, in different parts of Europe, directed their attention to the study of the magnet, believing it might he rendered efficacious in many diseases. Van Helmont, in particular, published a work on the effects of magnetism on the human frame; and Balthazar Gracian, a Spaniard, rendered himself famous for the boldness of his views on the subject. "The magnet," said the latter, "attracts iron; iron is found everywhere; everything, therefore, is under the influence of magnetism. It is only a modification of the general principle, which establishes harmony or foments divisions among men. It is the same agent which gives rise to sympathy, antipathy, and the passions." ["Introduction to the Study of Animal Magnetism," by Baron Dupotet de Sennevoy, p. 315.]

Baptista Porta, who, in the whimsical genealogy of the weapon−salve, given by Parson Foster in his attack upon Dr. a Fluctibus, is mentioned as one of its fathers, had also great faith in the efficacy of the magnet, and operated upon the imagination of his patients in a manner which was then considered so extraordinary that he was accused of being a magician, and prohibited from practising by the Court of Rome. Among others who distinguished themselves by their faith in magnetism, Sebastian Wirdig and William Maxwell claim especial notice. Wirdig was professor of medicine at the University of Rostock in Mecklenburgh, and wrote a treatise called "The New Medicine of the Spirits," which he presented to the Royal Society of London. An edition of this work was printed in 1673, in which the author maintained that a magnetic influence took place, not only between the celestial and terrestrial bodies, but between all living things. The whole world, he said, was under the influence of magnetism: life was preserved by magnetism; death was the consequence of magnetism!

Maxwell, the other enthusiast, was an admiring disciple of Paracelsus, and boasted that he had irradiated the obscurity in which too many of the wonder−working recipes of that great philosopher were enveloped. His works were printed at Frankfort, in 1679. It would seem, from the following passage, that he was aware of the great influence of imagination, as well in the production as in the cure of diseases. "If you wish to work prodigies," says he, "abstract from the materiality of beings — increase the sum of spirituality in bodies — rouse the spirit from its slumbers. Unless you do one or other of these things — unless you can bind the idea, you can never perform anything good or great." Here, in fact, lies the whole secret of magnetism, and all delusions of a similar kind: increase the spirituality — rouse the spirit from its slumbers, or in other words, work upon the imagination — induce belief and blind confidence, and you may do anything. This passage, which is quoted with approbation by M. Dupotet in a recent work ["Introduction to the Study of Animal Magnetism," p. 318.] as strongly corroborative of the theory now advanced by the animal−magnetists, is just the reverse. If they believe they can work all their

wonders by the means so dimly shadowed forth by Maxwell, what becomes of the universal fluid pervading all nature, and which they pretend to pour into weak and diseased bodies from the tips of their fingers?

Early in the eighteenth century, the attention of Europe was directed to a very remarkable instance of fanaticism, which has been claimed by the animal magnetists, as a proof of their science. The convulsionaries of St. Medard, as they were called, assembled in great numbers round the tomb of their favourite saint, the Jansenist priest Paris, and taught one another how to fall into convulsions. They believed that St. Paris would cure all their infirmities; and the number of hysterical women and weak−minded persons of all descriptions that flocked to the tomb from far and near was so great, as daily to block up all the avenues leading to the spot. Working themselves up to a pitch of excitement, they went off one after the other into fits, while some of them, still in apparent possession of all their faculties, voluntarily exposed themselves to sufferings, which on ordinary occasions would have been sufficient to deprive them of life. The scenes that occurred were a scandal to civilization and to religion — a strange mixture of obscenity, absurdity, and superstition. While some were praying on bended knees at the shrine of St. Paris, others were shrieking and making the most hideous noises. The women especially exerted themselves. On one side of the chapel there might be seen a score of them, all in convulsions, while at another as many more, excited to a sort of frenzy, yielded themselves up to gross indecencies. Some of them took an insane delight in being beaten and trampled upon. One in particular, according to Montegre, whose account we quote [Dictionnaire des Sciences Medicales — Article "Convulsionnaires," par Montegre.] was so enraptured with this ill usage, that nothing but the hardest blows would satisfy her. While a fellow of herculean strength was beating her with all his might with a heavy bar of iron, she kept continually urging him to renewed exertion. The harder he struck the better she liked it, exclaiming all the while, "Well done, brother; well done; oh, how pleasant it is! what good you are doing me! courage, my brother, courage; strike harder; strike harder still!" Another of these fanatics had, if possible, a still greater love for a beating. Carre de Montgeron, who relates the circumstance, was unable to satisfy her with sixty blows of a large sledge hammer. He afterwards used the same weapon, with the same degree of strength, for the sake of experiment, and succeeded in battering a hole in a stone wall at the twenty−fifth stroke. Another woman, named Sonnet, laid herself down on a red−hot brazier without flinching, and acquired for herself the nickname of the salamander; while others, desirous of a more illustrious martyrdom, attempted to crucify themselves. M. Deleuze, in his critical history of Animal Magnetism, attempts to prove that this fanatical frenzy was produced by magnetism, and that these mad enthusiasts magnetised each other without being aware of it. As well might he insist that the fanaticism which tempts the Hindoo bigot to keep his arms stretched in a horizontal position till the sinews wither, or his fingers closed upon his palms till the nails grow out of the backs of his hands, is also an effect of magnetism!

For a period of sixty or seventy years, magnetism was almost wholly confined to Germany. Men of sense and learning devoted their attention to the properties of the loadstone; and one Father Hell, a jesuit, and professor of astronomy at the University of Vienna, rendered himself famous by his magnetic cures. About the year 1771 or 1772, he invented steel plates of a peculiar form, which he applied to the naked body, as a cure for several diseases. In the year 1774, he communicated his system to Anthony Mesmer. The latter improved upon the ideas of Father Hell, constructed a new theory of his own, and became the founder of ANIMAL MAGNETISM.

It has been the fashion among the enemies of the new delusion to decry Mesmer as an unprincipled adventurer, while his disciples have extolled him to the skies as a regenerator of the human race. In nearly the same words, as the Rosicrucians applied to their founders, he has been called the discoverer of the secret which brings man into more intimate connexion with his Creator; the deliverer of the soul from the debasing trammels of the flesh; the man who enables us to set time at defiance, and conquer the obstructions of space. A careful sifting of his pretensions — and examination of the evidence brought forward to sustain them, will soon show which opinion is the more correct. That the writer of these pages considers him in the light of a man, who deluding himself, was the means of deluding others, may be inferred from his finding a place in these volumes, and figuring among the Flamels, the Agrippas, the Borris, the Boehmens, and the Cagliostros.

He was born in May 1734, at Mersburg, in Swabia, and studied medicine at the University of Vienna. He took his degrees in 1766, and chose the influence of the planets on the human body as the subject of his inaugural dissertation. Having treated the matter quite in the style of the old astrological physicians, he was exposed to some ridicule both then and afterwards. Even at this early period some faint ideas of his great theory were germinating in his mind. He maintained in his dissertation, "that the sun, moon, and fixed stars mutually affect

each other in their orbits; that they cause and direct in our earth a flux and reflux not only in the sea, but in the atmosphere, and affect in a similar manner all organized bodies through the medium of a subtile and mobile fluid, which pervades the universe and associates all things together in mutual intercourse and harmony." This influence, he said, was particularly exercised on the nervous system, and produced two states which he called intension and remission, which seemed to him to account for the different periodical revolutions observable in several maladies. When in after−life he met with Father Hell, he was confirmed by that person's observations in the truth of many of his own ideas. Having caused Hell to make him some magnetic plates, he determined to try experiments with them himself for his further satisfaction.

He tried accordingly, and was astonished at his success. The faith of their wearers operated wonders with the metallic plates. Mesmer made due reports to Father Hell of all he had done, and the latter published them as the results of his own happy invention, and speaking of Mesmer as a physician whom he had employed to work under him. Mesmer took offence at being thus treated, considering himself a far greater personage than Father Hell. He claimed the invention as his own, accused Hell of a breach of confidence, and stigmatized him as a mean person, anxious to turn the discoveries of others to his own account. Hell replied, and a very pretty quarrel was the result, which afforded small talk for months to the literati of Vienna. Hell ultimately gained the victory. Mesmer, nothing daunted, continued to promulgate his views, till he stumbled at last upon the animal theory.

One of his patients was a young lady named Oesterline, who suffered under a convulsive malady. Her attacks were periodical, and attended by a rush of blood to the head, followed by delirium and syncope. These symptoms he soon succeeded in reducing under his system of planetary influence, and imagined he could foretell the periods of accession and remission. Having thus accounted satisfactorily to himself for the origin of the disease, the idea struck him that he could operate a certain cure, if he could ascertain beyond doubt what he had long believed, that there existed between the bodies which compose our globe, an action equally reciprocal and similar to that of the heavenly bodies, by means of which he could imitate artificially the periodical revolutions of the flux and reflux beforementioned. He soon convinced himself that this action did exist. When trying the metallic plates of Father Hell, he thought their efficacy depended on their form; but he found afterwards that he could produce the same effects without using them at all, merely by passing his hands downwards towards the feet of the patient — even when at a considerable distance.

This completed the theory of Mesmer. He wrote an account of his discovery to all the learned societies of Europe, soliciting their investigation. The Academy of Sciences at Berlin was the only one that answered him, and their answer was anything but favourable to his system or flattering to himself. Still he was not discouraged. He maintained to all who would listen to him that the magnetic matter, or fluid, pervaded all the universe — that every human body contained it, and could communicate the superabundance of it to another by an exertion of the will. Writing to a friend from Vienna, he said, "I have observed that the magnetic is almost the same thing as the electric fluid, and that it may be propagated in the same manner, by means of intermediate bodies. Steel is not the only substance adapted to this purpose. I have rendered paper, bread, wool, silk, stones, leather, glass, wood, men, and dogs — in short, everything I touched, magnetic to such a degree that these substances produced the same effects as the loadstone on diseased persons. I have charged jars with magnetic matter in the same way as is done with electricity."

Mesmer did not long find his residence at Vienna as agreeable as he wished. His pretensions were looked upon with contempt or indifference, and the case of Mademoiselle Oesterline brought him less fame than notoriety. He determined to change his sphere of action, and travelled into Swabia and Switzerland. In the latter country he met with the celebrated Father Gassner, who, like Valentine Greatraks, amused himself by casting out devils, and healing the sick by merely laying hands upon them. At his approach puling girls fell into convulsions, and the hypochondriac fancied themselves cured. His house was daily besieged by the lame, the blind, and the hysteric. Mesmer at once acknowledged the efficacy of his cures, and declared that they were the obvious result of his own newly−discovered power of magnetism. A few of the Father's patients were forthwith subjected to the manipulations of Mesmer, and the same symptoms were induced. He then tried his hand upon some paupers in the hospitals of Berne and Zurich, and succeeded, according to his own account, but no other person's, in curing an opththalmia and a gutta serena. With memorials of these achievements he returned to Vienna, in the hope of silencing his enemies, or at least forcing them to respect his newly−acquired reputation, and to examine his system more attentively.

His second appearance in that capital was not more auspicious than the first. He undertook to cure a Mademoiselle Paradis, who was quite blind, and subject to convulsions. He magnetised her several times, and then declared that she was cured; at least, if she was not, it was her fault, and not his. An eminent oculist of that day, named Birth, went to visit her, and declared that she was as blind as ever; while her family said she was as much subject to convulsions as before. Mesmer persisted that she was cured. Like the French philosopher, he would not allow facts to interfere with his theory. [An enthusiastic philosopher, of whose name we are not informed, had constructed a very satisfactory theory on some subject or other, and was not a little proud of it. "But the facts, my dear fellow," said his friend, "the facts do not agree with your theory." — "Don't they," replied the philosopher, shrugging his shoulders, "then, taut pis pour les faits;" — so much the worse for the facts.] He declared that there was a conspiracy against him; and that Mademoiselle Paradis, at the instigation of her family, feigned blindness in order to injure his reputation!

The consequences of this pretended cure taught Mesmer that Vienna was not the sphere for him. Paris, the idle, the debauched, the pleasure−hunting, the novelty−loving, was the scene for a philosopher like him, and thither he repaired accordingly. He arrived at Paris in 1778, and began modestly, by making himself and his theory known to the principal physicians. At first, his encouragement was but slight; he found people more inclined to laugh at than to patronise him. But he was a man who had great confidence in himself, and of a perseverance which no difficulties could overcome. He hired a sumptuous apartment, which he opened to all comers who chose to make trial of the new power of nature. M. D'Eslon, a physician of great reputation, became a convert; and from that time, Animal Magnetism, or, as some called it, Mesmerism, became the fashion in Paris. The women were quite enthusiastic about it, and their admiring tattle wafted its fame through every grade of society. Mesmer was the rage; and high and low, rich and poor, credulous and unbelieving, all hastened to convince themselves of the power of this mighty magician, who made such magnificent promises. Mesmer, who knew as well as any man living the influence of the imagination, determined that, on that score, nothing should be wanting to heighten the effect of the magnetic charm. In all Paris, there was not a house so charmingly furnished as Monsieur Mesmer's. Richly−stained glass shed a dim religious light on his spacious saloons, which were almost covered with mirrors. Orange blossoms scented all the air of his corridors; incense of the most expensive kinds burned in antique vases on his chimney−pieces; aeolian harps sighed melodious music from distant chambers; while sometimes a sweet female voice, from above or below, stole softly upon the mysterious silence that was kept in the house, and insisted upon from all visitors. "Was ever anything so delightful?" cried all the Mrs. Wittitterley's of Paris, as they thronged to his house in search of pleasant excitement; "so wonderful!" said the pseudo−philosophers, who would believe anything if it were the fashion; "so amusing!" said the worn−out debauchees, who had drained the cup of sensuality to its dregs, and who longed to see lovely women in convulsions, with the hope that they might gain some new emotions from the sight.

The following was the mode of operation: — In the centre of the saloon was placed an oval vessel, about four feet in its longest diameter, and one foot deep. In this were laid a number of wine−bottles, filled with magnetised water, well corked−up, and disposed in radii, with their necks outwards. Water was then poured into the vessel so as just to cover the bottles, and filings of iron were thrown in occasionally to heighten the magnetic effect. The vessel was then covered with an iron cover, pierced through with many holes, and was called the baquet. From each hole issued a long moveable rod of iron, which the patients were to apply to such parts of their bodies as were afflicted. Around this baquet the patients were directed to sit, holding each other by the hand, and pressing their knees together as closely as possible to facilitate the passage of the magnetic fluid from one to the other.

Then came in the assistant magnetisers, generally strong, handsome young men, to pour into the patient from their finger−tips fresh streams of the wondrous fluid. They embraced the patients between the knees, rubbed them gently down the spine and the course of the nerves, using gentle pressure upon the breasts of the ladies, and staring them out of countenance to magnetise them by the eye! All this time the most rigorous silence was maintained, with the exception of a few wild notes on the harmonica or the piano−forte, or the melodious voice of a hidden opera−singer swelling softly at long intervals. Gradually the cheeks of the ladies began to glow, their imaginations to become inflamed; and off they went, one after the other, in convulsive fits. Some of them sobbed and tore their hair, others laughed till the tears ran from their eyes, while others shrieked and screamed and yelled till they became insensible altogether.

This was the crisis of the delirium. In the midst of it, the chief actor made his appearance, waving his wand,

like Prospero, to work new wonders. Dressed in a long robe of lilac−coloured silk, richly embroidered with gold flowers, bearing in his hand a white magnetic rod; and, with a look of dignity which would have sat well on an eastern caliph, he marched with solemn strides into the room. He awed the still sensible by his eye, and the violence of their symptoms diminished. He stroked the insensible with his hands upon the eyebrows and down the spine; traced figures upon their breast and abdomen with his long white wand, and they were restored to consciousness. They became calm, acknowledged his power, and said they felt streams of cold or burning vapour passing through their frames, according as he waved his wand or his fingers before them.

"It is impossible," says M. Dupotet, "to conceive the sensation which Mesmer's experiments created in Paris. No theological controversy, in the earlier ages of the Catholic Church, was ever conducted with greater bitterness." His adversaries denied the discovery; some calling him a quack, others a fool, and others, again, like the Abbe Fiard, a man who had sold himself to the devil! His friends were as extravagant in their praise, as his foes were in their censure. Paris was inundated with pamphlets upon the subject, as many defending as attacking the doctrine. At court, the Queen expressed herself in favour of it, and nothing else was to be heard of in society.

By the advice of M. D'Eslon, Mesmer challenged an examination of his doctrine by the Faculty of Medicine. He proposed to select twenty−four patients, twelve of whom he would treat magnetically, leaving the other twelve to be treated by the faculty according to the old and approved methods. He also stipulated, that to prevent disputes, the government should nominate certain persons who were not physicians, to be present at the experiments; and that the object of the inquiry should be, not how these effects were produced, but whether they were really efficacious in the cure of any disease. The faculty objected to limit the inquiry in this manner, and the proposition fell to the ground.

Mesmer now wrote to Marie Antoinette, with the view of securing her influence in obtaining for him the protection of government. He wished to have a chateau and its lands given to him, with a handsome yearly income, that he might be enabled to continue his experiments at leisure, untroubled by the persecution of his enemies. He hinted the duty of governments to support men of science, and expressed his fear, that if he met no more encouragement, he should be compelled to carry his great discovery to some other land more willing to appreciate him. "In the eyes of your Majesty," said he, "four or five hundred thousand francs, applied to a good purpose, are of no account. The welfare and happiness of your people are everything. My discovery ought to be received and rewarded with a munificence worthy of the monarch to whom I shall attach myself." The government at last offered him a pension of twenty thousand francs, and the cross of the order of St. Michael, if he had made any discovery in medicine, and would communicate it to physicians nominated by the King. The latter part of the proposition was not agreeable to Mesmer. He feared the unfavourable report of the King's physicians; and, breaking off the negotiation, spoke of his disregard of money, and his wish to have his discovery at once recognised by the government. He then retired to Spa, in a fit of disgust, upon pretence of drinking the waters for the benefit of his health.

After he had left Paris, the Faculty of Medicine called upon M. D'Eslon, for the third and last time, to renounce the doctrine of animal magnetism, or be expelled from their body. M. D'Eslon, so far from doing this, declared that he had discovered new secrets, and solicited further examination. A royal commission of the Faculty of Medicine was, in consequence, appointed on the l2th of March 1784, seconded by another commission of the Academie des Sciences, to investigate the phenomena and report upon them. The first commission was composed of the principal physicians of Paris; while, among the eminent men comprised in the latter, were Benjamin Franklin, Lavoisier, and Bailly, the historian of astronomy. Mesmer was formally invited to appear before this body, but absented himself from day to day, upon one pretence or another. M. D'Eslon was more honest, because he thoroughly believed in the phenomena, which it is to be questioned if Mesmer ever did, and regularly attended the sittings and performed experiments.

Bailly has thus described the scenes of which he was a witness in the course of this investigation. "The sick persons, arranged in great numbers and in several rows around the baquet, receive the magnetism by all these means: by the iron rods which convey it to them from the baquet — by the cords wound round their bodies — by the connection of the thumb, which conveys to them the magnetism of their neighbours — and by the sounds of a pianoforte, or of an agreeable voice, diffusing the magnetism in the air. The patients were also directly magnetised by means of the finger and wand of the magnetiser moved slowly before their faces, above or behind their heads, and on the diseased parts, always observing the direction of the holes. The magnetiser acts by fixing

his eyes on them. But above all, they are magnetised by the application of his hands and the pressure of his fingers on the hypochondres and on the regions of the abdomen; an application often continued for a long time−sometimes for several hours.

"Meanwhile the patients in their different conditions present a very varied picture. Some are calm, tranquil, and experience no effect. Others cough, spit, feel slight pains, local or general heat, and have sweatings. Others again are agitated and tormented with convulsions. These convulsions are remarkable in regard to the number affected with them, to their duration and force. As soon as one begins to be convulsed, several others are affected. The commissioners have observed some of these convulsions last more than three hours. They are accompanied with expectorations of a muddy viscous water, brought away by violent efforts. Sometimes streaks of blood have been observed in this fluid. These convulsions are characterized by the precipitous, involuntary motion of all the limbs, and of the whole body: by the construction of the throat — by the leaping motions of the hypochondria and the epigastrium — by the dimness and wandering of the eyes — by piercing shrieks, tears, sobbing, and immoderate laughter. They are preceded or followed by a state of languor or reverie, a kind of depression, and sometimes drowsiness. The smallest sudden noise occasions a shuddering; and it was remarked, that the change of measure in the airs played on the piano−forte had a great influence on the patients. A quicker motion, a livelier melody, agitated them more, and renewed the vivacity of their convulsions.

"Nothing is more astonishing than the spectacle of these convulsions. One who has not seen them can form no idea of them. The spectator is as much astonished at the profound repose of one portion of the patients as at the agitation of the rest − at the various accidents which are repeated, and at the sympathies which are exhibited. Some of the patients may be seen devoting their attention exclusively to one another, rushing towards each other with open arms, smiling, soothing, and manifesting every symptom of attachment and affection. All are under the power of the magnetiser; it matters not in what state of drowsiness they may be, the sound of his voice — a look, a motion of his hand — brings them out of it. Among the patients in convulsions there are always observed a great many women, and very few men." [Rapport des Commissaires, redige par M. Bailly. — Paris, 1784.]

These experiments lasted for about five months. They had hardly commenced, before Mesmer, alarmed at the loss both of fame and profit, determined to return to Paris. Some patients of rank and fortune, enthusiastic believers in his doctrine, had followed him to Spa. One of them named Bergasse, proposed to open a subscription for him, of one hundred shares, at one hundred louis each, on condition that he would disclose his secret to the subscribers, who were to be permitted to make whatever use they pleased of it. Mesmer readily embraced the proposal; and such was the infatuation, that the subscription was not only filled in a few days, but exceeded by no less a sum than one hundred and forty thousand francs.

With this fortune he returned to Paris, and recommenced his experiments, while the royal commission continued theirs. His admiring pupils, who had paid him so handsomely for his instructions, spread the delusion over the country, and established in all the principal towns of France, "Societies of Harmony," for trying experiments and curing all diseases by means of magnetism. Some of these societies were a scandal to morality, being joined by profligate men of depraved appetites, who took a disgusting delight in witnessing young girls in convulsions. Many of the pretended magnetisers were notorious libertines, who took that opportunity of gratifying their passions. An illegal increase of the number of French citizens was anything but a rare consequence in Strasburg, Nantes, Bourdeaux, Lyons, and other towns, where these societies were established.

At last the Commissioners published their report, which was drawn up by the illustrious and unfortunate Bailly. For clearness of reasoning and strict impartiality it has never been surpassed. After detailing the various experiments made, and their results, they came to the conclusion that the only proof advanced in support of Animal Magnetism was the effects it produced on the human body — that those effects could be produced without passes or other magnetic manipulations − that all these manipulations, and passes, and ceremonies never produce any effect at all if employed without the patient's knowledge; and that therefore imagination did, and animal magnetism did not, account for the phenomena.

This report was the ruin of Mesmer's reputation in France. He quitted Paris shortly after, with the three hundred and forty thousand francs which had been subscribed by his admirers, and retired to his own country, where he died in 1815, at the advanced age of eighty−one. But the seeds he had sown fructified of themselves, nourished and brought to maturity by the kindly warmth of popular credulity. Imitators sprang up in France, Germany, and England, more extravagant than their master, and claiming powers for the new science which its

founder had never dreamt of. Among others, Cagliostro made good use of the delusion in extending his claims to be considered a master of the occult sciences. But he made no discoveries worthy to be compared to those of the Marquis de Puysegur and the Chevalier Barbarin, honest men, who began by deceiving themselves before they deceived others.

The Marquis de Puysegur, the owner of a considerable estate at Busancy, was one of those who had entered into the subscription for Mesmer. After that individual had quitted France, he retired to Busancy with his brother to try Animal Magnetism upon his tenants, and cure the country people of all manner of diseases. He was a man of great simplicity and much benevolence, and not only magnetised but fed the sick that flocked around him. In all the neighbourhood, and indeed within a circumference of twenty miles, he was looked upon as endowed with a power almost Divine. His great discovery, as he called it, was made by chance. One day he had magnetised his gardener; and observing him to fall into a deep sleep, it occurred to him that he would address a question to him, as he would have done to a natural somnambulist. He did so, and the man replied with much clearness and precision. M. de Puysegur was agreeably surprised: he continued his experiments, and found that, in this state of magnetic somnambulism, the soul of the sleeper was enlarged, and brought into more intimate communion with all nature, and more especially with him, M. de Puysegur. He found that all further manipulations were unnecessary; that, without speaking or making any sign, he could convey his will to the patient; that he could, in fact, converse with him, soul to soul, without the employment of any physical operation whatever!

Simultaneously with this marvellous discovery he made another, which reflects equal credit upon his understanding. Like Valentine Greatraks, he found it hard work to magnetise all that came − that he had not even time to take the repose and relaxation which were necessary for his health. In this emergency he hit upon a clever expedient. He had heard Mesmer say that he could magnetise bits of wood — why should he not be able to magnetise a whole tree? It was no sooner thought than done. There was a large elm on the village green at Busancy, under which the peasant girls used to dance on festive occasions, and the old men to sit, drinking their vin du pays on the fine summer evenings. M. de Puysegur proceeded to this tree and magnetised it, by first touching it with his hands and then retiring a few steps from it; all the while directing streams of the magnetic fluid from the branches toward the trunk, and from the trunk toward the root. This done, he caused circular seats to be erected round it, and cords suspended from it in all directions. When the patients had seated themselves, they twisted the cords round the diseased parts of their bodies, and held one another firmly by their thumbs to form a direct channel of communication for the passage of the fluid.

M. de Puysegur had now two hobbies − the man with the enlarged soul, and the magnetic elm. The infatuation of himself and his patients cannot be better expressed than in his own words. Writing to his brother, on the 17th of May 1784, he says, "If you do not come, my dear friend, you will not see my extraordinary man, for his health is now almost quite restored. I continue to make use of the happy power for which I am indebted to M. Mesmer. Every day I bless his name; for I am very useful, and produce many salutary effects on all the sick poor in the neighbourhood. They flock around my tree; there were more than one hundred and thirty of them this morning. It is the best baquet possible; not a leaf of it but communicates health! all feel, more or less, the good effects of it. You will be delighted to see the charming picture of humanity which this presents. I have only one regret − it is, that I cannot touch all who come. But my magnetised man — my intelligence − sets me at ease. He teaches me what conduct I should adopt. According to him, it is not at all necessary that I should touch every one; a look, a gesture, even a wish, is sufficient. And it is one of the most ignorant peasants of the country that teaches me this! When he is in a crisis, I know of nothing more profound, more prudent, more clearsighted (clairvoyant) than he is."

In another letter, describing his first experiment with the magnetic tree, he says, "Yester evening I brought my first patient to it. As soon as I had put the cord round him he gazed at the tree; and, with an air of astonishment which I cannot describe, exclaimed, 'What is it that I see there?' His head then sunk down, and he fell into a perfect fit of somnambulism. At the end of an hour, I took him home to his house again, when I restored him to his senses. Several men and women came to tell him what he had been doing. He maintained it was not true; that, weak as he was, and scarcely able to walk, it would have been scarcely possible for him to have gone down stairs and walked to the tree. To−day I have repeated the experiment on him, and with the same success. I own to you that my head turns round with pleasure to think of the good I do. Madame de Puysegur, the friends she has with her, my servants, and, in fact, all who are near me, feel an amazement, mingled with admiration, which cannot be

described; but they do not experience the half of my sensations. Without my tree, which gives me rest, and which will give me still more, I should be in a state of agitation, inconsistent, I believe, with my health. I exist too much, if I may be allowed to use the expression."

In another letter, he descants still more poetically upon his gardener with the enlarged soul. He says, "It is from this simple man, this tall and stout rustic, twenty−three years of age, enfeebled by disease, or rather by sorrow, and therefore the more predisposed to be affected by any great natural agent, — it is from this man, I repeat, that I derive instruction and knowledge. When in the magnetic state, he is no longer a peasant who can hardly utter a single sentence; he is a being, to describe whom I cannot find a name. I need not speak; I have only to think before him, when he instantly understands and answers me. Should anybody come into the room, he sees him, if I desire it (but not else), and addresses him, and says what I wish him to say; not indeed exactly as I dictate to him, but as truth requires. When he wants to add more than I deem it prudent strangers should hear, I stop the flow of his ideas, and of his conversation in the middle of a word, and give it quite a different turn!"

Among other persons attracted to Busancy by the report of these extraordinary occurrences was M. Cloquet, the Receiver of Finance. His appetite for the marvellous being somewhat insatiable, he readily believed all that was told him by M. de Puysegur. He also has left a record of what he saw, and what he credited, which throws a still clearer light upon the progress of the delusion. ["Introduction to the Study of Animal Magnetism," by Baron Dupotet, p. 73.] He says that the patients he saw in the magnetic state had an appearance of deep sleep, during which all the physical faculties were suspended, to the advantage of the intellectual faculties. The eyes of the patients were closed; the sense of hearing was abolished, and they awoke only at the voice of their magnetiser. "If any one touched a patient during a crisis, or even the chair on which he was seated," says M. Cloquet, "it would cause him much pain and suffering, and throw him into convulsions. During the crisis, they possess an extraordinary and supernatural power, by which, on touching a patient presented to them, they can feel what part of his body is diseased, even by merely passing their hand over the clothes." Another singularity was, that these sleepers who could thus discover diseases — see into the interior of other men's stomachs, and point out remedies, remembered absolutely nothing after the magnetiser thought proper to disenchant them. The time that elapsed between their entering the crisis and their coming out of it was obliterated. Not only had the magnetiser the power of making himself heard by the somnambulists, but he could make them follow him by merely pointing his finger at them from a distance, though they had their eyes the whole time completely closed.

Such was Animal Magnetism under the auspices of the Marquis de Puysegur. While he was hibiting these fooleries around his elm−tree, a magnetiser of another class appeared in Lyons, in the person of the Chevalier de Barbarin. This person thought the effort of the will, without any of the paraphernalia of wands or baquets, was sufficient to throw patients into the magnetic sleep. He tried it and succeeded. By sitting at the bedside of his patients, and praying that they might be magnetised, they went off into a state very similar to that of the persons who fell under the notice of M. de Puysegur. In the course of time, a very considerable number of magnetisers, acknowledging Barbarin for their model, and called after him Barbarinists, appeared in different parts, and were believed to have effected some remarkable cures. In Sweden and Germany, this sect of fanatics increased rapidly, and were called spiritualists, to distinguish them from the followers of M. de Puysegur, who were called experimentalists. They maintained that all the effects of Animal Magnetism, which Mesmer believed to be producible by a magnetic fluid dispersed through nature, were produced by the mere effort of one human soul acting upon another; that when a connexion had once been established between a magnetiser and his patient, the former could communicate his influence to the latter from any distance, even hundreds of miles, by the will! One of them thus described the blessed state of a magnetic patient: — "In such a man animal instinct ascends to the highest degree admissible in this world. The clairvoyant is then a pure animal, without any admixture of matter. His observations are those of a spirit. He is similar to God. His eye penetrates all the secrets of nature. When his attention is fixed on any of the objects of this world — on his disease, his death, his well−beloved, his friends, his relations, his enemies, — in spirit he sees them acting; he penetrates into the causes and the consequences of their actions; he becomes a physician, a prophet, a divine!" [See "Foreign Review, Continental Miscellany," vol. v. 113.]

Let us now see what progress these mysteries made in England. In the year 1788, Dr. Mainauduc, who had been a pupil, first of Mesmer, and afterwards of D'Eslon, arrived in Bristol, and gave public lectures upon magnetism. His success was quite extraordinary. People of rank and fortune hastened from London to Bristol to

be magnetised, or to place themselves under his tuition. Dr. George Winter, in his History of Animal Magnetism, gives the following list of them: — "They amounted to one hundred and twenty−seven, among whom there were one duke, one duchess, one marchioness, two countesses, one earl, one baron, three baronesses, one bishop, five right honourable gentlemen and ladies, two baronets, seven members of parliament, one clergyman, two physicians, seven surgeons, besides ninety−two gentlemen and ladies of respectability." He afterwards established himself in London, where he performed with equal success.

He began by publishing proposals to the ladies for the formation of a Hygeian Society. In this paper he vaunted highly the curative effects of Animal Magnetism, and took great credit to himself for being the first person to introduce it into England, and thus concluded:— "As this method of cure is not confined to sex, or college education, and the fair sex being in general the most sympathising part of the creation, and most immediately concerned in the health and care of its offspring, I think myself bound in gratitude to you, ladies, for the partiality you have shown me in midwifery, to contribute, as far as lies in my power, to render you additionally useful and valuable to the community. With this view, I propose forming my Hygeian Society, to be incorporated with that of Paris. As soon as twenty ladies have given in their names, the day shall be appointed for the first meeting at my house, when they are to pay fifteen guineas, which will include the whole expense."

Hannah More, in a letter addressed to Horace Walpole, in September 1788, speaks of the "demoniacal mummeries" of Dr. Mainauduc, and says he was in a fair way of gaining a hundred thousand pounds by them, as Mesmer had done by his exhibitions in Paris.

So much curiosity was excited by the subject that, about the same time, a man, named Holloway, gave a course of lectures on Animal Magnetism in London, at the rate of five guineas for each pupil, and realised a considerable fortune. Loutherbourg, the painter, and his wife followed the same profitable trade; and such was the infatuation of the people to be witnesses of their strange manipulations, that, at times, upwards of three thousand persons crowded around their house at Hammersmith, unable to gain admission. The tickets sold at prices varying from one to three guineas. Loutherbourg performed his cures by the touch, after the manner of Valentine Greatraks, and finally pretended to a Divine mission. An account of his miracles, as they were called, was published in 1789, entitled "A List of New Cures performed by Mr. and Mrs. de Loutherbourg of Hammersmith Terrace, without Medicine; by a Lover of the Lamb of God. Dedicated to his Grace the Archbishop of Canterbury."

This "Lover of the Lamb of God" was a half−crazy old woman, named Mary Pratt, who conceived for Mr. and Mrs. de Loutherbourg a veneration which almost prompted her to worship them. She chose for the motto of her pamphlet a verse in the thirteenth chapter of the Acts of the Apostles: "Behold, ye despisers, and wonder and perish! for I will work a work in your days which ye shall not believe though a man declare it unto you." Attempting to give a religious character to the cures of the painter, she thought a woman was the proper person to make them known, since the apostle had declared that a man should not be able to conquer the incredulity of the people. She stated that, from Christmas 1788 to July 1789, De Loutherbourg and his wife had cured two thousand people, "having been made proper recipients to receive Divine manuductions; which heavenly and Divine influx, coming from the radix God, his Divine Majesty had most graciously bestowed upon them to diffuse healing to all, be they deaf, dumb, blind, lame, or halt."

In her dedication to the Archbishop of Canterbury, she implored him to compose a new form of prayer to be used in all churches and chapels, that nothing might impede this inestimable gift from having its due course. She further entreated all the magistrates and men of authority in the land to wait on Mr. and Mrs. de Loutherbourg, to consult with them on the immediate erection of a large hospital, with a pool of Bethesda attached to it. All the magnetisers were scandalised at the preposterous jabber of this old woman, and De Loutherbourg appears to have left London to avoid her; continuing, however, in conjunction with his wife, the fantastic tricks which had turned the brain of this poor fanatic, and deluded many others who pretended to more sense than she had.

From this period until 1798, magnetism excited little or no attention in England. An attempt to revive the doctrine was made in that year, but it was in the shape of mineral rather than of animal magnetism. One Benjamin Douglas Perkins, an American, practising as a surgeon in Leicestersquare, invented and took out a patent for the celebrated "Metallic Tractors." He pretended that these tractors, which were two small pieces of metal strongly magnetised, something resembling the steel plates which were first brought into notice by Father Hell, would cure gout, rheumatism, palsy, and in fact, almost every disease the human frame was subject to, if applied externally to

the afflicted part, and moved about gently, touching the surface only. The most wonderful stories soon obtained general circulation, and the press groaned with pamphlets, all vaunting the curative effects of the tractors, which were sold at five guineas the pair. Perkins gained money rapidly. Gouty subjects forgot their pains in the presence of this new remedy; the rheumatism fled at its approach; and toothache, which is often cured by the mere sight of a dentist, vanished before Perkins and his marvellous steel plates. The benevolent Quakers, of whose body he was a member, warmly patronised the invention. Desirous that the poor, who could not afford to pay Mr. Perkins five guineas, or even five shillings, for his tractors, should also share in the benefits of that sublime discovery, they subscribed a large sum, and built an hospital, called the "Perkinean Institution," in which all comers might be magnetised free of cost. In the course of a few months they were in very general use, and their lucky inventor in possession of five thousand pounds.

Dr. Haygarth, an eminent physician at Bath, recollecting the influence of imagination in the cure of disease, hit upon an expedient to try the real value of the tractors. Perkins's cures were too well established to be doubted; and Dr. Haygarth, without gainsaying them, quietly, but in the face of numerous witnesses, exposed the delusion under which people laboured with respect to the curative medium. He suggested to Dr. Falconer that they should make wooden tractors, paint them to resemble the steel ones, and see if the very same effects would not be produced. Five patients were chosen from the hospital in Bath, upon whom to operate. Four of them suffered severely from chronic rheumatism in the ankle, knee, wrist, and hip; and the fifth had been afflicted for several months with the gout. On the day appointed for the experiments, Dr. Haygarth and his friends assembled at the hospital, and with much solemnity brought forth the fictitious tractors. Four out of the five patients said their pains were immediately relieved; and three of them said they were not only relieved, but very much benefited. One felt his knee warmer, and said he could walk across the room. He tried and succeeded, although on the previous day he had not been able to stir. The gouty man felt his pains diminish rapidly, and was quite easy for nine hours, until he went to bed, when the twitching began again. On the following day the real tractors were applied to all the patients, when they described their symptoms in nearly the same terms.

To make still more sure, the experiment was tried in the Bristol Infirmary, a few weeks afterwards, on a man who had a rheumatic affection in the shoulder, so severe as to incapacitate him from lifting his hand from his knee. The fictitious tractors were brought and applied to the afflicted part, one of the physicians, to add solemnity to the scene, drawing a stop−watch from his pocket to calculate the time exactly, while another, with a pen in his hand, sat down to write the change of symptoms from minute to minute as they occurred. In less than four minutes the man felt so much relieved, that he lifted his hand several inches without any pain in the shoulder!

An account of these matters was published by Dr. Haygarth, in a small volume entitled, "Of the Imagination, as a Cause and Cure of Disorders, exemplified by fictitious Tractors." The exposure was a coup de grace to the system of Mr. Perkins. His friends and patrons, still unwilling to confess that they had been deceived, tried the tractors upon sheep, cows, and horses, alleging that the animals received benefit from the metallic plates, but none at all from the wooden ones. But they found nobody to believe them; the Perkinean Institution fell into neglect; and Perkins made his exit from England, carrying with him about ten thousand pounds, to soothe his declining years in the good city of Pennsylvania.

Thus was magnetism laughed out of England for a time. In France, the revolution left men no leisure for such puerilities. The "Societes de l'Harmonie," of Strasburg, and other great towns, lingered for a while, till sterner matters occupying men's attention, they were one after the other abandoned, both by pupils and professors. The system thus driven from the first two nations of Europe, took refuge among the dreamy philosophers of Germany. There the wonders of the magnetic sleep grew more and more wonderful every day; the patients acquired the gift of prophecy − their vision extended over all the surface of the globe — they could hear and see with their toes and fingers, and read unknown languages, and understand them too, by merely having the book placed on their bellies. Ignorant clodpoles, when once entranced by the grand Mesmeric fluid, could spout philosophy diviner than Plato ever wrote, descant upon the mysteries of the mind with more eloquence and truth than the profoundest metaphysicians the world ever saw, and solve knotty points of divinity with as much ease as waking men could undo their shoe−buckles!

During the first twelve years of the present century, little was heard of Animal Magnetism in any country of Europe. Even the Germans forgot their airy fancies; recalled to the knowledge of this every−day world by the roar of Napoleon's cannon and the fall or the establishment of kingdoms. During this period, a cloud of obscurity hung

over the science, which was not dispersed until M. Deleuze published, in 1813, his "Histoire Critique du Magnetisme Animal." This work gave a new impulse to the half−forgotten delusion; newspapers, pamphlets, and books again waged war upon each other on the question of its truth or falsehood; and many eminent men in the profession of medicine recommenced inquiry, with an earnest design to discover the truth.

The assertions made in the celebrated treatise of Deleuze are thus summed up: [See the very calm, clear, and dispassionate article upon the subject in the fifth volume (1830) of "The Foreign Review," page 96, et seq.] — "There is a fluid continually escaping from the human body," and "forming an atmosphere around us," which, as "it has no determined current," produces no sensible effects on surrounding individuals. It is, however, "capable of being directed by the will;" and, when so directed, "is sent forth in currents," with a force corresponding to the energy we possess. Its motion is "similar to that of the rays from burning bodies;" "it possesses different qualities in different individuals." It is capable of a high degree of concentration, "and exists also in trees." The will of the magnetiser, "guided by a motion of the hand, several times repeated in the same direction," can fill a tree with this fluid. Most persons, when this fluid is poured into them, from the body and by the will of the magnetiser, "feel a sensation of heat or cold" when he passes his hand before them, without even touching them. Some persons, when sufficiently charged with this fluid, fall into a state of somnambulism, or magnetic ecstasy; and, when in this state, "they see the fluid encircling the magnetiser like a halo of light, and issuing in luminous streams from his mouth and nostrils, his head, and hands; possessing a very agreeable smell, and communicating a particular taste to food and water."

One would think that these absurdities were quite enough to be insisted upon by any physician who wished to be considered sane, but they only form a small portion of the wondrous things related by M. Deleuze. He further said, "When magnetism produces somnambulism, the person who is in this state acquires a prodigious extension of all his faculties. Several of his external organs, especially those of sight and hearing, become inactive; but the sensations which depend upon them take place internally. Seeing and hearing are carried on by the magnetic fluid, which transmits the impressions immediately, and without the intervention of any nerves or organs directly to the brain. Thus the somnambulist, though his eyes and ears are closed, not only sees and hears, but sees and hears much better than he does when awake. In all things he feels the will of the magnetiser, although that will be not expressed. He sees into the interior of his own body, and the most secret organization of the bodies of all those who may be put en rapport, or in magnetic connexion, with him. Most commonly, he only sees those parts which are diseased and disordered, and intuitively prescribes a remedy for them. He has prophetic visions and sensations, which are generally true, but sometimes erroneous. He expresses himself with astonishing eloquence and facility. He is not free from vanity. He becomes a more perfect being of his own accord for a certain time, if guided wisely by the magnetiser, but wanders if he is ill−directed."

According to M. Deleuze, any person could become a magnetiser and produce these effects, by conforming to the following conditions, and acting upon the following rules:—

Forget for a while all your knowledge of physics and metaphysics.

Remove from your mind all objections that may occur.

Imagine that it is in your power to take the malady in hand, and throw it on one side.

Never reason for six weeks after you have commenced the study.

Have an active desire to do good; a firm belief in the power of magnetism, and an entire confidence in employing it. In short, repel all doubts; desire success, and act with simplicity and attention.

That is to say, "be very credulous; be very persevering; reject all past experience, and do not listen to reason," and you are a magnetiser after M. Deleuze's own heart.

Having brought yourself into this edifying state of fanaticism, "remove from the patient all persons who might be troublesome to you: keep with you only the necessary witnesses — a single person, if need be; desire them not to occupy themselves in any way with the processes you employ and the effects which result from them, but to join with you in the desire of doing good to your patient. Arrange yourself so as neither to be too hot nor too cold, and in such a manner that nothing may obstruct the freedom of your motions; and take precautions to prevent interruption during the sitting. Make your patient then sit as commodiously as possible, and place yourself opposite to him, on a seat a little more elevated, in such a manner that his knees may be betwixt yours, and your feet at the side of his. First, request him to resign himself; to think of nothing; not to perplex himself by examining the effects which may be produced; to banish all fear; to surrender himself to hope, and not to be

disturbed or discouraged if the action of magnetism should cause in him momentary pains. After having collected yourself, take his thumbs between your fingers in such a way that the internal part of your thumbs may be in contact with the internal part of his, and then fix your eyes upon him! You must remain from two to five minutes in this situation, or until you feel an equal heat between your thumbs and his. This done, you will withdraw your hands, removing them to the right and left; and at the same time turning them till their internal surface be outwards, and you will raise them to the height of the head. You will now place them upon the two shoulders, and let them remain there about a minute; afterwards drawing them gently along the arms to the extremities of the fingers, touching very slightly as you go. You will renew this pass five or six times, always turning your hands, and removing them a little from the body before you lift them. You will then place them above the head; and, after holding them there for an instant, lower them, passing them before the face, at the distance of one or two inches, down to the pit of the stomach. There you will stop them two minutes also, putting your thumbs upon the pit of the stomach and the rest of your fingers below the ribs. You will then descend slowly along the body to the knees, or rather, if you can do so without deranging yourself, to the extremity of the feet. You will repeat the same processes several times during the remainder of the sitting. You will also occasionally approach your patient, so as to place your hands behind his shoulders, in order to descend slowly along the spine of the back and the thighs, down to the knees or the feet. After the first passes, you may dispense with putting your hands upon the head, and may make the subsequent passes upon the arms, beginning at the shoulders, and upon the body, beginning at the stomach."

Such was the process of magnetising recommended by Deleuze. That delicate, fanciful, and nervous women, when subjected to it, should have worked themselves into convulsions will be readily believed by the sturdiest opponent of Animal Magnetism. To sit in a constrained posture — be stared out of countenance by a fellow who enclosed her knees between his, while he made passes upon different parts of her body, was quite enough to throw any weak woman into a fit, especially if she were predisposed to hysteria, and believed in the efficacy of the treatment. It is just as evident that those of stronger minds and healthier bodies should be sent to sleep by the process. That these effects have been produced by these means there are thousands of instances to show. But are they testimony in favour of Animal Magnetism? − do they prove the existence of the magnetic fluid? Every unprejudiced person must answer in the negative. It needs neither magnetism, nor ghost from the grave, to tell us that silence, monotony, and long recumbency in one position must produce sleep, or that excitement, imitation, and a strong imagination, acting upon a weak body, will bring on convulsions. It will be seen hereafter that magnetism produces no effects but these two; that the gift of prophecy − supernatural eloquence − the transfer of the senses, and the power of seeing through opaque substances, are pure fictions, that cannot be substantiated by anything like proof.

M. Deleuze's book produced quite a sensation in France; the study was resumed with redoubled vigour. In the following year, a journal was established devoted exclusively to the science, under the title of "Annales du Magnetisme Animal;" and shortly afterwards appeared the "Bibliotheque du Magnetisme Animal," and many others. About the same time, the Abbe Faria, "the man of wonders," began to magnetise; and the belief being that he had more of the Mesmeric fluid about him, and a stronger will, than most men, he was very successful in his treatment. His experiments afford a convincing proof that imagination can operate all, and the supposed fluid none, of the resuits so confidently claimed as evidence of the new science. He placed his patients in an arm−chair; told them to shut their eyes; and then, in a loud commanding voice, pronounced the single word, "Sleep!" He used no manipulations whatever — had no baquet, or conductor of the fluid; but he nevertheless succeeded in causing sleep in hundreds of patients. He boasted of having in his time produced five thousand somnambulists by this method. It was often necessary to repeat the command three or four times; and if the patient still remained awake, the Abbe got out of the difficulty by dismissing him from the chair, and declaring that he was incapable of being acted on. And here it should be remarked that the magnetisers do not lay claim to a universal efficacy for their fluid; the strong and the healthy cannot be magnetised; the incredulous cannot be magnetised; those who reason upon it cannot be magnetised; those who firmly believe in it can be magnetised; the weak in body can be magnetised, and the weak in mind can be magnetised. And lest, from some cause or other, individuals of the latter classes should resist the magnetic charm, the apostles of the science declare that there are times when even they cannot be acted upon; the presence of one scorner or unbeliever may weaken the potency of the fluid and destroy its efficacy. In M. Deleuze's instructions to a magnetiser, he expressly says, "Never magnetise before inquisitive

persons!" ["Histoire Critique du Magnetisme Animal," p. 60.] Yet the followers of this delusion claim for it the rank of a science!

The numerous writings that appeared between the years 1813 and 1825 show how much attention was excited in France. With every succeeding year some new discovery was put forth, until at last the magnetisers seemed to be very generally agreed that there were six separate and distinct degrees of magnetisation. They have been classed as follow:−

In the first stage, the skin of the patient becomes slightly reddened; and there is a feeling of heat, comfort, and lightness all over the body; but there is no visible action on the senses.

In the second stage, the eye is gradually abstracted from the dominion of the will (or, in other words, the patient becomes sleepy). The drooping eyelids cannot be raised; the senses of hearing, smelling, feeling, and tasting are more than usually excited. In addition, a variety of nervous sensations are felt, such as spasms of the muscles and prickings of the skin, and involuntary twitchings in various parts of the body.

In the third stage, which is that of magnetic sleep, all the senses are closed to external impressions; and sometimes fainting, and cataleptic or apoplectic attacks may occur.

In the fourth stage, the patient is asleep to all the world; but he is awake within his own body, and consciousness returns. While in this state, all his senses are transferred to the skin. He is in the perfect crisis, or magnetic somnambulism; a being of soul and mind — seeing without eyes — hearing without ears, and deadened in body to all sense of feeling.

In the fifth stage, which is that of lucid vision, the patient can see his own internal organisation, or that of others placed in magnetic communication with him. He becomes, at the same time, possessed of the instinct of remedies. The magnetic fluid, in this stage, unites him by powerful attraction to others, and establishes between them an impenetration of thought and feeling so intense as to blend their different natures into one.

In the sixth stage, which is at the same time the rarest and the most perfect of all, the lucid vision is not obstructed by opaque matter, or subject to any barriers interposed by time or space. The magnetic fluid, which is universally spread in nature, unites the individual with all nature, and gives him cognizance of coming events by its universal lucidity.

So much was said and written between the years 1820 and 1825, and so many converts were made, that the magnetisers became clamorous for a new investigation. M. de Foissac, a young physician, wrote to the Academie Royale du Medicine a letter, calling for inquiry, in which he complained of the unfairness of the report of Messrs. Bailly and Franklin in 1784, and stating that, since that time, the science had wholly changed by the important discovery of magnetic somnambulism. He informed the Academy that he had under his care a young woman, whose powers of divination when in the somnambulic state were of the most extraordinary character. He invited the members of that body to go into any hospital, and choose persons afflicted with any diseases, acute or chronic, simple or complex, and his somnambulist, on being put en rapport, or in magnetic connexion, with them, would infallibly point out their ailings and name the remedies. She, and other somnambulists, he said, could, by merely laying the hand successively on the head, the chest, and the abdomen of a stranger, immediately discover his maladies, with, the pains and different alterations thereby occasioned. They could indicate, besides, whether the cure were possible, and, if so, whether it were easy or difficult, near or remote, and what means should be employed to attain this result by the surest and readiest way. In this examination they never departed from the sound principles of medicine. "In fact," added M. de Foissac, "I go further, and assert that their inspirations are allied to the genius which animated Hippocrates!"

In the mean time experiments were carried on in various hospitals of Paris. The epileptic patients at the Salpetriere were magnetised by permission of M. Esquirol. At the Bicetre also the same resuits were obtained. M. de Foissac busied himself with the invalids at the Hospice de la Charite, and M. Dupotet was equally successful in producing sleep or convulsions at Val de Grace. Many members of the Chamber of Deputies became converts, and M. Chardel, the Comte de Gestas, M. de Laseases, and others, opened their saloons to those who were desirous of being instructed in animal magnetism. [Dupotet's Introduction to the Study of Animal Magnetism, page 23.] Other physicians united with M. de Foissac in calling for an inquiry; and ultimately the Academy nominated a preliminary committee of five of its members, namely, Messrs Adelon, Burdin, Marc, Pariset, and Husson, to investigate the alleged facts, and to report whether the Academy, without any compromise of its dignity, could appoint a new commission.

Before this committee, M. de Foissac produced his famous somnambulist; but she failed in exhibiting any one of the phenomena her physician had so confidently predicted: she was easily thrown into the state of sleep, by long habit and the monotony of the passes and manipulations of her magnetiser; but she could not tell the diseases of persons put en rapport with her. The committee of five framed excuses for this failure, by saying, that probably the magnetic fluid was obstructed, because they were "inexperienced, distrustful, and perhaps impatient." After this, what can be said for the judgment or the impartiality of such a committee? They gave at last their opinion, that it would be advisable to appoint a new commission. On the l3th of December 1825, they presented themselves to the Academie to deliver their report. A debate ensued, which occupied three days, and in which all the most distinguished members took part. It was finally decided by a majority of ten, that the commission should be appointed, and the following physicians were chosen its members:— They were eleven in number, viz. Bourdois de la Motte, the President; Fouquier, Gueneau de Mussy, Guersent, Husson, Itard, Marc, J. J. Leroux, Thillay, Double, and Majendie.

These gentlemen began their labours by publishing an address to all magnetisers, inviting them to come forward and exhibit in their presence the wonders of animal magnetism. M. Dupotet says that very few answered this amicable appeal, because they were afraid of being ridiculed when the report should be published. Four magnetisers, however, answered their appeal readily, and for five years were busily engaged in bringing proofs of the new science before the commission. These were M. de Foissac, M. Dupotet, M. Chapelain, and M. de Geslin. It would be but an unprofitable, and by no means a pleasant task to follow the commissioners in their erratic career, as they were led hither and thither by the four lights of magnetism above mentioned; the four "Wills−o'−the−Wisp" which dazzled the benighted and bewildered doctors on that wide and shadowy region of metaphysical inquiry — the influence of mind over matter. It will be better to state at once the conclusion they came to after so long and laborious an investigation, and then examine whether they were warranted in it by the evidence brought before them.

The report, which is exceedingly voluminous, is classed under thirty different heads, and its general tenor is favourable to magnetism. The reporters expressly state their belief in the existence of the magnetic fluid, and sum up the result of their inquiries in the four assertions which follow:—

1. Magnetism has no effect upon persons in a sound state of health, nor upon some diseased persons.
2. In others its effects are slight.
3. These effects are sometimes produced by weariness or ennui, by monotony, and by the imagination.
4. We have seen these effects developed independently of the last causes, most probably as the effects of magnetism alone.

It will be seen that the first and second of these sentences presuppose the existence of that magnetic power, which it is the object of the inquiry to discover. The reporters begin, by saying, that magnetism exists, when after detailing their proofs, they should have ended by affirming it. For the sake of lucidity, a favourite expression of their own, let us put the propositions into a new form and new words, without altering the sense.

1. Certain effects, such as convulsions, somnambulism, are producible in the human frame, by the will of others, by the will of the patient himself, or by both combined, or by some unknown means, we wish to discover, perhaps by magnetism.
2. These effects are not producible upon all bodies. They cannot be produced upon persons in a sound state of health, nor upon some diseased persons; while in other eases, the effects are very slight.
3. These effects were produced in many cases that fell under our notice, in which the persons operated on were in a weak state of health, by weariness or ennui, by monotony, and by the power of imagination.
4. But in many other eases these effects were produced, and were clearly not the result of weariness or ennui, of monotony, or of the power of the imagination. They were, therefore, produced by the magnetic processes we employed: — ergo — Animal Magnetism exists.

Every one, whether a believer or disbeliever in the doctrine, must see that the whole gist of the argument will be destroyed, if it be proved that the effects which the reporters claimed as resulting from a power independent of weariness, monotony, and the imagination, did, in fact, result from them, and from nothing else. The following are among the proofs brought forward to support the existence of the magnetic fluid, as producing those phenomena:—

"A child, twenty−eight months old, was magnetised by M. Foissac, at the house of M. Bourdois. The child, as

well as its father, was subject to attacks of epilepsy. Almost immediately after M. Foissac had begun his manipulations and passes, the child rubbed its eyes, bent its head to one side, supported it on one of the cushions of the sofa where it was sitting, yawned, moved itself about, scratched its head and its ears, appeared to strive against the approach of sleep, and then rose, if we may be allowed the expression, grumbling. Being taken away to satisfy a necessity of nature, it was again placed on the sofa, and magnetised for a few moments. But as there appeared no decided symptoms of somnolency this time, we terminated the experiment."

And this in all seriousness and sobriety was called a proof of the existence of the magnetic fluid! That these effects were not produced by the imagination may be granted; but that they were not produced by weariness and monotony is not so clear. A child is seated upon a sofa, a solemn looking gentleman, surrounded by several others equally grave, begins to play various strange antics before it, moving his hands mysteriously, pointing at his head, all the while preserving a most provoking silence. And what does the child? It rubs its eyes, appears restless, yawns, scratches its head, grumbles, and makes an excuse to get away. Magnetism, forsooth! 'Twas a decided case of botheration!

The next proof (so called), though not so amusing, is equally decisive of the mystification of the Commissioners. A deaf and dumb lad, eighteen years of age, and subject to attacks of epilepsy, was magnetised fifteen times by M. Foissac. The phenomena exhibited during the treatment were a heaviness of the eyelids, a general numbness, a desire to sleep, and sometimes vertigo:— the epileptic attacks were entirely suspended, and did not return till eight months afterwards. Upon this case and the first mentioned, the Committee reasoned thus:— "These cases appear to us altogether worthy of remark. The two individuals who formed the subject of the experiment, were ignorant of what was done to them. The one, indeed, was not in a state capable of knowing it; and the other never had the slightest idea of magnetism. Both, however, were insensible of its influence; and most certainly it is impossible in either case to attribute this sensibility to the imagination." The first case has been already disposed of. With regard to the second, it is very possible to attribute all the results to imagination. It cannot be contended, that because the lad was deaf and dumb he had no understanding, that he could not see the strange manipulations of the magnetiser, and that he was unaware that his cure was the object of the experiments that were thus made upon him. Had he no fancy merely because he was dumb? and could he, for the same reason, avoid feeling a heaviness in his eyelids, a numbness, and a sleepiness, when he was forced to sit for two or three hours while M. Foissac pointed his fingers at him? As for the amelioration in his health, no argument can be adduced to prove that he was devoid of faith in the remedy; and that, having faith, he should not feel the benefit of it as well as thousands of others who have been cured by means wholly as imaginary.

The third case is brought forward with a still greater show of authority. Having magnetised the child and the dumb youth with results so extraordinary, M. Foissac next tried his hand upon a Commissioner. M. Itard was subjected to a course of manipulations; the consequences were a flow of saliva, a metallic savour in the mouth, and a severe headach. These symptoms, say the reporters, cannot be accounted for by the influence of imagination. M. Itard, it should be remarked, was a confirmed valetudinarian; and a believer, before the investigation commenced, in the truth of magnetism. He was a man, therefore, whose testimony cannot be received with implicit credence upon this subject. He may have repeated, and so may his brother Commissioners, that the results above stated were not produced by the power of the imagination. The patients of Perkins, of Valentine Greatraks, of Sir Kenelm Digby, of Father Gassner, were all equally positive: but what availed their assertions? Experience soon made it manifest, that no other power than that of imagination worked the wonders in their case. M. Itard's is not half so extraordinary; the only wonder is, that it should ever have been insisted upon.

The Commissioners having, as they thought, established beyond doubt the existence of the magnetic fluid, (and these are all their proofs,) next proceeded to investigate the more marvellous phenomena of the science; such as the transfer of the senses; the capability of seeing into one's own or other people's insides, and of divining remedies; and the power of prophecy. A few examples will suffice.

M. Petit was magnetised by M. Dupotet, who asserted that the somnambulist would be able to choose, with his eyes shut, a mesmerised coin out of twelve others. The experiment was tried, and the somnambulist chose the wrong one. [Report of the Commissioners, p. 153.]

Baptiste Chamet was also magnetised by M. Dupotet, and fell into the somnambulic state after eight minutes. As he appeared to be suffering great pain, he was asked what ailed him, when he pointed to his breast, and said he felt pain there. Being asked what part of his body that was, he said his liver. [Ibid, p. 137.]

Mademoiselle Martineau was magnetised by M. Dupotet, and it was expected that her case would prove not only the transfer of the senses, but the power of divining remedies. Her eyes having been bandaged, she was asked if she could not see all the persons present? She replied, no; but she could hear them talking. No one was speaking at the time. She said she would awake after five or ten minutes sleep. She did not awake for sixteen or seventeen minutes. She announced that on a certain day she would be able to tell exactly the nature of her complaint, and prescribe the proper remedies. On the appointed day she was asked the question, and could not answer. [Report of the Commissioners, p. 139.]

Mademoiselle Couturier, a patient of M. de Geslin, was thrown into the state of somnambulism, and M. de Geslin said she would execute his mental orders. One of the Committee then wrote on a slip of paper the words "Go and sit down on the stool in front of the piano." He handed the paper to M. de Geslin, who having conceived the words mentally, turned to his patient, and told her to do as he required of her. She rose up, went to the clock, and said it was twenty minutes past nine. She was tried nine times more, and made as many mistakes. [Idem, p. 139.]

Pierre Cazot was an epileptic patient, and was said to have the power of prophecy. Being magnetised on the 22nd of April, he said that in nine weeks he should have a fit, in three weeks afterwards go mad, abuse his wife, murder some one, and finally recover in the month of August. After which he should never have an attack again. [Idem, p. 180] In two days after uttering this prophecy, he was run over by a cabriolet and killed. [Foreign Quarterly Review, vol. xii. p. 439] A post mortem examination was made of his body, when it was ascertained beyond doubt, that even had he not met with this accident, he could never have recovered. [At the extremity of the plexus choroides was found a substance, yellow within, and white without, containing small hydatids. — Report oltre Commissioners, p. 186.]

The inquest which had been the means of eliciting these, along with many other facts, having sat for upwards of five years, the magnetisers became anxious that the report should be received by the solemn conclave of the Academie. At length a day (the 20th of June 1831) was fixed for the reading. All the doctors of Paris thronged around the hall to learn the result; the street in front of the building was crowded with medical students; the passages were obstructed by philosophers. "So great was the sensation," says M. Dupotet, "that it might have been supposed the fate of the nation depended on the result." M. Husson, the reporter, appeared at the bar and read the report, the substance of which we have just extracted. He was heard at first with great attention, but as he proceeded signs of impatience and dissent were manifested on all sides. The unreasonable inferences of the Commissioners — their false conclusions − their too positive assertions, were received with repeated marks of disapprobation. Some of the academicians started from their seats, and apostrophising the Commissioners, accused them of partiality or stolidity. The Commissioners replied; until, at last, the uproar became so violent that an adjournment of the sitting was moved and carried. On the following day the report was concluded. A stormy discussion immediately ensued, which certainly reflected no credit upon the opponents of Animal Magnetism. Both sides lost temper − the anti−magnetists declaring that the whole was a fraud and a delusion; the pro−magnetists reminding the Academy that it was too often the fate of truth to be scorned and disregarded for a while, but that eventually her cause would triumph. "We do not care for your disbelief," cried one, "for in this very hall your predecessors denied the circulation of the blood!" − "Yes," cried another, "and they denied the falling of meteoric stones!" while a third exclaimed "Grande est veritas et praevalebit!" Some degree of order being at last restored, the question whether the report should be received and published was decided in the negative. It was afterwards agreed that a limited number of copies should be lithographed, for the private use of such members as wished to make further examination.

As might have been expected, magnetism did not suffer from a discussion which its opponents had conducted with so much intemperance. The followers of magnetism were as loud as ever in vaunting its efficacy as a cure, and its value, not only to the science of medicine, but to philosophy in general. By force of repeated outcries against the decision of the Academie, and assertions that new facts were discovered day after day, its friends, six years afterwards, prevailed upon that learned and influential body to institute another inquiry. The Academie, in thus consenting to renew the investigation after it had twice solemnly decided (once in conjunction with, and once in opposition to a committee of its own appointment) that Animal Magnetism was a fraud or a chimera, gave the most striking proof of its own impartiality and sincere desire to arrive at the truth.

The new Commission was composed of M. Roux, the President; and Messieurs Bouillard, Cloquet, Emery,

Pelletier, Caventon, Oudet, Cornac, and Dubois d'Amiens. The chief magnetiser upon the occasion was M. Berna, who had written to the Academie on the 12th of February 1837, offering to bring forward the most convincing proofs of the truth of the new "science." The Commissioners met for the first time on the 27th of February, and delivered their report, which was drawn up by M. Dubois d'Amiens, on the 22nd of August following. After a careful examination of all the evidence, they decided, as Messieurs Bailly and Franklin had done in 1784, that the touchings, imagination, and the force of imitation would account satisfactorily for all the phenomena; that the supposed Mesmeric fluid would not; that M. Berna, the magnetiser, laboured under a delusion; and that the facts brought under their notice were anything but conclusive in favour of the doctrine of Animal Magnetism, and could have no relation either with physiology or with therapeutics.

The following abridgment of the report will show that the Commissioners did not thus decide without abundant reason. On the 3rd of March they met at the house of M. Roux, the President, when M. Berna introduced his patient, a young girl of seventeen, of a constitution apparently nervous and delicate, but with an air sufficiently cool and self−sufficient. M. Berna offered eight proofs of Animal Magnetism, which he would elicit in her case, and which he classed as follow:—

1. He would throw her into the state of somnambulism.

2. He would render her quite insensible to bodily pain.

3. He would restore her to sensibility by his mere will, without any visible or audible manifestation of it.

4. His mental order should deprive her of motion.

5. He would cause her, by a mental order, to cease answering in the midst of a conversation, and by a second mental order would make her begin again.

6. He would repeat the same experiment, separated from his patient by a door.

7. He would awake her.

8. He would throw her again into the somnambulic state, and by his will successively cause her to lose and recover the sensibility of any part of her body.

Before any attempt at magnetisation was made by M. Berna, the Commissioners determined to ascertain how far, in her ordinary state, she was sensible to pricking. Needles of a moderate size were stuck into her hands and neck, to the depth of half a line, and she was asked by Messieurs Roux and Caventon whether she felt any pain. She replied that she felt nothing; neither did her countenance express any pain. The Commissioners, somewhat surprised at this, repeated their question, and inquired whether she was absolutely insensible. Being thus pressed, she acknowledged that she felt a little pain.

These preliminaries having been completed, M. Berna made her sit close by him. He looked steadfastly at her, but made no movements or passes whatever. After the lapse of about two minutes she fell back asleep, and M. Berna told the Commissioners that she was now in the state of magnetic somnambulism. He then arose, and again looking steadfastly at her from a short distance, declared, after another minute, that she was struck with general insensibility.

To ascertain this, the girl's eyes having been previously bandaged, Messieurs Bouillard, Emery, and Dubois pricked her one after the other with needles. By word she complained of no pain; and her features, where the bandage allowed them to be seen, appeared calm and unmoved. But M. Dubois having stuck his needle rather deep under her chin, she immediately made with much vivacity a movement of deglutition.

This experiment having failed, M. Berna tried another, saying that he would, by the sole and tacit intervention of his will, paralyze any part of the girl's body the Commissioners might mention. To avoid the possibility of collusion, M. Dubois drew up the following conditions:— " That M. Berna should maintain the most perfect silence, and should receive from the hands of the Commissioners papers, on which should be written the parts to be deprived of motion and sensibility, and that M. Berna should let them know when he had done it by closing one of his eyes, that they might verify it. The parts to be deprived of sensibility were the chin, the right thumb, the region of the left deltoid, and that of the right patella." M. Berna would not accept these conditions, giving for his reason that the parts pointed out by the Commissioners were too limited; that, besides, all this was out of his programme, and he did not understand why such precautions should be taken against him.

M. Berna had written in his programme that he would deprive the whole body of sensibility, and then a part only. He would afterwards deprive the two arms of motion — then the two legs — then a leg and an arm − then the neck, and lastly the tongue. All the evidence he wished the Commissioners to have was after a very

unsatisfactory fashion. He would tell the somnambulist to raise her arm, and if she did not raise it, the limb was to be considered paralyzed. Besides this, the Commissioners were to make haste with their observations. If the first trials did not succeed, they were to be repeated till paralysis was produced. "These," as the Commissioners very justly remarked, "were not such conditions as men of science, who were to give an account of their commission, could exactly comply with." After some time spent in a friendly discussion of the point, M. Berna said he could do no more at that meeting. Then placing himself opposite the girl, he twice exclaimed, "Wake!" She awakened accordingly, and the sitting terminated.

At the second meeting, M. Berna was requested to paralyze the right arm only of the girl by the tacit intervention of his will, as he had confidently assured the Commissioners he could. M. Berna, after a few moments, made a sign with his eye that he had done so, when M. Bouillard proceeded to verify the fact. Being requested to move her left arm, she did so. Being then requested to move her right leg, she said the whole of her right side was paralyzed — she could neither move arm nor leg. On this experiment the Commissioners remark: "M. Berna's programme stated that he had the power of paralyzing either a single limb or two limbs at once, we chose a single limb, and there resulted, in spite of his will, a paralysis of two limbs." Some other experiments, equally unsatisfactory, were tried with the same girl. M. Berna was soon convinced that she had not studied her part well, or was not clever enough to reflect any honour upon the science, and he therefore dismissed her. Her place was filled by a woman, aged about thirty, also of very delicate health; and the following conclusive experiments were tried upon her:−

The patient was thrown into the somnambulic state, and her eyes covered with a bandage. At the invitation of the magnetiser, M. Dubois d'Amiens wrote several words upon a card, that the somnambule might read them through her bandages, or through her occiput. M. Dubois wrote the word Pantagruel, in perfectly distinct roman characters; then placing himself behind the somnambule, he presented the card close to her occiput. The magnetiser was seated in front of the woman and of M. Dubois, and could not see the writing upon the card. Being asked by her magnetiser what was behind her head, she answered, after some hesitation, that she saw something white — something resembling a card — a visiting−card. It should be remembered that M. Berna had requested M. Dubois aloud to take a card and write upon it, and that the patient must have heard it, as it was said in her presence. She was next asked if she could distinguish what there was on this card. She replied "Yes; there was writing on it." — "Is it small or large, this writing?" inquired the magnetiser. "Pretty large," replied she. "What is written on it?" continued the magnetiser. "Wait a little−I cannot see very plain. Ah! there is first an M. Yes, it is a word beginning with an M." [The woman thought it was a visiting−card, and guessed that doubtless it would begin with the words Monsieur or Madame.] M. Cornac, unknown to the magnetiser, who alone put the questions, passed a perfectly blank card to M. Dubois, who substituted it quietly for the one on which he had written the word Pantagruel. The somnambule still persisted that she saw a word beginning with an M. At last, after some efforts, she added doubtingly that she thought she could see two lines of writing. She was still thinking of the visiting−card, with a name in one line and the address on the other.

Many other experiments of the same kind, and with a similar result, were tried with blank cards; and it was then determined to try her with playing−cards. M. Berna had a pack of them on his table, and addressing M. Dubois aloud, he asked him to take one of them and place it at the occiput of the somnambule. M. Dubois asked him aloud whether he should take a court card. "As you please," replied the magnetiser. As M. Dubois went towards the table, the idea struck him that he would not take either a court or a common card, but a perfectly blank card of the same size. Neither M. Berna nor the somnambule was aware of the substitution. He then placed himself behind her as before, and held the card to her occiput so that M. Berna could not see it. M. Berna then began to magnetise her with all his force, that he might sublimate her into the stage of extreme lucidity, and effectually transfer the power of vision to her occiput. She was interrogated as to what she could see. She hesitated; appeared to struggle with herself, and at last said she saw a card. "But what do you see on the card?" After a little hesitation, she said she could see black and red (thinking of the court card).

The Commissioners allowed M. Berna to continue the examination in his own way. After some fruitless efforts to get a more satisfactory answer from the somnambule, he invited M. Dubois to pass his card before her head, close against the bandage covering her eyes. This having been done, the somnambule said she could see better. M. Berna then began to put some leading questions, and she replied that she could see a figure. Hereupon, there were renewed solicitations from M. Berna. The somnambule, on her part, appeared to be making great

efforts to glean some information from her magnetiser, and at last said that she could distinguish the Knave. But this was not all; it remained for her to say which of the four knaves. In answer to further inquiries, she said there was black by the side of it. Not being contradicted at all, she imagined that she was in the right track; and made, after much pressing, her final guess, that it was the Knave of Clubs.

M. Berna, thinking the experiment finished, took the card from the hands of M. Dubois, and in presence of all the Commissioners saw that it was entirely blank. Blank was his own dismay.

As a last experiment, she was tried with a silver medal. It was with very great difficulty that any answers could be elicited from her. M. Cornac held the object firmly closed in his hand close before the bandage over her eyes. She first said she saw something round; she then said it was flesh−coloured — then yellow — then the colour of gold. It was as thick as an onion: and, in answer to incessant questions, she said it was yellow on one side, white on the other, and had black above it. She was thinking, apparently, of a gold watch, with its white dial and black figures for the hours. Solicited, for the last time, to explain herself clearly — to say, at least, the use of the object and its name, she appeared to be anxious to collect all her energies, and then uttered only the word "hour." Then, at last, as if suddenly illumined, she cried out that "it was to tell the hour."

Thus ended the sitting. Some difficulties afterwards arose between the Commissioners and M. Berna, who wished that a copy of the proces verbal should be given him. The Commissioners would not agree; and M. Berna, in his turn, refused to make any fresh experiments. It was impossible that any investigation could have been conducted more satisfactorily than this. The report of the Commissioners was quite conclusive; and Animal Magnetism since that day lost much of its repute in France. M. Dupotet, with a perseverance and ingenuity worthy a better cause, has found a satisfactory excuse for the failure of M. Berna. Having taken care in his work not to publish the particulars, he merely mentions, in three lines, that M. Berna failed before a committee of the Royal Academy of Medicine in an endeavour to produce some of the higher magnetic phenomena. "There are a variety of incidental circumstances," says that shining light of magnetism, "which it is difficult even to enumerate. An over−anxiety to produce the effects, or any incidental suggestions that may disturb the attention of the magnetiser, will often be sufficient to mar the successful issue of the experiment." ["Introduction to the Study of Animal Magnetism," by Baron Dupotet de Sennevoy, London, 1838, p. 159.] Such are the miserable shifts to which error reduces its votaries!

While Dupotet thus conveniently forbears to dwell upon the unfavourable decision of the committee of 1837, let us hear how he dilates upon the favourable report of the previous committee of 1835, and how he praises the judgment and the impartiality of its members. "The Academie Royale de Medicine," says he, "put upon record clear and authenticated evidence in favour of Animal Magnetism. The Comissioners detailed circumstantially the facts which they witnessed, and the methods they adopted to detect every possible source of deception. Many of the Commissioners, when they entered on the investigation, were not only unfavourable to magnetism, but avowedly unbelievers; so that their evidence in any court of justice would be esteemed the most unexceptionable that could possibly be desired. They were inquiring too, not into any speculative or occult theory, upon which there might be a chance of their being led away by sophistical representations, but they were inquiring into the existence of facts only — plain demonstrable facts, which were in their own nature palpable to every observer." ["Introduction to the Study of Animal Magnetism," p. 27.] M. Dupotet might not unreasonably be asked whether the very same arguments ought not to be applied to the unfavourable report drawn up by the able M. Dubois d'Amiens and his coadjutors in the last inquiry. If the question were asked, we should, in all probability, meet some such a reply as this: — "True, they might; but then you must consider the variety of incidental circumstances, too numerous to mention! M. Berna may have been over anxious; in fact, the experiments must have been spoiled by an incidental suggestion!"

A man with a faith so lively as M. Dupotet was just the person to undertake the difficult mission of converting the English to a belief in magnetism. Accordingly we find that, very shortly after the last decision of the Academie, M. Dupotet turned his back upon his native soil and arrived in England, loaded with the magnetic fluid, and ready to re−enact all the fooleries of his great predecessors, Mesmer and Puysegur. Since the days of Perkinism and metallic tractors, until 1833, magnetism had made no progress, and excited no attention in England. Mr. Colquhoun, an advocate at the Scottish bar, published in that year the, till then, inedited report of the French commission of 1831, together with a history of the science, under the title of "Isis Revelata; or, an Inquiry into the Origin, Progress, and present State of Animal Magnetism." Mr. Colquhoun was a devout believer, and his

work was full of enthusiasm. It succeeded in awakening some interest upon a subject certainly very curious, but it made few or no converts. An interesting article, exposing the delusion, appeared in the same year in the "Foreign Quarterly Review;" and one or two medical works noticed the subject afterwards, to scout it and turn it into ridicule. The arrival of M. Dupotet, in 1837, worked quite a revolution, and raised Animal Magnetism to a height of favour, as great as it had ever attained even in France.

He began by addressing letters of invitation to the principal philosophers and men of science, physicians, editors of newspapers, and others, to witness the experiments, which were at first carried on at his own residence, in Wigmore−street, Cavendish−square. Many of them accepted the invitation; and, though not convinced, were surprised and confounded at the singular influence which he exercised over the imagination of his patients. Still, at first, his success was not flattering. To quote his own words, in the dedication of his work to Earl Stanhope, "he spent several months in fruitless attempts to induce the wise men of the country to study the phenomena of magnetism. His incessant appeals for an examination of these novel facts remained unanswered, and the press began to declare against him." With a saddened heart, he was about to renounce the design he had formed of spreading magnetism in England, and carry to some more credulous people the important doctrines of which he had made himself the apostle. Earl Stanhope, however, encouraged him to remain; telling him to hope for a favourable change in public opinion, and the eventual triumph of that truth of which he was the defender. M. Dupotet remained. He was not so cruel as to refuse the English people a sight of his wonders. Although they might be ungrateful, his kindness and patience should be long enduring.

In the course of time his perseverance met its reward. Ladies in search of emotions — the hysteric, the idle, the puling, and the ultra−sentimental crowded to his saloons, as ladies similarly predisposed had crowded to Mesmer's sixty years before. Peers, members of the House of Commons, philosophers, men of letters, and physicians came in great numbers — some to believe, some to doubt, and a few to scoff. M. Dupotet continued his experiments, and at last made several important converts. Most important of all for a second Mesmer, he found a second D'Eslon.

Dr. Elliotson, the most conspicuous among the converts of Dupotet, was, like D'Eslon, a physician in extensive practice — a thoroughly honest man, but with a little too much enthusiasm. The parallel holds good between them in every particular; for, as D'Eslon had done before him, Dr. Elliotson soon threw his master into the shade, and attracted all the notice of the public upon himself. He was at that time professor of the principles and practice of medicine at the University College, London, and physician to the hospital. In conjunction with M. Dupotet, he commenced a course of experiments upon some of the patients in that institution. The reports which were published from time to time, partook so largely of the marvellous, and were corroborated by the evidence of men whose learning, judgment, and integrity it was impossible to call in question, that the public opinion was staggered. Men were ashamed to believe, and yet afraid to doubt; and the subject at last became so engrossing that a committee of some of the most distinguished members of the medical profession undertook to investigate the phenomena, and report upon them.

In the mean time, Dr. Elliotson and M. Dupotet continued the public exhibition at the hospital; while the credulous gaped with wonder, and only some few daring spirits had temerity enough to hint about quackery and delusion on the part of the doctors, and imposture on the part of the patients. The phenomena induced in two young women, sisters, named Elizabeth and Jane Okey, were so extraordinary that they became at last the chief, if not the only proofs of the science in London. We have not been able to meet with any reports of these experiments from the pen of an unbeliever, and are therefore compelled to rely solely upon the reports published under the authority of the magnetisers themselves, and given to the world in "The Lancet" and other medical journals.

Elizabeth Okey was an intelligent girl, aged about seventeen, and was admitted into the University College hospital, suffering under attacks of epilepsy. She was magnetised repeatedly by M. Dupotet in the autumn of 1837, and afterwards by Dr. Elliotson at the hospital, during the spring and summer of 1838. By the usual process, she was very easily thrown into a state of deep unconscious sleep, from which she was aroused into somnambulism and delirium. In her waking state she was a modest well−behaved girl, and spoke but little. In the somnambulic state, she appeared quite another being; evinced considerable powers of mimicry; sang comic songs; was obedient to every motion of her magnetiser; and was believed to have the power of prophesying the return of her illness — the means of cure, and even the death or recovery of other patients in the ward.

Mesmer had often pretended in his day that he could impart the magnetic power to pieces of metal or wood, strings of silk or cord, The reader will remember his famous battery, and the no less famous tree of M. de Puysegur. During the experiments upon Okey, it was soon discovered that all the phenomena could be produced in her, if she touched any object that had been previously mesmerised by the will or the touch of her magnetiser. At a sitting, on the 5th of July 1838, it was mentioned that Okey, some short time previously, and while in the state of magnetic lucidity, had prophesied that, if mesmerised tea were placed in each of her hands, no power in nature would be able to awake her until after the lapse of a quarter of an hour. The experiment was tried accordingly. Tea which had been touched by the magnetiser was placed in each hand, and she immediately fell asleep. After ten minutes, the customary means to awaken her were tried, but without effect. She was quite insensible to all external impressions. In a quarter of an hour, they were tried with redoubled energy, but still in vain. She was left alone for six minutes longer; but she still slept, and it was found quite impossible to wake her. At last some one present remarked that this wonderful sleep would, in all probability, last till the tea was removed from her bands. The suggestion was acted upon, the tea was taken away, and she awoke in a few seconds. ["Lancet," vol. ii. 1837−8, p. 585.]

On the 12th of July, just a week afterwards, numerous experiments as to the capability of different substances for conveying the magnetic influence were tried upon her. A slip of crumpled paper, magnetised by being held in the hand, produced no effect. A penknife magnetised her immediately. A piece of oilskin had no influence. A watch placed on her palm sent her to sleep immediately, if the metal part were first placed in contact with her; the glass did not affect her so quickly. As she was leaving the room, a sleeve−cuff made of brown−holland, which had been accidentally magnetised by a spectator, stopped her in mid career, and sent her fast to sleep. It was also found that, on placing the point of her finger on a sovereign which had been magnetised, she was immediately stupified. A pile of sovereigns produced sleep; but if they were so placed that she could touch the surface of each coin, the sleep became intense and protracted.

Still more extraordinary circumstances were related of this patient. In her state of magnetic sleep, she said that a tall black man, or negro, attended her, and prompted the answers she was to give to the various perplexing questions that were put to her. It was also asserted that she could use the back of her hand as an organ of vision. The first time this remarkable phenomenon was said to have been exhibited was a few days prior to the 5th of July. On the latter day, being in what was called a state of loquacious somnambulism, she was asked by Dr. Elliotson's assistant whether she had an eye in her hand. She replied that "it was a light there, and not an eye." "Have you got a light anywhere else?" — "No, none anywhere else." — "Can you see with the inside as well as the out?" — "Yes; but very little with the inside."

On the 9th of July bread with butter was given to her, and while eating it she drank some magnetised water, and falling into a stupor dropped her food from her hand and frowned. The eyes, partially closed, had the abstracted aspect that always accompanies stupefaction. The right−hand was open, the palm upwards; the left, with its back presented anteriorly, was relaxed and curved. The bread being lost, she moved her left−hand about convulsively until right over the bread, when a clear view being obtained, the hand turned suddenly round and clutched it eagerly. Her hand was afterwards wrapped in a handkerchief; but then she could not see with it, and laid it on her lap with an expression of despair.

These are a few only of the wonderful feats of Elizabeth Okey. Jane was not quite so clever; but she nevertheless managed to bewilder the learned men almost as much as her sister. A magnetised sovereign having been placed on the floor, Jane, then in the state of delirium, was directed to stoop and pick it up. She stooped, and having raised it about three inches, was fixed in a sound sleep in that constrained position. Dr. Elliotson pointed his finger at her, to discharge some more of the mesmeric fluid into her, when her hand immediately relaxed its grasp of the coin, and she re−awoke into the state of delirium, exclaiming, "God bless my soul!"

It is now time to mention the famous gold−chain experiment which was performed at the hospital upon Elizabeth Okey, in the presence of Count Flahault, Dr. Lardner, Mr. Knatchbull the professor of Arabic in the University of Oxford, and many other gentlemen. The object of the experiment was to demonstrate that, when Okey held one end of a gold chain, and Dr. Elliotson, or any other magnetiser, the other, the magnetic fluid would travel through the chain, and, after the lapse of a minute, stupify the patient. A long gold chain having been twice placed around her neck, Dr. Elliotson at once threw her into a state of stupor. It was then found that, if the intermediate part of the chain were twisted around a piece of wood, or a roll of paper, the passage of the fluid

would be checked, and stupor would not so speedily ensue. If the chain were removed, she might be easily thrown into the state of delirium; when she would sing at the request of her magnetiser; and, if the chain were then unrolled, her voice would be arrested in the most gradual manner; its loudness first diminishing — the tune then becoming confused, and finally lost altogether. The operations of her intellect could be checked, while the organs of sound would still continue to exert themselves. For instance, while her thoughts were occupied on the poetry and air of Lord Byron's song, "The Maid of Athens," the chain was unrolled; and when she had reached the line, "My life, I love you!" the stupor had increased; a cold statue−like aspect crept over the face — the voice sank — the limbs became rigid — the memory was gone — the faculty of forecasting the thoughts had departed, and but one portion of capacity remained — that of repeating again and again, perhaps twenty times, the line and music which had last issued from her lips, without pause, and in the proper time, until the magnetiser stopped her voice altogether, by further unrolling the chain and stupifying her. On another trial, she was stopped in the comic song, "Sir Frog he would a wooing go," when she came to the line,

"Whether his mother would let him or no;"

while her left hand outstretched, with the chain in it, was moving up and down, and the right toe was tapping the time on the floor; and with these words and actions she persevered for fifty repetitions, until the winding of the chain re−opened her faculties, when she finished the song. ["Lancet," vol. ii. 1837−8, p.617.]

The report from which we have extracted the above passage further informed the public and the medical profession, and expected them to believe, that, when this species of stupefaction was produced while she was employed in any action, the action was repeated as long as the mesmeric influence lasted. For instance, it was asserted that she was once deprived of the motion of every part of her body, except the right forefinger, with which she was rubbing her chin; and that, when thrown into the trance, she continued rubbing her chin for several minutes, until she was unmagnetised, when she ceased. A similar result was obtained when she was smoothing down her hair; and at another time when she was imitating the laughter of the spectators, excited beyond control by her clever mimicry. At another time she was suddenly thrown into the state of delirious stupor while pronouncing the word "you," of which she kept prolonging the sound for several minutes, with a sort of vibrating noise, until she was awakened. At another time, when a magnetised sovereign was given to her, wrapped up in paper, she caught it in her hand, and turned it round flatwise between her fingers, saying that it was wrapped up "very neatly indeed." The mesmeric influence caught her in the remark, which she kept repeating over and over again, all the while twirling the sovereign round and round until the influence in the coin had evaporated.

We are also told of a remarkable instance of the force of the magnetic power. While Elizabeth Okey was one day employed in writing, a sovereign which had been imbued with the fluid was placed upon her boot. In half a minute her leg was paralyzed — rooted to the floor — perfectly immovable at the joints, and visited, apparently, with pain so intense that the girl writhed in agony. "The muscles of the leg were found," says the report, "as rigid and stiff as if they had been carved in wood. When the sovereign was removed, the pain left her in a quarter of a minute. On a subsequent day, a mesmerised sovereign was placed in her left hand as it hung at her side, with the palm turned slightly outwards. The hand and arm were immediately paralyzed — fixed with marble−like firmness." No general stupor having occurred, she was requested to move her arm; but she could not lift it a hair's−breadth from her side. On another occasion, when in a state of delirium, in which she had remained three hours, she was asked to describe her feelings when she handled any magnetised object and went off into the stupor. She had never before, although several times asked, given any information upon the subject. She now replied that, at the moment of losing her senses through any manipulations, she experienced a sensation of opening in the crown of her head; that she never knew when it closed again; but that her eyes seemed to become exceedingly large; — three times as big as before. On recovering from this state, she remembered nothing that had taken place in the interval, whether that interval were hours or days; her only sensation was that of awakening, and of something being lifted from her eyes.

The regular publication of these marvellous experiments, authenticated as they were by many eminent names, naturally excited the public attention in an extreme degree. Animal Magnetism became the topic of discussion in every circle — politics and literature were for a time thrown into the shade, so strange were the facts, or so wonderful was the delusion. The public journals contented themselves in many instances with a mere relation of the results, without giving any opinion as to the cause. One of them which gave a series of reports upon the

subject, thus described the girl, and avowed its readiness to believe all that was related of her. [Morning Post, March 2, 1838.] "Her appearance as she sits, as pale and almost as still as a corpse, is strangely awful. She whistles to oblige Dr. Elliotson: an incredulous bystander presses his fingers upon her lips; she does not appear conscious of the nature of the interruption; but when asked to continue, replies in childish surprise, 'it can't.' This state of magnetic semi−existence will continue we know not how long. She has continued in it for twelve days at a time, and when awakened to real life forgets all that has occurred in the magnetic one. Can this be deception? We have conversed with the poor child her ordinary state as she sat by the fire in her ward, suffering from the headach, which persecutes her almost continually when not under the soothing fluence of the magnetic operation, and we confess we never beheld anybody less likely to prove an impostor. We have seen Professor Faraday exerting his acute and sagacious powers for an hour together, in the endeavour to detect some physical discrepancy in her performance, or elicit some blush of mental confusion by his naive and startling remarks. But there was nothing which could be detected, and the professor candidly confessed that the matter was beyond his philosophy to unravel."

Notwithstanding this sincere, and on the point of integrity, unimpeachable evidence in her favour; notwithstanding that she appeared to have no motives for carrying on so extraordinary and long−continued a deception, the girl was an impostor, and all these wise, learned, and contemplative men her dupes. It was some time, however, before this fact was clearly established, and the delusion dissipated by the clear light of truth. In the mean time various other experiments on the efficacy of the supposed magnetic power were tried in various parts of England; but the country did not furnish another epileptic girl so clever as Elizabeth Okey. An exhibition of the kind was performed on a girl named Sarah Overton, at the workhouse of the parish of St. Martin's−in−the−Fields. The magnetiser on this occasion was Mr. Bainbridge, the parish surgeon. It is but justice to him to state, that he conducted the experiments with the utmost fairness, and did not pretend to produce any of the wondrous and incredible phenomena of other practitioners. This girl, whose age was about twenty, had long been subject to epileptic fits, and appeared remarkably simple and modest in her manners and appearance. She was brought into the room and placed in a chair. About twenty gentlemen were present. Mr. Bainbridge stationed himself behind, and pointed his fingers at her brain, while his assistant in front made the magnetic passes before her eyes, and over her body. It cannot be said that her imagination was not at work; for she had been previously magnetised, and was brought in with her eyes open, and in complete possession of all her faculties. No means had been taken to prevent interruption during the sitting; new visiters continually arrived, and the noise of the opening and shutting of the door repeatedly called from Mr. Bainbridge a request that all should be kept silent. The girl herself constantly raised her head to see who was coming in; but still, in direct contradiction to M. Dupotet, and, indeed, all the magnetisers, who have repeated over and over again, that interruption destroys the magnetic power, she fell into a deep sleep at the end of about twelve minutes. In this state, which is that called "Mesmeric Coma," she was quite insensible. Though pulled violently by the hair, and pricked on the arm with a pin, she showed no signs of consciousness or feeling. In a short time afterwards, she was awakened into the somnambulic or delirious state, when she began to converse freely with the persons around her, but more especially with her magnetiser. She would sing if required, and even dance in obedience to his command, and pretended to see him although her eyes were closely blindfolded with a handkerchief. She seemed to have a constant tendency to fall back into the state of coma, and had to be aroused with violence every two or three minutes to prevent a relapse. A motion of the hand before her face was sufficient to throw her, in the middle of a song, into this insensible state; but it was observed particularly that she fell at regular intervals, whether any magnetic passes were made at her or not. It was hinted aloud to a person present that be should merely bend his body before her, and she would become insensible, and fall to the ground. The pass was made, and she fell accordingly into the arms of a medical gentleman, who stood behind ready to receive her. The girl having been again aroused into the state of delirium, another person, still audibly, was requested to do the same. He did not; but the girl fell as before. The experiments were sufficient to convince the author that one human being could indubitably exercise a very wonderful influence over another; but that imagination only, and not the mesmeric fluid, was the great agent by which these phenomena could be produced in persons of strong faith and weak bodies.

Some gentlemen present were desirous of trying whether any of the higher mesmeric states, such as that of lucidity and clairvoyance could be produced. Mr. Bainbridge was willing to allow the experiment to be made, but previously expressed his own doubts upon the subject. A watch was then put into her bosom, the dial plate and

glass against her skin, to ascertain whether she could see without the intervention of the organs of sight. She was asked what hour it was; and was promised a shilling if she would tell by the watch which had been placed in her bosom. She held out her hand for the shilling, and received it with great delight. She was then asked if she could see the watch? She said "no — not a watch; she could see something — something that was very pretty indeed." "Come, come, Sally," said Mr. Bainbridge, "you must not be so stupid; rouse up, girl, and tell us what o'clock it is, and I'll give you another shilling!" The girl at this time seemed to be relapsing into a deep sleep; but on being shaken, aroused herself with a convulsive start. In reply to further questions, she said, "she could see a clock, a very pretty clock, indeed!" She was again asked, five or six times, what the hour was: she at last replied that "it was ten minutes to two." The watch being then taken out of her bosom, it was found to be on the stroke of two. Every one present, including the magnetiser, confessed that there was nothing wonderful in the conjecture she had hazarded. She knew perfectly well what hour it was before she was brought into the ward, as there was a large clock in the workhouse, and a bell which rang at dinner time; she calculated mentally the interval that had since elapsed, and guessed accordingly. The same watch was afterwards advanced four or five hours, and put into her bosom without a word being said in her hearing. On being again asked what o'clock it was by that watch, and promised another shilling if she would tell, she still replied that it was near two — the actual time. Thus, as Mr. Bainbridge had predicted, the experiment came to nothing. The whole case of this girl offered a striking instance of the power of imagination, but no proof whatever of the supposed existence of the magnetic fluid.

The Medical Committee of the University College Hospital took alarm at a very early period at the injury which might be done to that Institution, by the exhibitions of Okey and her magnetisers. A meeting was held in June 1838, at which Dr. Elliotson was not present, to take into consideration the reports of the experiments that had been published in the Medical Journals. Resolutions were then passed to the effect, that Dr. Elliotson should be requested to refrain from further public exhibitions of mesmerism; and, at the same time, stating the wish of the Committee not to interfere with its private employment as a remedial agent, if he thought it would be efficacious upon any of the patients of the Institution. Dr. Elliotson replied, that no consideration should prevent him from pursuing the investigation of Animal Magnetism; but that he had no desire to make a public exhibition of it. He had only given lectures and demonstrations when numbers of scientific gentlemen were present; he still continued to receive numerous letters from learned and eminent men, entreating permission to witness the phenomena; but if the Committee willed it, he should admit no person without their sanction. He shortly afterwards sent a list of the names of individuals who were anxious to witness the experiments. The Committee returned it to him unread, with the reply that they could not sanction any exhibition that was so entirely foreign to the objects of the Hospital. In answer to this, Dr. Elliotson reiterated his full belief in the doctrines of Animal Magnetism, and his conviction that his experiments would ultimately throw a light upon the operations of nature, which would equal, if not exceed, that elicited by the greatest discoveries of by−gone ages. The correspondence dropped here; and the experiments continued as usual.

The scene, however, was drawing to a close. On the 25th of August, a notice was published in the Lancet, to the effect, that some experiments had been performed on the girls Elizabeth and Jane Okey, at the house of Mr. Wakley, a report of which was only withheld in the hope that the Committee of Members of the Medical Profession, then sitting to investigate the phenomena of mesmerism, would publish their report of what they had witnessed. It was further stated, that whether that Committee did or did not publish their report, the result of the experiments at Mr. Wakley's house should certainly be made known in the next number of that journal. Accordingly, on the 1st of September appeared a statement, which overthrew, in the most complete manner, the delusion of mesmerism. Nothing could have been better conducted than these experiments; nothing could be more decisive of the fact, that all the phenomena were purely the results of the excited imaginations of the girls, aided in no slight degree by their wilful deception.

The first experiments were performed on the 16th of August, in the presence of Mr. Wakley, M. Dupotet, Dr. Elliotson, Dr. Richardson, Mr. Herring, Mr. Clarke, and Mr. G. Mills the writer of the published reports of the experiments at the University College Hospital. Dr. Elliotson had said, that nickel was capable of retaining and transmitting the magnetic fluid in an extraordinary degree; but that lead possessed no such virtues. The effects of the nickel, he was confident, would be quite astounding; but that lead might always be applied with impunity. A piece of nickel was produced by the Doctor, about three quarters of an ounce in weight, together with a piece of lead of the same shape and smoothness, but somewhat larger. Elizabeth Okey was seated in a chair; and, by a few

passes and manipulations, was thrown into the state of "ecstatic delirium." A piece of thick pasteboard was then placed in front of her face, and held in that situation by two of the spectators, so that she could not see what was passing either below or in front of her. Mr. Wakley having received both the nickel and the lead, seated himself opposite the girl, and applied the lead to each hand alternately, but in such a manner as to lead her to believe that both metals had been used. No effect was produced. The nickel magnetised by Dr. Elliotson was, after a pause, applied in a similar manner. No results followed. After another pause, the lead was several times applied, and then again the nickel. After the last application of the nickel, the face of the patient became violently flushed, the eyes were convulsed into a startling squint, she fell back in the chair, her breathing was hurried, her limbs rigid, and her back bent in the form of a bow. She remained in this state for a quarter of an hour.

This experiment was not considered a satisfactory proof of the magnetic powers of the nickel; and Dr. Elliotson suggested that, in the second experiment, that metal should alone be tried. Mr. Wakley was again the operator; but, before commencing, he stated privately to Mr. Clarke, that instead of using nickel only, he would not employ the nickel at all. Mr. Clarke, unseen by any person present, took the piece of nickel; put it into his waistcoat pocket; and walked to the window, where he remained during the whole of the experiment. Mr. Wakley again sat down, employing both hands, but placing his fingers in such a manner, that it was impossible for any person to see what substance he held. Presently, on applying his left hand, the girl's vision being still obstructed by the pasteboard, Mr. Herring, who was standing near, said in a whisper, and with much sincerity, "Take care, don't apply the nickel too strongly." Immediately the face of the girl became violently red, her eyes were fixed in an intense squint, she fell back convulsively in her chair, and all the previous symptoms were produced more powerfully than before. Dr. Elliotson observed that the effects were most extraordinary; that no other metal than nickel could produce them, and that they presented a beautiful series of phenomena. This paroxysm lasted half an hour. Mr. Wakley retired with Dr. Elliotson and the other gentlemen into an adjoining room, and convinced them that he had used no nickel at all, but a piece of lead and a farthing.

This experiment was twice repeated with the same results. A third trial was made with the nickel, but no effect was produced.

On the succeeding day the experiments were repeated upon both the sisters, chiefly with mesmerised water and sovereigns. The investigation occupied about five hours, and the following were the results:—

1. Six wine glasses, filled with water unmesmerised, were placed on a table, and Jane Okey being called in, was requested to drink from each of them successively. She did so, and no effect was produced.

2. The same six glasses stood on the table, the water in the fourth having been subjected for a long time to the supposed magnetic influence. She was requested in like manner to drink of these. She did so, and again no effect was produced, although, according to the doctrine of the magnetisers, she ought to have been immediately fixed on drinking of the fourth.

3. In this experiment the position of the glasses was changed. There was no result.

4. Was a repetition of the foregoing. No result.

5. The water in all the glasses was subjected to the supposed magnetic influence from the fingers of Dr. Elliotson, until, in his opinion, it was strongly magnetised. Still no result.

6. The glasses were filled up with fresh water unmesmerised. No result.

7. The water was strongly magnetised in each glass, and the girl emptied them all. No result.

It would be needless to go through the whole series of experiments. The results may be briefly stated. Sovereigns unmesmerised threw the girls into convulsions, or fixed them. Mesmerised sovereigns sometimes did and sometimes did not produce these symptoms. Elizabeth Okey became repeatedly fixed when drinking unmagnetised water; while that which had been subjected to the powers of a supposed magnetic battery, produced no results. Altogether twenty−nine experiments were tried, which convinced every one present, except Dr. Elliotson, that Animal Magnetism was a delusion, that the girls were of very exciteable imaginations, and arrant impostors.

Their motives for carrying on so extraordinary a deception have often been asked. The question is easily answered. Poor girls, unknown and unnoticed, or, if noticed, perhaps despised, they found themselves all at once the observed of all observers, by the really remarkable symptoms of their disease, which it required no aid from magnetism to produce. Flattered by the oft−repeated experiments and constant attentions of doctors and learned men, who had begun by deluding themselves, they imagined themselves persons of vast importance, and

encouraged by degrees the whims of their physicians, as the means of prolonging the consideration they so unexpectedly enjoyed. Constant practice made them at last all but perfect in the parts they were performing; and they failed at last, not from a want of ingenuity, or of a most wonderful power over their own minds, and by their minds upon their bodies, but from the physical impossibility of seeing through a thick pasteboard, or into the closed hands of Mr. Wakley. The exposure that was made was complete and decisive. From that day forth, magnetism in England has hid its diminished head, and affronted no longer the common sense of the age. M. Dupotet is no more heard of, the girls Okey afford no more either wonder or amusement by their clever acting, and reason has resumed her sway in the public mind.

A few more circumstances remain to be stated. Elizabeth Okey left the hospital; but was re−admitted some weeks afterwards, labouring under ischuria, a fresh complaint, unconnected with her former malady. As experiments in magnetism were still tried upon her privately, notwithstanding the recent exposure and the all but universal derision of the public, the House Committee of the hospital, early in December, met to consider the expediency of expelling the girl. Dr. Elliotson, on that occasion, expressed his opinion that it was necessary to retain her in the hospital, as she was too ill to be discharged. It was then elicited from the nurse, who was examined by the Committee, that Okey, when in the state of "magnetic delirium," was in the habit of prophesying the death or recovery of the patients in the ward; that, with the consent of Dr. Elliotson, she had been led in the twilight into the men's ward, and had prophesied in a similar manner; her predictions being taken down in writing, and given in a sealed paper to the apothecary, to be opened after a certain time, that it might be seen whether they were verified. Dr. Elliotson did not deny the fact. The nurse also stated more particularly the manner in which the prophecies were delivered. She said that, on approaching the bed of a certain patient, Okey gave a convulsive shudder, exclaiming that "Great Jacky was sitting on the bedclothes!" On being asked to explain herself, she said that Great Jacky was the angel of death. At the bedside of another patient she shuddered slightly, and said "Little Jacky was there!" Dr. Elliotson did not altogether discredit the predictions; but imagined they might ultimately be verified by the death or recovery of the patient. Upon the minds of the patients themselves, enfeebled as they were by disease and suffering, the worst effects were produced. One man's death was accelerated by the despondency it occasioned, and the recovery of others was seriously impeded.

When these facts became known, the Council of the College requested the Medical Committee to discharge Okey and prevent any further exhibitions of Animal Magnetism in the wards. The latter part of this request having been communicated to Dr. Elliotson, he immediately sent in his resignation. A successor was afterwards appointed in the person of Dr. Copland. At his inaugural lecture the students of the college manifested a riotous disposition, called repeatedly for their old instructor, and refused to allow the lecture to proceed; but it appears the disturbance was caused by their respect and affection for Dr. Elliotson individually, and not from any participation in his ideas about magnetism.

Extravagant as the vagaries of the English professors of magnetism may appear, they are actual common sense in comparison with the aberrations of the Germans. The latter have revived all the exploded doctrines of the Rosicrucians; and in an age which is called enlightened, have disinterred from the rubbish of antiquity, the wildest superstitions of their predecessors, and built upon them theories more wild and startling than anything before attempted or witnessed among mankind. Paracelsus and Bohmen, Borri and Meyer, with their strange heterogeneous mixture of alchymy and religion, but paved the way for the stranger, and even more extravagant mixture of magnetism and religion, as now practised in Germany. Magnetism, it is believed, is the key of all knowledge, and opens the door to those forbidden regions where all the wonders of God's works are made clear to the mind of man. The magnetic patient is possessed of all gifts — can converse with myriads of spirits, and even with God himself — be transported with greater rapidity than the lightning's flash to the moon or the stars, and see their inhabitants, and hold converse with them on the wonders and beauties of their separate spheres, and the power and goodness of the God who made them. Time and space are to them as if annihilated — nothing is hidden from them — past, present, or future. They divine the laws by which the universe is upheld, and snatch the secrets of the Creator from the darkness in which, to all other men, it is enveloped. For the last twenty or thirty years these daring and blasphemous notions have flourished in rank luxuriance; and men of station in society, learning, and apparent good sense in all the usual affairs of life, have publicly given in their adhesion, and encouraged the doctrine by their example, or spread it abroad by their precepts. That the above summary of their tenets may not he deemed an exaggeration we enter into particulars, and refer the incredulous that human folly in

the present age could ever be pushed so far, to chapter and verse for every allegation.

In a work published in Germany in 1817, by J. A. L. Richter, entitled "Considerations on Animal Magnetism," the author states that in magnetism is to be found the solution of the enigmas of human existence, and particularly the enigmas of Christianity, on the mystic and obscure parts of which it throws a light which permits us to gaze clearly on the secrets of the mystery. Wolfart's "Annals of Animal Magnetism" abound with similar passages; and Kluge's celebrated work is written in the same spirit. "Such is the wonderful sympathy," says the latter, "between the magnetiser and the somnambulist that he has known the latter to vomit and be purged in consequence of medicine which the former had taken. Whenever he put pepper on his tongue, or drank wine, the patient could taste these things distinctly on her palate." But Kerner's history of the case of Madame Hauffe, the famous magnetic woman, "Seer" or "Prophetess of Prevorst," Will give a more complete and melancholy proof of the sad wanderings of these German "men of science," than any random selections we might make from their voluminous works. This work was published in two volumes, and the authenticity of its details supported by Gorres, Eschenmeyer, and other men of character and reputation in Germany: it is said to have had an immense sale. She resided in the house of Kerner, at Weinsberg; and being weak and sickly, was very easily thrown into a state of somnambulism. "She belonged," says Kerner, "to a world of spirits; she was half spirit herself; she belonged to the region beyond death, in which she already half existed. * * * Her body clothed her spirit like a thin veil. * * * She was small and slightly made, had an Oriental expression of countenance, and the piercing eyes of a prophet, the gleams of which were increased in their power and beauty by her long dark eyebrows and eyelashes. She was a flower of light, living upon sunbeams. * * * Her spirit often seemed to be separated from her frame. The spirits of all things, of which mankind in general have no perception, were perceptible to and operated upon her, more particularly the spirits of metals, herbs, men, and animals. All imponderable matters, even the rays of light, had an effect upon her when she was magnetised." The smell of flint was very agreeable to her. Salt laid on her hand caused a flow of saliva: rock crystal laid on the pit of her stomach produced rigidity of the whole body. Red grapes produced certain effects, if placed in her hands; white grapes produced different effects. The bone of an elk would throw her into an epileptic fit. The tooth of a mammoth produced a feeling of sluggishness. A spider's web rolled into a ball produced a prickly feeling in the hands, and a restlessness in the whole body. Glow−worms threw her into the magnetic sleep. Music somnambulised her. When she wanted to be cheerful, she requested Kerner to magnetise the water she drank, by playing the Jew's−harp. She used to say in her sleep, "Magnetise the water by seven vibrations of the harp." If she drank water magnetised in this manner, she was constrained involuntarily to pour forth her soul in song. The eyes of many men threw her into the state of somnambulism. She said that in those eyes there was a spiritual spark, which was the mirror of the soul. If a magnetised rod were laid on her right eye, every object on which she gazed appeared magnified.

It was by this means that she was enabled to see the inhabitants of the moon. She said, that on the left side of the moon, the inhabitants were great builders, and much happier than those on the right side. "I often see," said she to her magnetiser, "many spirits with whom I do not come into contact. Others come to me, and I speak to them; and they often spend months in my company. I hear and see other things at the same time; but I cannot turn my eyes from the spirits; they are in magnetic rapport with me. They look like clouds, thin, but not transparent; though, at first, they seem so. Still, I never saw one which cast a shadow. Their form is similar to that which they possessed when alive; but colourless, or grey. They wear clothing; and it appears as if made of clouds, also colourless and misty grey. The brighter and better spirits wear long garments, which hang in graceful folds, with belts around their waists. The expression of their features is sad and solemn. Their eyes are bright, like fire; but none of them that I ever saw had hair upon their heads. They make noises when they wish to excite the attention of those who have not the gift of seeing them. These noises consist of sounds in the air, sometimes sudden and sharp, and causing a shock. Sometimes the sounds are plaintive and musical; at other times they resemble the rustling of silk, the falling of sand, or the rolling of a ball. The better spirits are brighter than the bad ones, and their voice is not so strong. Many, particularly the dark, sad spirits, when I uttered words of religious consolation, sucked them in, as it were; and I saw them become brighter and quite glorious in consequence: but I became weaker. Most of the spirits who come to me are of the lowest regions of the spiritual world, which are situated just above our atmosphere. They were, in their life, grovelling and low−minded people, or such as did not die in the faith of Jesus; or else such as, in expiring, clung to some earthly thought or affection, which now presses upon them, and prevents them from soaring up to heaven. I once asked a spirit whether children grew after death? 'Yes,'

replied the spirit,' the soul gradually expands, until it becomes as large as it would have been on earth. I cannot effect the salvation of these spirits; I am only their mediator. I pray ardently with them, and so lead them by degrees to the great Saviour of the world. It costs an infinity of trouble before such a soul turns again to the Lord.'"

It would, however, serve no good purpose to extend to greater length the reveries of this mad woman, or to set down one after the other the names of the magnetisers who encouraged her in her delusions — being themselves deluded. To wade through these volumes of German mysticism is a task both painful and disgusting — and happily not necessary. Enough has been stated to show how gross is the superstition even of the learned; and that errors, like comets, run in one eternal cycle — at their apogee in one age, at their perigee in the next, but returning in one phase or another for men to wonder at.

In England the delusion of magnetism may for the present be considered as fairly exploded. Taking its history from the commencement, and tracing it to our own day, it can hardly be said, delusion though it was, that it has been wholly without its uses. To quote the words of Bailly, in 1784, "Magnetism has not been altogether unavailing to the philosophy which condemns it: it is an additional fact to record among the errors of the human mind, and a great experiment on the strength of the imagination." Over that vast inquiry of the influence of mind over matter, — an inquiry which the embodied intellect of mankind will never be able to fathom completely, — it will, at least, have thrown a feeble and imperfect light. It will have afforded an additional proof of the strength of the unconquerable will, and the weakness of matter as compared with it; another illustration of the words of the inspired Psalmist, that "we are fearfully and wonderfully made." If it serve no other purpose than this, its history will prove useful. Truth ere now has been elicited by means of error; and Animal Magnetism, like other errors, may yet contribute its quota towards the instruction and improvement of mankind.

THE END.