

to the Chinese in California. Mr. P. is anti-Chinaman and is endeavoring to create a sentiment in the East which will help toward securing from the Government at Washington a restrictive policy affecting Chinese emigration.

These Conventions of the Press Association, held in the different cities of the State, are as schools—on the object-teaching plan—to the members who, in this way, learn more about the visited city and its industries than they would be likely to learn otherwise in a life-time. They, in their turn, publish in their papers a report of what they have seen, and thus their readers learn the same lesson, and so it is carried along, benefiting many others besides the editors.

Some of the Trojans who entertained the Association declared that the time they spent had been profitable to themselves, inasmuch as they also had learned much which was new and useful.

C. F. W.

THE ART OF THINKING.—Too much stress can not be laid upon the fundamental importance of perfect command over thought. How many a page must be re-read, how many lessons conned over and over to compensate for lapses of thought? In the possession or absence of this power over mind lies the chief difference between mental strength and mental weakness. Some men think as a child plays with a hammer, striking little blows here, there, anywhere, at any object within reach. The action of a strong mind may be compared to the stone-breaker's sledge-hammer, dealing stubborn blows successively upon one spot till the hard rock cracks and yields. When such a mind acts, it acts to some purpose and can begin where it left off without going over the whole ground again to take up the threads of its ratiocinations. Concentration and system are thus seen to be the chief elements in the art of thinking.

HALLUCINATIONS.

I DO not care to reason with Dr. Maudsley or any other scientist in regard to what is called hallucinations. These gradgrinds, in their inveterate repugnance to spiritualistic ideas, are unquestionably laboring under scientific hallucinations that would seem to nullify their own doctrines of development and evolution. Because their advance has been intensely on the rational or materialistic side of the mind, I see nothing to justify the contempt they are heaping upon those whose finer organization evolves the ideal or spiritual. We all believe the brain of the civilized man is less rudimentary than that of the savage. It is of a more delicate texture; more complex, and in the proportions of the humanizing, sympathetic parts larger, while the crueller, destructive forces, are subordinated.

This being the case, the survival of the fittest will naturally be such as can best uphold and advance the condition of the ameliorated man; the growth, steadily

progressive, of the ideal, the æsthetic, the man of government, freedom, science, art, and literature. Now, if man be immortal; if his condition in this world be the prophecy of an existence hereafter, it is natural to suppose that his faculties would, in the course of development, gradually evolve the germ of cognizance. The external, material sense, giving place to the internal, spiritual sense.

In the Christ we find the spiritual sense so preponderating that the external senses were no more than adjuncts or appendages thereto. He not only read the minds and hearts of men, but was in companionship with beings hidden to and from other eyes. He so penetrated the secrets of nature that He intimates that all physical infirmities are subject to certain states of the mind or belief, and this state, which He calls faith, He declares to be the spiritual, curative element by which healing is wrought; hence, what the people called miracles (and we

preserve the term), was no more than the natural action of advanced development in Him, and simple reliance upon a divine power in the recipient of healing.

Immortality is the natural sequence to development which, of itself, negates limitation. If our kind, from the poor, simple, blind Anthropoid was in progress of eons evolved, the Darwins, the Spencers, and Tyndales of modern thought, no less than the Oberlins, St. Therasas, and Elizabeths of Hungary, backward in time to the Saints and Martyrs, the law-givers, Moses and Solon, and Lycurgus, the Messiahs of the nations, Zoroaster, Confucius, Buddha, and Mahomet, and greatest of all, the Christ, are we to suppose that no other and no higher revelations are to be experienced by the onward man?

Are we driven to the miserable subterfuge of asserting that these wonderful men were impostors? It seems utterly childish to say they were misled by their own imagination, deluded by their own excited nerves, and ideas took form and objective shape when all was no more than their own excited nerves and heated blood. Even if this be the case, it merely changes the ground and makes man even more wonderful than his revelations; makes him in his own right a God after the manner of Jacob Boehm. The Anthropoid has scaled the heavens, and can no more be subject to mere material laws than the particles of matter out of which suns and worlds are evolved can be annihilated. By the laws of his own being, righteously and reverently observed, his generations are becoming more and more in harmony with the God of the universe, and we shall, at length, be as Gods, royally born, truth-penetrating, and spirit-discerning.

Are men and women impostors, who see and hear what we have not the power of seeing and hearing? God forbid! Were the Saints, who, by their steadfastness, have helped to redeem the race from subterfuge and moral as well as physical cowardice, laboring under a poor delusion that sinks them from martyrs to

mere deceived men and women, who died from obstinacy? When the heavens were opened to them and they perished amid exultant cries of holy rapture, was there nothing at stake needful for them to assert, and no truth in the divine vision open to their eyes?

When Joan of Arc heard voices and saw beings who transformed her ignorance into knowledge and power and effective soldiership, it would be blasphemy to say that delusion and imposture could effect what she realized. Suppose the exultation declined, the rapt vision disappeared after a time, and the poor girl died pitifully in darkness and dread, she will still remain on the page of history as one of the most wonderful creations that ever came athwart our horizon, and fell a victim to the cruelty of the times. To say there was no vision, no seeing beyond what others saw about her, and she was the tool of priestcraft or soldier, will not account for the unwonted courage, wisdom, and forecast she displayed. She was what she believed herself to be, and nothing less. It is easier to believe in facts than in hallucinations. Imposture may accomplish much, but when it overturns kingdoms, and establishes empires, as in the case of Mohammed, the visions that accompany the movement are of a solid, realistic kind, no more to be doubted than the historic facts that supervened.

Cromwell had his visions and ecstasies, and it is the fashion to call him a hypocrite, but his fastings and prayers went with the vision of the great Democrat, and did more to exhibit the spirit, and establish the freedom of England, than all the prayers of all the hierarchy of the Established Church. It would be well if such hypocrites could multiply both here and in England. Imposture does not create heroes, statesmen, and reformers.

Scientists enlarge upon the action of the imagination as well as the sensitiveness of the nervous system as productive of hallucination. It may be that these are the very states required to give vitality to what may not be wholly illu-

sive, and yet partially so, owing to the incompleteness of the organization, by which the seer has glimpses only, and he is tempted to struggle for the full light, when it would be more honest to wait, and as in human legal testimony, say, "I do not know, it is not clear."

The question comes home again and again, Is there any reality in these things? When a person in good health, without any previous thought of an individual, sees him visibly presented to the eye, why should he consider it a trick of the senses? He might conjure up an image by dwelling upon the subject, but when all his thoughts are in another direction, I do not see how the image in question is to be referred to an act of the imagination. We have the testimony of thousands of persons whose integrity and good sense are unquestionable, who have seen such things. Their word would be unchallenged in a court of law, but when it is a phenomenon, something out of ordinary experience, people hesitate to believe.

I wake from a pleasant sleep. The night is a dark, tempestuous night, the rain beating furiously upon the roof, and the wind howling at sash and crevice. My light has been extinguished, and my room ought to be totally dark, but it is not. On the contrary, luminous rays are about my bed, and a beautiful child, the sweet image of a golden-haired darling who had gone onward years before, is leaning by my side. I am not surprised nor awe-struck. Somehow it seems most natural, and as the light slowly fades and the sweet image grows indistinct, and nothing remains but the wild war of the elements, I think how tranquillizing such heavenly visitants might be to us; but friend after friend departs and I, who so long for their companionship, see them no more, though others declare that spirits come and go almost unbidden to them.

From this I infer that in myself the power of discerning such manifestations is but a partial, temporary exercise of a faculty in which the conditions are transient, and the faculty rudimentary. I do

not believe it to be hallucination; it is not disease, nor is it the result of imagination, for what I both see and hear comes upon me unexpectedly when my thoughts are in no way exercised in that direction.

I have a firm belief in the immortality of the soul, of its progressive nature, of its innate tendency to what is true and beautiful, its infinitude of possibilities; that it is always emancipating itself from what is unworthy, discordant, or evil in any way. I believe in an Infinite Father, who loves His child and extends to it a helping hand, and is mindful of all its endeavors, and pitiful over its shortcomings; and, as its faculties expand under the influence of divine affections, it naturally happens that spirits kindred to itself will associate with him, and be more or less manifest to him as his conditions of biology are favorable.

I know of no more terrible orphanage than the materialist makes of man. Born into conditions by which he may scale heaven or descend to hell; poised amid divine and devilish proclivities, he is left in utter darkness and dread to suffer without remedy or cause; be virtuous without moral results; aspire to be only the victim of a mockery of the faculties he has attained through eons of growth. Such an estimate of our being casts suspicion and terror upon the whole system of a universe in which we find ourselves. Without a benign progressive evolution which no conditions of life or change or death can frustrate, we are no better than miserable atoms of destiny, whose friends and devils mock at our struggles in the abyss of never-ending darkness and misery. But we are conscious of the opposite of all this, which would be a libel upon the beneficence of the Father of our being.

Readers of Charlotte Brontë will remember how strikingly, in "Jane Eyre" and in "The Professor," if I mistake not, either that work or "Valette," she precipitates the fate of her heroine by an unwonted voice or cry, by which she learns of the state of her lover, etc. A friend inquired

of her why she made use of this weird superstition, to which she answered, with a manner that implied her own experience:

"We know that such things have been!"

In this relation I will record what happened to myself of a similar import, in the hope that some of your readers may suggest a solution of what, to my mind, admits of but one reading, namely, the wide-spreading sympathies of all life and nature, and that the blessed unseen ones participate in our grief. We know "such things are," and why conceal them?

On the 4th of July last, myself and family were invited by a friend to pass the day with them at a secluded farmhouse, green to the very threshold. We were all in good health and spirits, and the walk through the pine woods was not oppressive, a walk of nearly two miles. We had some fine singing, conversation, and an excellent dinner which all enjoyed. In the course of the afternoon, I found myself suffering from a sense of presentiment which I could not cast aside, notwithstanding my utmost efforts to do so. I gave no expression to a feeling that might mar the pleasure of the group of intelligent friends and happy children,

but so oppressive did it become that I grew ill and retired early.

No sooner was I alone than my ears were conscious of cries and sobs as of persons in distress. Wailings in a low key were pitiful to hear. I covered my head, and tried in every way not to hear, but it would not be. The sad, heart-sobs could not be put by. I arose several times and went out. The night was a windy, misty one, with a slight fall of rain. In vain did I strive to think this boding wail might be smothered. It was not a new experience. I had heard it before, out over the sea and from distant lands, and never had it been a meaningless sound, and now I knew that deep sorrow awaited me.

Is this superstition? Is it delusion? Is it hallucination? Whence came the sounds, so unexpected, so full of grief?

I only know the fact. I know it was.

I will not dwell upon the tragical event that was transpiring far away on the coast of North Carolina. At that very time four lovely girls, my granddaughters, two in early childhood, and two in the first flush of young womanhood, perished in Beaufort harbor by the upsetting of a sail-boat!

ELIZABETH OAKES SMITH.

EDGAR A. POE AND HIS POETRY.

WE have in our possession an old newspaper that contains the following announcement:

BOSTON THEATRE.

For the Benefit of Master Payne.

HAMLET.		
Hamlet,	Master Payne.	
Laertes,	Mr. Poe.	
Grave-digger,	Mr. Bernard.	
Ophelia,	Mrs. Poe.	
Queen,	Mrs. Powell.	

After which a Musical Entertainment, entitled:

PAUL AND VIRGINIA.		
Paul,	Mrs. Woodham.	
Virginia,	Mrs. Poe.	

∴ Mrs. Poe respectfully informs her friends and the publick that her Benefit will be on Wednesday evening next.

This brief record indicates the parentage and standing of the immediate ances-

tors of our poet. We marvel that the son, with his imaginative temperament, during his many trials of want and disappointment, should not have followed the adventurous footsteps of his parents.

The depreciative memoir of Poe that precedes his volume of poems in the edition of 1876 is libelous. His publisher can not be excused for having permitted it to go forth attached to Poe's writings. In this scurrilous proem our author is depicted, full-length, as a vagabond, villain, drunkard, gambler, and libertine. No doubt Poe had grave faults of character, and was of a badly-balanced organization. Boot-blacking denotes a thrifty pursuit—but, alas, magazine writing begets only a precarious livelihood. Al-