VARIOUS

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Содержание

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M. DE TOCQUEVILLE. [1]

M. De Tocqueville is one of the greatest, perhaps the very greatest, of the political philosophers of the present day. Alone of all his contemporaries, his best works will bear a comparison with those of Machiavelli and Bacon. Less caustic and condensed than Tacitus, less imaginative and eloquent than Burke, he possesses the calm judgment, the discriminating eye, and the just reflection, which have immortalised the Florentine statesman and the English philosopher. Born and bred in the midst of the vehement strife of parties in his own country, placed midway, as it were, between the ruins of feudal and the reconstruction of modern society in France, he has surveyed the contest with an impartial gaze. He has brought to the examination of republican institutions in the United States, the eye of calm reason and the

[1] *Histoire Philosophique du Regne de Louis XV.* Par M. Le Comte De Tocqueville. 2 Vols. Paris, 1847.

powers of philosophic reflection. The war-cries, the illusions, the associations of neither party have been able to disturb his steady mind. Though a man of rank, descended, as his name indicates, of an ancient family, he is not bigoted in favour of the old régime; though belonging to a profession where strenuous efforts can alone ensure success, he is not blind to the dangers of the new order of things. The feudal ages, with their dignified manners, glorious episodes, and heart-stirring recollections, are not lost upon him, but they have not closed his eyes to the numerous evils which they brought in their train. Modern times, with their general activity, vast achievements, and boundless anticipations, have produced their full effect on his thoughtful mind; but they have not rendered him insensible to the perils with which they are fraught. He is a Burke without his imagination—a Machiavelli without his crimes.

M. De Tocqueville, it is well known, is a firm believer in the progress of society to a general system of equality and popular government. He thinks that, for better or for worse, this tendency is inevitable; that all efforts to resist it are vain, and that true wisdom consists in accommodating ourselves to the new order of things, and making the transition with as little confusion and individual distress as may be. America he considers as the type of what Europe is to become; though he has grievous misgivings as to the final result of such a prostration of the great interests of society as has there taken place, and is too well-read a scholar not to know that it was in the institutions of the Byzantine empire

that a similar levelling resulted in ancient times. But being thus a devout believer, if not in the doctrine of perfectibility, at least in that of ceaseless progress towards democracy, his opinions are of the highest value when he portrays the perils with which the new order of things is attended. Alone of all the moderns, he has fixed the public attention upon the real danger of purely republican institutions; he first has discerned in their working in America, where it is that the lasting peril is to be apprehended. Passing by the bloodshed, suffering, and confiscations with which the transition from aristocratic ascendency to democratic power is necessarily attended, he has examined with a scrutinising eye the practical working of the latter system in the United States, where it had been long established and was in pacific undisputed sovereignty. He has demonstrated that in such circumstances, it is not the *weakness* but the *strength* of the ruling power in the state which is the great danger, and that the many-headed despot, acting by means of a subservient press and servile juries, speedily becomes as formidable to real freedom as ever Eastern sultaun with his despotic power and armed guards has proved.

The works of this very eminent writer, however, are by no means of equal merit. The last two volumes of his "Democratie en Amerique" are much inferior to the first. In the latter, he sketched out with a master hand, when fresh from the object of his study, the practical working of democratic institutions, when entirely free from all the impediments which, it was alleged, concealed or thwarted their operation in the Old World.

He delineated the results of the republican principle in a new state, without a hereditary nobility, established church, or national debt; unfettered by primogeniture, pauperism, or previous misgovernment; surrounded by boundless lands of exceeding fertility, with all the powers of European knowledge to bring them into cultivation, and all the energy of the Anglo-Saxon race to carry out the mission of Japhet—to replenish the earth and subdue it. The world had never seen, probably the world will never again see, the democratic principle launched into activity under such favourable circumstances, and when its practical effect, for good or for evil, could with so much accuracy and certainty be discerned. The study and delineation of such an experiment, in such circumstances, and on such a scale, by a competent observer, must have been an object of the highest interest at any time; but what must it be when that observer is a man of the capacity and judgment of M. De Tocqueville?

The latter volumes of the same work, however, have dipped into more doubtful matters, and have brought forward more questionable opinions. The inquisitive mind, philosophic turn, and deep reflection of the author, indeed, are every where conspicuous; but his opinions do not equally as in the first two volumes bear the signet mark of truth stamped upon them. They are more speculative and fanciful; founded rather on contemplation of future, than observation of present effects. When De Tocqueville painted the unrestrained working of democracy on political thought and parties, as he saw it around

him in the course of his residence in America, he drew a picture which all, in circumstances at all similar, must at once have recognised as trustworthy, because it was only an extension of what they had witnessed in their own vicinity. But when he extended these effects so far as he has done in his later volumes, to manners, opinions, habits, and the intercourse of the sexes, the attempt seemed overstrained. The theory, beyond all question just to a certain point, was pushed too far. M. De Tocqueville's great reputation, accordingly, has been somewhat impaired by the publication of his last two volumes on democracy in America; and it is to the first two that the philosophic student most frequently recurs for light on the practical working of the popular system.

Perhaps, too, there is another, and a still more cogent, reason why the reputation of this philosopher has not continued so general as it at first was. This is his *impartiality*. Both the great parties which divide the world turned to his work on its first appearance with avidity, in the hope of discovering something favourable to their respective views. Neither were disappointed. Both found numerous facts and observations of the very highest importance, and having a material bearing on the points at issue between them. Enchanted with the discovery, each raised an *Io Pæan*; and in the midst of a chorus of praise from liberals and conservatives, M. De Tocqueville took his place as the first political philosopher of the age. But in process of time, both discovered something in his opinions which they would rather

had been omitted. The popular party were displeased at seeing it proved that the great and virtuous middle classes of society could establish a despotism as complete, and more irresistible, than any sultaun of Asia: the aristocratic, at finding the opinion of the author not disguised that the tendency to democracy was irresistible, and that, for good or for evil, it had irrevocably set in upon human affairs. But present celebrity is seldom a test of future fame; in matters of thought and reflection, scarcely ever so. What makes a didactic author popular at the moment is, the coincidence of his opinions with those of his readers, in the main, and the tracing them out to some consequences as yet new to them. What gives him fame with futurity is, his having boldly resisted general delusions, and violently, and to the great vexation of his contemporaries, first demonstrated the erroneous nature of many of their opinions, which subsequent experience has shewn to be false. "Present and future time," says Sir Joshua Reynolds, "are rivals; he who pays court to the one, must lay his account with being discountenanced by the other." We augur the more favourably for M. De Tocqueville's lasting fame, from his being no longer quoted by party writers on either side of the questions which divide society.

M. de Tocqueville calls the history he has recently published, and which forms the subject of this article,—"A *Philosophic* History of the Reign of Louis XV."[2] We regret the title: we have an instinctive aversion to *soi-disant* philosophic histories. Those

[2] *Histoire Philosophique du Regne de Louis XV.*

that really are so, invariably shun the name. Robertson, in his first volume of Charles V.; Guizot in his "Civilisation Européenne;" Sismondi, in his "Essais sur les Sciences Sociales," and the last volume of his "Republiques Italiennes," have carried the philosophy of history to the highest perfection; but none of them thought of calling their immortal works "Philosophic Histories." Schlegel has written an admirable book not improperly styled "the *Philosophy* of History;" but it avowedly is not a history, but a review of the general conclusions which seemed deducible from it. Bossuet entitled his celebrated work, "Histoire Universelle," without a word of philosophy. In truth, philosophy, though a corollary from history, is not its primary object. That is, and ever must be, the narrative of human events. Not but what the noblest and most important lessons of philosophy may and should be deduced from history; but they should be *deduced*, not made the main object of the work. The reason is obvious: history is addressed to the great body of mankind; to most of whom, narrative of event, if told in an agreeable manner, may be made an object of interest; but to not one in twenty of whom general or philosophic conclusions ever can be a matter of the smallest concern. History, in truth, is much more nearly allied to poetry, oratory, and painting. The drama is but the expansion of its touching scenes,—painting, the representation of its fleeting events. Even to the few who are gifted by nature with the power of abstract thought, it is often hazardous to push matters to a conclusion too openly. Lingard evinced the profound knowledge

of the human heart by which the Church of Rome has ever been distinguished, when, in his skilful narrative, he concealed the Roman Catholic save in the facts which he brought forward. It is well to enlist self-love on the side of truth. No conclusions are so readily embraced, as those which the reader flatters himself he himself has had a large share in drawing. Like the famous images which were withheld from the funeral of Junia, they are only the more present to the mind that they are withdrawn from the sight.

Perhaps M. de Tocqueville meant, by prefixing this title to his work, to prepare his readers for what they were to expect. He does not aim at making a very interesting narrative. Though possessed, as the extracts we shall give will abundantly testify, of considerable power of description, and rising at times into strains of touching eloquence, it is not his object to render his work attractive in either of these ways. Had it been so, he would have chosen a different subject; he would have selected the glories of Louis XIV. which preceded the disasters of the Revolution; the glories of the empire, which followed it. His turn of mind is not dramatic; he is neither poetic in his imagination, nor pictorial in his description. Considering the close connexion between these arts and history, these are very great deficiencies, and must ever prevent his work from taking its place beside the masterpieces in this department of literature. It will not bear a comparison with the dramatic story of Livy, the caustic nerve of Sallust, the profound observation of Tacitus, or the pictorial page of Gibbon. But, regarded as a picture of the moral causes working in society,

anterior to a great and memorable convulsion, it is entitled to the highest praise, and will ever be viewed as a most valuable *preliminary volume* to the most important period of European history.

M. de Tocqueville possesses one most important quality, in addition to his calm judgment and discriminating sagacity. His moral and religious principles are not only unexceptionable, but they are founded on the soundest and most enlightened basis. Humane without being sentimental—moral but not uncharitable—religious but not fanatical—he surveys society, its actors and its crimes, with the eve of enlightened philanthropy, experienced reason, and Christian charity. He is neither a fierce, imperious Romish bigot like Bossuet, nor a relentless Calvinistic theologian like D'Aubigné, nor a scoffing infidel like Voltaire. Deeply impressed with the vital importance of religion to the temporal and eternal welfare of mankind, he is yet enlightened enough to see that all systems of religious belief have much to recommend them, and rejects the monstrous doctrine that salvation can be obtained only by the members of any particular sect. He sees much good in all religions; much evil in many of their supporters. He is a Roman Catholic; but he is the first to condemn the frightful injustice of the revocation of the Edict of Nantes; he does not doom the whole members of the Church of England to damnation, as so many of our zealous sectarians do the adherents of the Church of Rome.

It is a remarkable and most consolatory circumstance, that

these just and enlightened views on the subject of religion, and its beneficial influence on society, are now entertained by all the deepest thinkers and most brilliant writers in France. There is not an intellect which rises to a certain level now in that country—not a name which will be known a hundred years hence, which is not thoroughly *Christian* in its principles. *That*, at least, is one blessing which has resulted from the Revolution. Chateaubriand, Guizot, Lamartine, Vilmain, De Tocqueville, Michelet, Sismondi, Amadée Thierry, Beranger, Barante, belong to this bright band. When such men, differing so widely in every other respect, are leagued together in defence of Christianity, we may regard as a passing evil whatever profligacy the works of Victor Hugo, Eugène Sue, and Sand, pour forth upon the Parisian world and middle classes throughout France. They, no doubt, indicate clearly enough the state of general opinion *at this time*. But what then? Their great compeers, the giants of thought, foreshadow what it will be. The profligate novels, licentious drama, and irreligious opinions of the middle class now in France, are the result of the infidelity and wickedness which produced the Revolution. The opinions of the great men who have succeeded the school of the Encyclopedie, who have been taught by the suffering it produced, will form the character of a future generation. Public opinion, of which we hear so much, is never any thing else than the re-echo of the thoughts of a few great men *half a century before*. It takes that time for ideas to flow down from the elevated to the inferior level. The great

never adopt, they only originate. Their chief efforts are always made *in opposition* to the prevailing opinions by which they are surrounded. Thence it is that a powerful mind is always uneasy when it is not in the minority on any subject which excites general attention.

The reign of Louis XV. is peculiarly favourable for a writer possessed of the philosophic mind, calm judgment, and contemplative turn of M. de Tocqueville. It was then that the many causes which concurred to produce the Revolution were brought to maturity. We say *brought to maturity*: for, great as were the corruptions, enormous the profligacy of that reign, and of the regency which preceded it, it would be absurd to suppose that it was during them alone that the causes which produced the terrible convulsion began to operate. They were only brought to maturity—but the catastrophe undoubtedly was accelerated by the vices that succeeded the reign of Louis XIV., not so much by the evils they inflicted on the people, as by the corruption which they spread among the defenders of the throne. They paralysed the nobility by the fatal gangrene of individual selfishness; they prostrated thought by diverting it almost entirely to wicked and licentious purposes. Intellect, instead of being the guardian of order, the protector of religion, the supporter of morality, became their most fatal enemy; for its powers—and they were gigantic in that age—were all devoted to the spread of infidelity, the ridicule of virtue, the fomenting of passion. It is in this *debauchery of the public mind* by the example of royal

and noble profligacy, and the power of vigorous and perverted talent, that the real causes of the Revolution are to be found. The working classes of themselves can never overturn a state—if they could, England would have been revolutionised in 1832. They may make a *Jacquerie*, but they cannot make a revolution. They may rear up a Jack Cade, a Wat Tyler, or a Jacques Bonhomme, but they will never produce a Robespierre or a Cromwell. It is the *coincidence* of general evils that make all the people feel sore, with corrupted manners, and licentious or selfish writers who make their leaders *think wrong*, which can alone overturn society. The first furnishes the private soldier, the last the officers to the army of revolution; or, what is the same thing, they withdraw them from that of religion and order.

The latter years of Louis XV. were so completely sunk in shameless debaucheries, the glory of France had been so long tarnished by the wretched choice which his mistresses had made of ministers to rule the state and generals to lead the armies, that the world has not unnaturally come to entertain an opinion in many respects exaggerated or erroneous, of his character. He had many good points; at first he was an unexceptionable sovereign. Though bred up in the licentious school of the Regent Orleans, he led in the outset a comparatively blameless life. The universal grief which seized the nation when he lay at the point of death at Metz, in 1744, proves to what extent he had then won the hearts of his subjects. His person was fine and well-proportioned; his manners were grace personified; he possessed considerable

penetration when his native indolence would permit him to attend to public affairs; and he was not destitute, like his predecessor Charles VI., when roused by necessity, or the entreaties of a high-minded and generous mistress, of noble and heroic qualities. His conduct at Foutenoy, and during the few occasions when he made war in person, in company with Marshal Saxe, sufficiently proved this. Nay, what is still more extraordinary, he was at first a model of conjugal fidelity. Though married at nineteen to his Queen, Marie Leczinska, daughter of the king of Poland, who was six years older than himself, and possessed of no remarkable personal attractions, he resisted for long all the arts of the ladies of the court, who were vieing with each other for his homage, saying constantly to those who urged the beauty of any one upon him, "the Queen is handsomer." The Queen had already borne him nine children, before a suspicion even of his infidelities came to be entertained; and he was led into them at first, rather by the efforts of those around him than his own inclination. So timid was his disposition in these respects in early years—so strong the religious scruples to which throughout life he continued subject, that, on the first occasion on which he obtained an interview with his future mistress, Madame de Chateauroux, the visit passed over without the desired result, and on the second his valet had, literally speaking, to throw him into her arms. "C'est le premier pas qui coute." He became less scrupulous in subsequent years.

Of the Regent Orleans, who succeeded Louis XIV. in the government, and preceded Louis XV. in its abuse, M. de

Tocqueville gives the following masterly character:—

"Nature had bestowed on the Duke of Orleans all those gifts which usually captivate mankind. His physiognomy was agreeable and prepossessing: to a natural eloquence he joined uncommon sweetness of manner. Brave, full of liveliness, his penetration was never at fault, and his abilities would have procured for him distinction at the head of councils or armies. Those Who were about his person became attached to him, because they found him amiable and indulgent. They lamented his faults, without ceasing to love him, carried away by the graces of his character and amiability of his manners, which recalled, they said, those of his grandfather, Henry IV. He had the good fortune, rare in princes, to preserve his friends to the hour of his death. He readily forgave offences and pardoned injuries. But the mind endowed with so many amiable qualities was destitute of that which can alone develop or turn them to good account—he had no force of character. Without the energy which prompts crime, he was equally without that which leads to virtue. After having lost his first preceptor, his ill fortune placed him in the hands of Dubois, the most corrupt of men. This Dubois, the son of an apothecary of Brives-la-Gaillarde, founded his hopes of fortune on the entire demoralisation of the prince committed to his care. Inspired by the genius of vice, he divined and encouraged the vices of others, and above all of his master. He taught him to believe that virtue is but a mask worn by hypocrisy, a chimera on which no one can rely in the

business of life; that religion is a political invention, of use only to the lower people; that all men are cheats and deceivers, and pretended rectitude a mere cover for intended villany. Madame, the mother of the Regent, early discovered the character of this detestable man. 'My son,' said she, 'I desire nothing but the good of the state and your glory: I ask but one thing for your safety, and I demand your word of honour for it—it is never to employ that scoundrel the Abbé Dubois—the greatest miscreant on the earth: who would at any time sacrifice the state and you to the slightest interest of his own.' The Duke of Orleans gave his word accordingly, but he was not long of breaking it. Shortly after, he made Dubois a councillor of state. The debaucheries into which that man impelled him soon became all indispensable distraction for that soft and enervated mind, to which the *ennui* of a court was insupportable. He loved its scandal and rumours —even the report of incest was not displeasing to him. Every evening, he assembled his *roués*, his mistresses, some *danseuses* from the Opera, often his daughter the Duchess de Berri,[3] and some persons of obscure birth, but brilliant for their talent or renowned for their vices. At these suppers the choicest viands, the finest wines, exhilarated the guests, all the disorders and scandal of court and the city were passed in review. They drank,

[3] The Duchess de Berri was an apt scholar in the lessons which her father taught her. One evening, after copious libations, a fancy seized them to represent the Judgment of Paris. The Princess played the part of Venus; two of the Regent's mistresses those of Minerva and Juno. "*The three Goddesses appeared in the costume in which those in the tale displayed themselves to the son of Priam.*" De Tocqueville. Vol. i. p. 26—note.

they became intoxicated; the conversation became licentious; impieties of every sort issued from every mouth. At last, fatigued with satiety, the party was broken up: those who could walk retired to rest; the others were carried to bed;—and the next evening a similar scene was renewed."—(Vol. i. pp. 22-24.)

It may be conceived what an effect manners such as these pervading the head of a court, already sufficiently inclined to excitement and gratification, must have had upon the general tone of morals among the higher ranks. M. de Tocqueville portrays it in strong colours, but not stronger we believe than the truth:—

"The disorders of its head spread to all the branches of the royal family. There was not a princess who had not her lover —not a prince who had not his mistresses. This system soon descended from the palace to the hotels of the nobles. Conjugal fidelity was considered as a prejudice, fit only to be the subject of ridicule. Adultery became the fashion, intemperance a path to distinction—the seduction of women was deemed the great object of life, and conquests in that line were sought as the highest glory; minds absorbed in the frivolous pursuits of a man *à bonnes fortunes*, became incapable of attention to serious affairs. When a young woman appeared in the world, no inquiries were made as to the union which prevailed in her establishment, the sole point was what lover they were to give her. The men with pretensions in that line, the corrupted women, entered into a league to plunge her into crime; and in that abominable lottery,

they fixed beforehand on the person to whom she was to fall. The example of the Duchess de Berri obtained many imitators. Sometimes devotion was mingled with debauchery, as if a feeble struggle was still kept up between the recollections of the past and the seductions of the present. Women of gallantry, ambitious debauchees, passed from their orgies to the cloister; and the abstinence of penitence furnished some respite to the pleasure of the world and the agitations of politics. Such was the society of the great world, under the regency. The impulse given to vice during that period, continued through that which followed it. Neither the good example given by Louis XV., during the first years of his youth, nor the grave habits of Cardinal de Fleury, could avail as a barrier to the inundation. It only abated something of its audacity; more veiled, it excited less public scandal."—(Vol. i. p. 31.)

It is impossible that in any country, but most of all in a monarchical and in aristocratic one, such manners can exist in the higher ranks, without inducing a total depravity of general thought, and perversion of the power of mind. Talent, often the most venal of venal things, follows in the wake of corruption. Covetous of gain, thirsting for patronage, it fans, instead of lowering, the passions by which all hope to profit. Whenever prevailing vices have set in upon a nation, be they such as spring from a monarchical, an aristocratic, or a democratic régime, the great majority of its abilities will do nothing but encourage its excesses, because it is there alone they can gain profit. A few

great and generous minds will probably set themselves to resist the torrent, and they may produce a great effect upon a future age; but in their own, they are almost sure to meet with nothing but ridicule, abuse, and neglect. We see this deplorable subservience of talent, even of a very high cast, to the taste of the majority holding preferment in their hands, around us in Great Britain at this time; and the same evil was experienced in an equal degree in France during the whole course of the reign of Louis XV. and his virtuous but ill-fated successor.

"The reign," says Tocqueville, "of Louis XIV. finished: that of Louis XV. commenced. During its course we shall see every thing change: of old forms there will remain only the shadow. Never was alteration more complete among mankind."

"In lieu of lofty thoughts, and their serious expression, will appear a sterile futility. An incurable frivolity will get possession of the high society, and come entirely to direct thought. Licentiousness of language will accompany wicked manners, and lend a seduction the more to vice. Libertinism becomes the fashion. Impiety *á la mode*, miserable vanities, will supplant a noble pride to achieve a reputation in letters: it will become necessary to raise a doubt, wherever truth has been admitted. Amidst the din of feasts and the music of the ball-room, they will sap the foundations of religion, morality, and society. They will call themselves philanthropic, they will declaim on humanity —at the very moment that they are taking from the people the consolations which render supportable the miseries of life, and

the religious curb which suspends wrath and restrains vengeance. It is thus, also, that they will obtain the envied title of philosophy, and merit the protection of the great; for they, too, will desire the reputation of *Esprits forts*. All will give way together. In war, no more great generals. The pulpit will no longer resound with the illustrious orators, whose words seemed to descend from divine inspiration. Statesmen will be without elevation: instead of able men, mere intriguers: the influence of talent will be replaced by the influence of coteries. Business will be treated of in boudoirs, and decided according to the caprice of abandoned women. They will dispose of administrations, lower politics to the level of their own minds, and even ecclesiastical dignities will depend on their patronage. As a consequence of that general debasement, an unmeasured disdain will arise in the inferior classes of all that is great in the state. Doubt will be applauded, and it will extend to the power of the king, the noblesse, and the clergy. The spirit of investigation and analysis will replace the flights of the imagination. Men will sound the depths of that power which they have ceased to regard with respect. The authorities of the earth will not be sufficiently respected to make them look up to them —they must bring them down to their own level, and look below them. A terrible reaction will arise—the result of old rancours to which general feeling will no longer oppose any barrier. On all sides will spring up the ideas of liberty and independence. Meanwhile the redoubtable progress of a revolution, which is advancing, will escape the observation of those whom it is to

swallow up; for the frivolity of their lives, and the vacancy of their thoughts, will have deprived them of all foresight."—(Vol. i. p. 22.)

The courage with which the French church frequently denounced the vices and corruptions in high places with which it was surrounded, has always been one of the most honourable features of its glorious annals. Massillon, in the corrupted days of the regency, was not behind Bourdalone and Bossuet and Fénélon, in the time of Louis XIV., in the discharge of this noble duty:—

"When Massillon ascended the pulpit to instruct the young king, he threatened with the wrath of God the great on the earth who violated his commandments, and the Regent manifested no displeasure: conscience had palsied his mind. Never had religion been more sublime,—never did she appear clothed in more magnificent language. To the profound corruption of the court, the preacher opposed the example of the little and the weak; to their pride, the virtue of the poor, and its omnipotence in the sight of God. 'If Providence permits,' said he, 'the elevation of some unworthy characters, it is that they may be rendered useful to others. All power comes from God, and is established only for the use of man. The great would be useless on the earth if they were not surrounded by the poor and the indigent; they owe their elevation to the public necessities; and, so far are the people from being made for them, it is they who are made for the people. It is the people who give the great the right which they have to

approach the throne; and it is for the people that the throne itself has been raised. In a word, the great and the princes are but, as it were, the men of the people: thence it is that the prosperity of the great and their ministers, and of the sovereigns who have been the oppressors of the people, has never brought any thing but shame, ignominy, and maledictions to their descendants. We have seen issue from that stem of iniquity the shameless shoots which have been the disgrace of their name and of their age. The Lord has breathed upon the heaps of their ill-gotten riches; he has dispersed them as the dust: if he yet leaves on the earth the remnants of their race, it is that they may remain an eternal monument of his vengeance.

"'The glory of a conqueror will be always stained with blood:—He passes like a torrent over the earth, only to devastate it, and not as a majestic river which brings joy and abundance. The remembrance of his reign will recall only the recollection of the evils he has inflicted on humanity. The people suffer always from the vices of their sovereign. Whatever exaggerates authority, vilifies or degrades it; princes, ruled by their passions, are always pernicious and bizarre masters. Government has no longer a ruler when its head has none.

"'The Lord has ever blown on the haughty races and withered their roots. The prosperity of the impious has never passed to their descendants. Thrones themselves, and royal succession have failed, to effeminate and worthless princes; and the history of the crimes and excess of the great is, at the same time, the history

of their misfortunes and of their fall.

"'Prince's and sovereigns cannot be great but in rendering themselves useful to the people—in bringing them, like Jesus Christ, abundance and peace. The liberty which princes owe to their people, is the liberty of the laws. You know only God above you, it is true; but the laws should have an authority even superior to yourselves.

"'A great man—a prince—is not born for himself alone. He owes himself to his subjects. The people, in elevating him, have entrusted him with power and authority, and have reserved to themselves, in exchange, his care, his time, his vigilance. He is a superintendant whom they have placed at their head to protect and defend them. It is the people who, by the order of God, have made them what they are.—Yes, Sire! *It is the choice of the nation which has put the sceptre in the hand of your ancestors.* It is it which proclaimed them sovereigns. The kingdom came in time to be considered as the inheritance of their successors; but they owed it at first to the free consent of their subjects, and it was the public suffrages which, in the beginning, attached that right and that prerogative to their birth. In a word, as their prerogative first flowed from ourselves, so kings should make no use of their power but for us.'"—(Vol. i. p. 67.)

Such was the eloquent and intrepid language in which Massillon addressed the Regent Orleans and Louis XV., in the plenitude of their power, in the chapel-royal at Versailles. It was a minister of the *established* church, be it recollected, who

thundered in those unmeasured terms to the prince who held in his hands the whole patronage of the church of France. We should like to see a preacher of the Free and popular dissenting establishments of Great Britain or America, thunder in equally intrepid strains on the sins which most easily beset the democratic congregations upon whom their elevation and fortune depend.

"There is nothing new," says the Wise Man, "under the sun." We have seen enough, of late years, of railway manias, and the almost incredible anxiety of all classes to realise something in the numerous El Dorados which infatuation or cupidity set afloat in periods of excitement. But, from the following account of De Tocqueville, it appears that a hundred and thirty years ago the same passions were developed on a still greater scale in France; and even our ladies of rank and fashion may take a lesson in these particulars from the marchionesses and countesses of the court of the Regent Orleans.

"In the month of August 1719, the anxiety to procure shares (in the Mississippi scheme) began to assemble an immense crowd in the street Quincampoix, where, for many years, the public funds had been bought and sold. From six in the morning, crowds of people, men and women, rich and poor, gentlemen and burghers, filled the street and never left it till eight at night. There were spread all sorts of rumours, true or false; and all the devices of stock-jobbing were put in practice, in order to effect a rise or fall in the prices. The price of some shares rose to *six-and-*

thirty times their original value. Their price often varied, during the course of a single day, several thousand francs. From this perilous gambling arose alternately incredible fortunes and total ruins.

"The numerous instances which occurred of person who had risen from nothing and suddenly become possessed of immense wealth, raised the public avidity to a perfect frenzy. At that epoch of scandal and opprobrium, there was no folly or vice in which the high society did not take the lead. The degradation of men's minds was equal to the corruption of their manners. The courtiers, even the princes of the blood, besieged the Regent to obtain shares. He flung them among them with open hands; and soon they were seen mingling in the crowds of speculators, and covetous like them of discreditable gains. 'My son,' said the Regent's mother, 'has given me, for my family, two millions in shares. The King has taken some millions for his house. The whole royal family have received some; all the children of France, all their grandsons and princes of the blood.'—(28th Nov. 1719.)

"Women of the highest rank did not scruple to pay the most assiduous court to Law to obtain shares. They passed whole days in his ante-chamber waiting for an audience, which he very seldom gave them. One caused her carriage to be overturned before his door to attract his attention, and had the good fortune, in consequence, to get a few words from him. Another stopped before his hotel and made her servants call out 'Fire,' to force

him to come out, and thus obtain an interview. They were to be seen seated on the front part of the carriage of Madame Law, striving to obtain from her a profitable friendship. That woman who had the effrontery to take the name of Law, though she was only his mistress, treated them with hauteur.

"The same passion was not less vehement in the other classes of society. The latest *arrêts* of the council had ordained that all shares should be paid in paper: and instantly a crowd assembled round the bank, to exchange their gold and silver for bank-notes. The women sold their diamonds and pearls, the men their plate. Ere long the provinces became envious of the profits made in the capital, and desirous to share in them: proprietors sold their lands for whatever they would bring, and hastened to Paris to acquire the much coveted shares. Ecclesiastics, bishops even, did not scruple to mingle in these transactions. In a short time, the population of the capital was increased by three hundred thousand souls. Foreigners also arrived in crowds; but, less intoxicated by the prevailing madness than the French, they foresaw the fatal denoûement, and, for the most part, extricated themselves in time from its effects."—(Vol. i. pp. 129, 130.)

The ultimate issue of this, as of all other general manias, was disastrous in the extreme.

"The rise of shares having at length experienced a check, they continued for some time to oscillate up and down without any material variation, according to the devices employed by skilful speculators. These variations occasioned enormous changes in

the fortune of the gamblers. Those newly enriched, displayed an unheard-of luxury; hastening to enjoy wealth which had come to them like a dream, and which the wakening from it might dissipate. Never had the equipages been so magnificent, never so numerous. Laquais rolled about in their chariots, and, from the force of habit, were seen sometimes *to get upon the back of their own carriages*. 'Put the most showy arms on my coach,' said one to his coach-maker. 'I will have that livery,' said another, when a particularly stylish one drove past. Their furniture was sumptuous, their repasts exquisite, and the *noblesse* did not disdain to honour their tables, making such condescension the first step to alliances which might hereafter convey to them some of the profits of their speculations.

"Meanwhile a frightful tumult disturbed every existence. Speculation became universal, unbounded, at length brutal. Persons were crushed to death in the approaches to the Rue Quincampoix: the men with large portfolios were in hourly danger of their lives. Assassinations were committed: a Count de Horn was condemned to be broken on the wheel by the Parliament, and the sentence carried into execution, for having robbed and murdered a courtier. Alarmed at the crowds, the Regent interdicted the speculators from making use of the Rue Quincampoix: they took refuge in the Place Vendôme. In a single day that square was covered with tents, where the most sumptuous stuffs were displayed; and, without disquieting themselves with the wild joy of some, or the abject despair of

others, the ladies of the court seated themselves at gambling tables, where the choicest refreshments were handed to them. Bands of musicians and courtezans served to amuse that insensate crowd. Soon its excesses led to its being expelled from the Place Vendôme; it then fixed itself in the Hotel de Soissons."—(Vol. i. pp. 133-134.)

This exceeds even the joint-stock mania of 1824, or the railway mania of 1845, in this country, of which, in the conclusion of his first volume of "Tancred," Mr D'Israeli has given a graphic picture. Lady Bertie and Bellair, whose billet regarding the "*broad gauge*" occasioned her to swoon, and dispelled the romantic attachment of Lord Montacute, was but a repetition of the French countesses, who thronged the antechambers of Law a century before. More vehement in their desires, more mercurial in their temperament than the English, the French, when seized with any general mania, push it even into greater excesses, and induce upon themselves and their country more wide-spread calamities.

M. De Tocqueville frequently says that he is not a military historian; and although he has considerable powers of description, and, like all his countrymen, understands something of the art of war, yet it is very apparent that his inclination does not lie in that direction. We gladly give a place, however, to his admirable account of the battle of Fontenoy, and the exploits of the famous "English column," which, though in the end unsuccessful, displayed a valour on the banks of the Scheldt

which foreshadowed the heroism of Albuera and Waterloo:—

"The King of France passed the Scheldt, and, in spite of the representations of Marshal Saxe, placed himself on an eminence commanding a view of the field of battle, and where the balls rolled to his horse's feet. Many persons were wounded behind him. The English and the Dutch commenced the attack at the same time at different points. The former advanced as if nothing could disconcert their audacity. As the ground contracted, their battalions became more close together, but still keeping the finest order; and there was formed, partly by design, partly by accident, that redoubtable column of which the Duke of Cumberland soon felt the full value. Nothing could withstand that terrible mass. Steadily it moved on, launching forth death incessantly from every front. The French regiments in vain strove to impede its progress; they perished in the attempt. The first corps which the English approached was the regiment of Gardes Françaises. Before the fire commenced, an English officer stepped forth from the rank, and taking off his hat, said, 'Gentlemen of the French guard, fire.' A French officer advanced and replied, 'The French do not fire first: we will reply.' The English then levelled their pieces, and sent in a discharge with such precision, that the whole front rank of the Guard fell. That ill-timed piece of courtesy cost the lives of eighteen officers. No sooner was this over than the column renewed its march, slowly but with immovable firmness. Soon it had passed by six hundred toises (1800 feet) the front of the French army. The battle seemed

lost, and the persons who surrounded the King already began to counsel him to leave the field. 'Who is the scoundrel who dares to give that advice to your Majesty?' exclaimed the Marshal, who had been all day in the hottest of the fire. 'Before the action began it was my time to give it: now it is too late.' In truth, all was lost if the monarch had left his post. His remaining there seemed to make heroes spring out of the earth: his departure would have spread discouragement through the ranks. The advice of the Marshal coincided with the feelings of the King, and he remained firm. The blood of Henry IV. then beat at his heart. By his advice a new effort better combined was resolved on. The King, whose *sang froid* had never for an instant been disturbed, in person rallied the fugitives. Four guns, kept in reserve for his personal safety, were brought forward, and placed in battery at the distance of forty paces from the head of the English column. They fired with grape with extraordinary rapidity, and soon huge chasms appeared in the enemy's ranks. The cavalry of the French Guard charged impetuously in at the openings, —the Dauphin, sword in hand, leading them on. The swords of the horsemen, aided by the fire of the guns and the foot-soldiers, soon completed the work of destruction. And ere long that terrible column which had so recently made the bravest tremble, is nothing but a vast ruin. The English had nine thousand killed and wounded, the French were weakened by five thousand men."—(Vol. i. pp. 425-426.)

Such is the account of the conduct of the English troops at

Fontenoy—the only great battle on the continent of Europe in which they ever sustained a defeat from the French—as given by the historians of France itself. The crisis produced by the irruption of this terrible column into the centre of the French army, exactly resembles a similar attack at Aspern and Wagram, and the last onset of the Imperial Guards at Waterloo. The account of the progress of the English column, and the means by which its advance was at length arrested, might pass for a narrative of the penetrating of the Austrian centre by the French column under Lannes, on the second day of Aspern, or the famous advance of the Old and Middle Guard against the British right centre, on the evening of the 18th June 1815. Both these formidable attacks were defeated, and by means precisely similar to those by which Marshal Saxe stopped the English column at Fontenoy. At Wagram, also, the heavy mass of infantry led by Macdonald was arrested by the dreadful cross-fire of the Austrian batteries; and if the Archduke Charles had evinced the same tenacity and resolution as Marshal Saxe, the result would probably have been the same, and Wagram had been Waterloo!

Of the effects of the irreligious fanaticism, the natural result of the tyranny and oppressive conduct of the Church of Rome, which pervaded France for half a century before the Revolution, our author gives the following interesting account:—

"Another powerful cause of dissolution existed in French society at this period. The vast conspiracy against Christianity, of which Voltaire was the chief, daily developed itself in a

more alarming manner. A body of men styling themselves philosophers—that is, lovers of wisdom—set up for reformers of the human race. They professed to be the enemies of prejudice; they had for ever in their mouths the words 'humanity,' and 'philanthropy;' their object was declared to be to restore the dignity of man, and with that view they proposed to substitute certain conventional virtues for the precepts of Christianity. They pleaded tolerance, and soon they became themselves intolerant. Misfortune excited their pity; they ever undertook its defence, when there was a noise to be made, celebrity to be acquired by doing so. By these means, they acquired a great renown; to philosophise was continually in their mouths and their writings. It is no wonder it was so; for to philosophise, in their estimation, was to attack all the received opinions, and annihilate them under the weight of public contempt; to persecute fanaticism without perceiving that the irreligious passion soon acquired the character of the worst species of fanaticism.

"Voltaire, endowed by nature with immense talent, had, from his earliest years, the steady will and unshaken determination which were necessary to make him a leader of thought. He laboured at it all his life, and his mental qualifications enabled him to keep pace with the public desires in all their branches. The age was frivolous, and he excelled in fugitive pieces; it was libertine, and he had obscene verses at command; the *esprits forts* had a leaning to incredulity, and he put himself

at the head of the movement, and made use of it to turn into ridicule all that men had been most accustomed to revere. Gifted with extraordinary powers of raillery and sarcasm, he faithfully reflected in his writings the graces and the vices of the brilliant and profligate society in which he lived. He kept some measure in his publications as long as he had any hope of obtaining in France a political station; but from the very beginning, the acerbity of his disposition displayed itself in his ceaseless attacks on the mysteries of religion, in the elegant society which sought him, and of which he was the delight. 'He had the art,' says Vilmain, 'of throwing discredit on a dogma by a happy couplet; by a philosophic sentence he refuted a syllogistic argument.'"—(Vol. ii. pp. 61, 62.)

The correspondence of Voltaire with the King of Prussia, the bond of union in which was their common antipathy to Christianity, forms not the least curious part of the lives of both these eminent men. Nearly all the sovereigns of the Continent, at this period, were led away by this mania, destined to produce such fatal effects to themselves and their children. Catherine of Russia was peculiarly active in the infidel league. De Tocqueville gives the following interesting account of the almost incredible extent to which this mania prevailed in the age which preceded the French Revolution:—

"Voltaire and the King of Prussia resembled two lovers who were continually quarreling and making up their differences. The royal hero could never dispense with the renown which the

praises of the Patriarch of Incredulity gave to him. Catherine II. of Russia kept up a close correspondence with him; his expressions to her were confiding, even tender. She required that trumpet to celebrate her exploits, and palliate the crimes committed in the pursuit of her ambition. 'My *Catau* (his name for the Empress) loves the philosophers, her husband will suffer for it with posterity.' At the same time, she respected him more than Frederick, and her letters were never disgraced by any impurity. She offered D'Alembert to intrust him with the education of her only son, and to settle on him a pension of 50,000 francs (£2000). She flattered Diderot, and sent him a present of 66,000 francs (£2400). If the Encyclopedia is proscribed at Paris, it was reprinted at St Petersburg; the Empress went so far as herself to translate the Belisarius of Marmontel into the Russian tongue. Eighteen other princes, among whom were the King of Poland, the King of Sweden, and the King of Denmark, corresponded with Voltaire, and hastened to deposit in his hands their adhesion to his protest against the prejudices of the age. The princes and great men who were travelling in Europe, endeavoured to stop at Ferney, happy if they could enjoy for a few minutes the conversation of the great writer. 'I have been,' said he to Madame de Deffand, 'for fourteen years the hotel-keeper of Europe.' In his old age, intoxicated with joy, he wrote to Helvetius, on the 26th June 1765: 'Do you not see that the whole North is for us, and that it is inevitable that sooner or later those miserable fanatics of the South must be confounded?

The Empress of Russia, the King of Prussia, the conqueror of the superstitious Austrian, besides many other princes, have already erected the standard of philosophy.' Again he wrote to D'Alembert, on the 4th June 1767: 'Men begin to open their eyes from one end of Europe to the other. Fanaticism, which feels its weakness and implores the arm of authority, despite itself, acknowledges its defeat. The works of Bolingbroke, of Trent, and of Boulanger, universally diffused, are so many triumphs of Reason. Let us bless that revolution which for the last fifteen or twenty years has taken place in general opinion. It has exceeded my most sanguine hopes. *With respect to the common people, I take no charge of them—they will always remain the rabble.* I cultivate my own garden; it is unavoidable that there should be frogs in it, but they do not prevent my nightingales from singing.'"—Vol. ii. pp. 357-8.

Such were the opinions of the wise men of Europe in the age which preceded the French Revolution! It is not surprising they brought on that convulsion.

One of the most powerful means by which Voltaire and his party succeeded in rousing so strong a feeling among the ablest men of Europe in their favour, was by the constant appeals which they made to the feelings of humanity, and the resolution with which they denounced the cruelties, equally impolitic and inhuman, which the Romish Church, whenever it had the power, still exercised on the unhappy victims who occasionally fell under the barbarous laws of former times. This atrocious adherence

to antiquated severity, in the vain idea of coercing the freedom of modern thought, in an age of increasing philanthropy, was, perhaps, the greatest cause of the spread of modern infidelity, and of the general horror with which the Roman Catholic Church was generally regarded by enlightened men throughout Europe. In this respect their labours are worthy of the highest approbation; and in so far as they mainly contributed to destroy the dreadful fabric of ecclesiastical tyranny which the Romish Church had established wherever their faith was still prevalent, they deserve, and will ever obtain, the warmest thanks of all friends of humanity. But, like most other reformers, in the ardour of their zeal for the removal of real grievances, they destroyed, also, beneficent institutions. It appears, too, from his confidential correspondence, that Voltaire's zeal in the cause of humanity was more a war-cry assumed to rouse a party, than a feeling of benevolence towards mankind; for no one rejoiced more sincerely than he did when the acerbity of the fanatics was directed against each other.

"It must ever be regretted," says M. De Tocqueville, "that Voltaire, in undertaking the defence of outraged humanity, appeared to have had no other object but to employ his sensibility to render the Roman Catholic religion odious." The same man who had expressed such touching regrets on the fate of the unhappy Calas, a Protestant, who had been broken on the wheel without sufficient evidence, on a charge of murder by a sentence of the parliament of Toulouse, permitted the most cruel irony to

flow from his pen when tortures were inflicted on the Jesuits. 'I hear,' said he, 'that they have at last *burned three Jesuits* at Lisbon. This is truly *consoling intelligence*; but unhappily it rests on the authority of a Jansenist.' (Voltaire to M. Vernet, 1760.) 'It is said that they have broken Father Malagrida on the wheel: *God be praised for it! I should die content if I could see the Jansenists and Molenists crushed to death by each other.*' (Letter to the Countess of Lutzelbourg, vol. ii. p. 363.)

Great Britain was at that period as much shaken by the effects of her irreligious party as France; in fact, it was from the writings of Bolingbroke, Tindal, Toland, and their contemporaries, that Voltaire drew almost all the arguments with which his writings abound against the doctrines of Christianity. Gibbon afterwards lent the same cause the aid of his brilliant genius and vast industry. Scotland, too, had its own share of the prevailing epidemic. Hume was the great apostle of scepticism, caressed by all Europe. But neither England nor Scotland were overturned by their efforts: on the contrary, Christianity, tried but not injured, came forth unscathed from the furnace. The learning—the talent—the zeal which arose in defence of religion, were at least equal to what was employed in the attack; and so completely did they baffle the efforts of the infidel party, that Christianity grew and strengthened with every assault made upon it; and when this great conflict began between the antagonist principles in 1793, England was found at its proper post in the vanguard of religion and order. This fact is very remarkable, and deserves

more serious consideration than has yet been bestowed upon it. It clearly points to some essential difference between the political and religious institutions of France and England at that period, on the capacity which they bestowed upon a nation to withstand the assaults of infidelity and corruption. It is not difficult to see what that difference was. In England, a free constitution was established, freedom of discussion was permitted, and the church was not allowed to exercise any tyrannical sway over either the minds or bodies of men. The consequence was, genius in the hour of need came to her side, and brought her triumphant through all the dangers by which she was assailed. Intellect was divided; it was not as in France wholly ranged on the side of infidelity. The cause of truth, though it may be subjected to grievous temporary trials, has nothing in the end to fear except from the excesses of tyranny exerted in its defence. Unsheltered by power, talent will speedily come to its aid. The wounds inflicted by mind can be cured only by mind: but they will never fail of being so if mind is left to itself.

One of the well-known abuses which preceded the Revolution, was the improper use which, in the reign of Louis XV. was made of *lettres de cachet*, obtained too often by private solicitation or the interest of some of the mistresses of the King or his ministers. Their abuse rose to the highest pitch, under the administration of the Duke de la Villière. The Marchioness Langeac, his mistress, openly made a traffic of them, and never was one refused to a man of influence, who had a vengeance

to satiate, a passion to gratify. The Comte de Segur gives the following characteristic anecdote, illustrating the use made of these instruments of tyranny, even upon the inferior classes of society.

"I have heard related the sad mishap which occurred to a young shop-mistress, named Jeanneton, who was remarkable for her beauty. One day the Chevalier de Coigny met her radiant with smiles, and in the highest spirits. He inquired the cause of her extreme satisfaction. 'I am truly happy,' she replied,—'My husband is a scold, a brute; he gave me no rest—I have been with M. le Comte de Saint Florentin; Madame –, who enjoys his good graces, has received me in the kindest manner, and for a present of ten *Louis* I have just obtained a *lettre de cachet* which will deliver me from the persecution of that most jealous tyrant.'

"Two years afterwards, M. de Coigny met the same Jeanneton, but now sad, pale, with downcast look, and a care-worn countenance. 'Ah! my poor Jeanneton!' said he, 'what has become of you? I never meet you any where. What has cast you down, since we last met?' 'Alas! sir,' replied she, 'I was very foolish to be then in such spirits; my villanous husband had that very day taken up the same idea as I; he went to the minister, and the same day, by the intervention of his mistress, *he brought an order to shut me up*; so that it cost our poor *menage* twenty *louis* to throw us at the same time reciprocally into prison.'"—(Vol. ii. p. 489.)

M. De Tocqueville sums up in these eloquent words which

close his work, the tendency and final result of the government of the Regent Orleans and Louis XV.:—

"The high society was more liberal than the bourgeois: the bourgeois than the people. The Revolution commenced in the head of the social system; from that it gained the heart, and spread to the extremities. It became a point of honour to be in opposition. It was a mode of shining and acquiring popularity; a fashion which the young seized with avidity. The words Liberty and Representative Government were continually in the mouths of those who were, ere long, to ascribe to them all their misfortunes.

"The partition of Poland revealed to the French the political degradation of their country. The great and beautiful kingdom of France resembled a planet under eclipse: its light seemed extinguished. The French honour felt itself profoundly mortified. In the midst of that degradation, and from its very effects, political combinations entered more and more into every thought. The activity of mind, which no longer could find employment in the glory of the country, took a direction towards industry and the sciences. The middle class, rich and instructed, obtained an influence which formerly had been monopolised by the *noblesse*, and aspired to the destruction of privileges which it did not enjoy. Beneath both, the working classes, steeped in misery, crushed under the weight of taxes, reserved to the innovators the most formidable support.

"Thus the movement, arising from many different causes,

extended more and more. The philosophers, by incessantly depreciating the nation in their writings, had succeeded in rendering the nation ashamed of itself. All parties in the nation seemed to unite in deeming it necessary to destroy the ancient social order. It was manifest that important changes would take place at no distant period, though the exact time of their approach could not be fixed with certainty. It was at the approach of that tempest which was destined to shake the state to its foundations, that the pride of philosophy sought to exalt itself by attacking heaven. By it the curb of conscience was broken, and the great name of God, which might have imposed a restraint on the violence of the passions which the Revolution called forth, was effaced. By this means, to the legitimate conquest of liberty will ere long succeed a mortal strife of vanities, in which those of the majority, having proved victorious, will stain themselves without mercy with the blood of the vanquished. Other people will, in future times, undergo changes similar to ours; but they will eschew the same violence, because the influence of religion will not be extinct among them. Posterity, that equitable judge of the past, imputes to philosophy that it perverted the minds of the people while it pretended to enlighten them, and turned aside from its proper end a revolution commenced with the design of ameliorating the lot of the human race.

"Louis XV. left royalty tarnished in France. At his death the people rejoiced,—the enlightened classes congratulated themselves. The vices of the sovereign had opened in every heart

an incurable wound. Neither the virtues of Louis XVI., nor the glory acquired during the American war; nor the sight of France restored to its rank among the nations; nor the love of the King for his subjects; nor the liberal institutions which he bestowed on them, could heal that fatal wound. The stains of the crown could be washed out only by the blood of the just ascending to Heaven by the steps of the scaffold."[4]—(Vol. ii. pp. 531, 533.)

After these quotations, it is needless to say what the merits of M. De Tocqueville's work are. He possesses the abstract thought, the philosophic temperament, the reflecting mind, which enable him to follow, with a correct and discerning eye, the *general* course of events. He does not attach himself to individual men, —he is no hero-worshipper. His narrative has not the interest of biography, or of histories framed on its model. It has not the dramatic air of Thierry, the genius of Chateaubriand, or the pictorial powers of Michelet. It is, on that account, not likely to be so generally popular as the works of any of these eminent writers. It resembles more nearly the admirable "Sketches of the Progress of Society," to be found in the works of Guizot and Sismondi. As such, it possesses very high merit, and will doubtless take its place among the standard works of French history. Perhaps his work is more worthy of study, and more likely to be esteemed by thinking men in other countries than his own: for France has gone through the convulsions consequent on the social and moral

[4] Alluding to the sublime words of the Father Edgeworth to Louis XVI., at the foot of the scaffold:—"Fils de St Louis, montez au ciel!"

evils which he has so well portrayed; but other nations are only in their commencement. What to the one is history, to the other, if not averted, may be prophecy.

LETTERS ON THE TRUTHS CONTAINED IN POPULAR SUPERSTITIONS

IV.—REAL GHOSTS, AND SECOND-SIGHT

Dear Archy,—You will not expect, after my last letter, that under the title of real ghosts, I am going to introduce to your acquaintance a set of personages resembling Madame Tussaud's wax-work, done in air—filmy gentlemen, in spectral blue coats, gray trousers, Wellingtons; and semi-transparent ladies clad from the looms of the other world. No, Nicolai's case, has extinguished that delusion. The visitant and his dress are figments of the imagination *always*. They are as unreal and subjective as the figures we see in our dreams. They are fancy's progeny, having under pressing circumstances acting rank, as realities. But, Archy, do dreams never come true? Let them plead their own cause. Enter Dream.

A Scottish gentleman and his wife were travelling four or five years ago in Switzerland. There travelled with them a third party, an intimate friend, a lady, who some time before had been

the object of a deep attachment on the part of a foreigner, a Frenchman. Well, she would have nothing to say to him, but she gave him a good deal of serious advice, which I conclude she thought he wanted, and ultimately promoted, or was a cognisant party to his marriage with a lady, whom she likewise knew. The so-married couple were now in America. And the lady, my friend's fellow-traveller, occasionally heard from them, and had every reason to believe they were both in perfect health. One morning on their meeting at breakfast she told her companions, that she had had a very impressive dream the night before, which had recurred twice. The scene was a room in which lay a coffin, near which stood her ex-lover, in a luminous transfigured resplendent state; his wife was by, looking much as usual. The dream had caused the lady some misgivings; but her companions exhorted her to view it as a trick of her fancy, and she was half persuaded so to do. The dream, however, was right notwithstanding. In process of time, letters arrived announcing the death after a short illness of the French gentleman, within the twenty-four hours in which the vision appeared. Exit Dream, with applause.

I adduce this individual instance, simply because it is the last I have heard, out of many that have come before me equally well attested. I should have observed, that my informant was the fellow-traveller himself: he told me the story in presence of his wife, who religiously attested its accuracy. You will meet with similar stories, implicitly believed, in every society you go into,

varying in their circumstances—a ghost being sometimes put in the place of a dream, and sometimes a vague but strong mental impression, a foreboding only. But the common point exists in all, that all intimation of the death of an absent acquaintance has been in one or another way insinuated into the mind of his friend about the time the event really took place. Instances of this kind, it will be found, are far too numerous to permit one off-hand to conclude that they have arisen from accident; that the connexion between the event and its anticipation and foreshadowing has been merely coincidence.

If you ask me how I would otherwise explain these stories, I will frankly avow, that it appears to me neither impossible, nor absurdly improbable, that the soul, or the nervous system, as you like, of the dying man, should have put itself into direct communication with the thoughts of his absent friend.

Ah, ah! the last touch of the vampyr theory again! You were then very modest about your hobby, and pretended not to know him, and passed him off as my beast, and now you daringly mount him yourself, and expect to be allowed to pace him before us, in that easy and confident style, as if he were some well-known roadster of Stewart's, or Ferriar's, or Hibbert's, or Abercromby's. Now shall we shortly see you thrown, or run away with, or led by some will-o'-the-wisp into a bottomless slough.

Well, that at all events will amuse you.

But in the mean time did you ever hear of the Wynyard ghost? A late General Wynyard and the late Sir John Colebrook,

when young men, were serving in Canada. One day—it was daylight—Mr Wynyard and Mr Colebrook both saw a figure pass through the room in which they were sitting, which Mr Wynyard recognised as a brother then far away. One of them walked to the door, and looked out upon the landing-place; but the stranger was not there, and a servant, who was on the stairs, had seen nobody pass out. In time the news arrived, that Mr Wynyard's brother had died about the time of the visit of the apparition. Of this story, which I had heard narrated, I inquired the truth of two military men, each a General Wynyard, near relations of the ghost-seer of that name. They told me it was so narrated *by him*, certainly, and that it had the implicit belief of the family.

Another similar, double-barreled ghost story I recently had narrated to me, and was assured it rested on evidence equally good. I have heard of several others being in existence.

Now, if these stories be true, to suppose the events mere coincidences, or rather to believe them to be so, would be an immense stretch of credulity. The chances would be millions to one against two persons, neither of whom, before or after, experienced sensorial illusions, becoming the subject of one, and seemingly the same illusion at the same moment—the two hallucinations coinciding in point of time with an event which they served, in the mind of one of the parties at least, to foreshadow. I prefer supposing that the event so communicated really had to do with, and was the common idea of the sensorial illusion experienced by both parties. To speak figuratively, my

dear Archy—mind, *figuratively*—I prefer to think, that the death of a human being throws a sort of gleam through the spiritual world, which may now and then touch some congenial object with sudden light, *or even two*, when they happen to be exactly in the proper position; as the twin spires of a cathedral may be momentarily illuminated by some far-off flash, while the countless roofs below lie in unbroken gloom.

Pretty well, indeed! I think I hear you say—Very easy, certainly! But, perhaps, you will be kind enough to give us a trifle more grounds for admitting your hypothesis than you have yet vouchsafed. Likewise a little explanation of what you exactly mean might be of use, if you seriously hope to reconcile us to this most prodigious prance.

I shall be happy to give you every reasonable satisfaction. Then, in the first place, I propose to establish beyond the possibility of doubt or question, and at once, that the mind of a living human being, in his ordinary state, may enter into communication with the mind of another human being, likewise in his every-day state, through some other channel than that of the senses, in their understood and ordinary operation, and as it would seem, *immediately and directly*; so that it becomes *at once* intimately acquainted with all the former affections, feelings, volitions, history of the second mind.

Heinrich Zschokke, I need hardly say, is one of the most eminent literary men now living in Europe; one, too, whose life has not been exclusively occupied with the cultivation of

letters, but who, having been early engaged in public and official employments in Switzerland, the country of his adoption, has been practically tried and proved in sight of the world, in which he has always borne a high and unblemished character; one, finally, whose writings and whose life have happily concurred in winning for him general respect, esteem, and confidence. Then, in a sort of autobiography which Zschokke published a few years back, (*Selbstschau*, it is entitled—Self-retrospect,) there occurs the following passage, which I translate and give at length, from its marvellous interest, from its unquestioned fidelity, from the complete and irresistible evidence it affords that the phenomenon, enunciated in the last paragraph, occasionally turns up in men's experience.

"If the reception of so many visitors was occasionally troublesome, it repaid itself occasionally, either by making me acquainted with remarkable personages, or by bringing out a wonderful sort of seer-gift, which I called my inward vision, and which has always remained an enigma to me. I am almost afraid to say a word upon this subject, not for fear of the imputation of being superstitious, but lest I should encourage that disposition in others; and yet it forms a contribution to psychology. So to confess.

"It is acknowledged that the judgment which we form of strangers upon first seeing them, is frequently more correct than that which we adopt upon a longer acquaintance with them. The first impression, which, through an instinct of the soul,

attracts one towards, or repels one from another, becomes after a time more dim, and is weakened, either through his appearing other than at first, or through our being accustomed to him. People speak, too, in reference to such cases, of involuntary sympathies and aversions, and attach a special certainty to such manifestations in children, in whom knowledge of mankind by experience is wanting. Others again are incredulous, and attribute all to physiognomical skill. But of myself.

"It has happened to me occasionally, at the first meeting with a total stranger, when I have been listening in silence to his conversation, that his past life up to the present moment, with many minute circumstances, belonging to one or other particular scene in it, has come across me like a dream, but distinctly, entirely involuntarily and unsought, occupying in duration a few minutes. During this period, I am usually so completely plunged into the representation of the stranger's life, that at last I neither continue to see distinctly his face, on which I was idly speculating, nor hear intelligently his voice, which at first I was using as a commentary on the test of his physiognomy. For a long time, I was disposed to consider those fleeting visions as a trick of the fancy; the more so that my dream-vision displayed to me the dress and movements of the actors, the appearance of the room, the furniture and other accidents of the scene. Till on one occasion, in a gamesome mood, I narrated to my family the secret history of a sempstress, who had just before quitted the room. I had never seen the person before. Nevertheless, the hearers

were astonished, and laughed, and would not be persuaded but that I had a previous acquaintance with the former life of the person, in as much as what I had stated was perfectly true. I was not less astonished to find that my dream-vision agreed with reality. I then gave more attention to the subject, and as often as propriety allowed of it, I related to those whose lives had so passed before me, the substance of my dream-vision, to obtain from them its contradiction or confirmation. On every occasion its confirmation followed, not without amazement on the part of those who gave it.

"Least of all could I myself give faith to these conjuring tricks of my mind. Every time that I described to any one my dream-vision respecting him, I confidently expected him to answer, it was not so. A secret thrill always came over me, when the listener replied, "It happened as you say," or when, before he spoke, his astonishment betrayed that I was not wrong. Instead of recording many instances, I will give one, which at the time made a strong impression upon me:—

"On a market-day, (fair-day,) I went into the town of Waldshut, accompanied by two young foresters who are still alive. It was evening, and, tired with our walk, we went into an inn called the Rebstock. We took our supper with a numerous company at the public table, when it happened that they made themselves merry over the peculiarities and simplicity of the Swiss; in common with the belief in mesmerism, Lavater's physiognomical system, and the like. One of my companions,

whose national pride was touched by their raillery, begged me to make some reply, particularly in answer to a young man of superior appearance, who sat opposite, and had indulged in unrestrained ridicule. It happened that the events of this very person's life had just previously passed before my mind. I turned to him with the question, whether he would reply to me with truth and candour, if I narrated to him the most secret passages of his history, he being as little known to me as I to him. That would, I suggested, go something beyond Lavater's physiognomical skill. He promised, if I told the truth, to admit it openly. Then I narrated the events which my dream-vision had furnished me with, and the table learned the history of the young tradesman's life, of his school years, his peccadilloes, and finally of a little act of roguery committed by him on the strong-box of his employer. I described the uninhabited room, with its white walls, where, to the right of the brown door, there had stood upon the table the small black money-chest, &c. A dead silence reigned in the company during this recital, which I broke in upon, only by occasionally asking whether I spoke the truth. The man, much struck, admitted the correctness of each circumstance—even, which I could not expect, of the last. Touched with his frankness, I reached my hand to him across the table, and closed my narrative. He asked my name, which I gave him. We sat up late in the night conversing. He may be alive yet.

"Now, I can well imagine how a lively imagination could picture, romance fashion, from the obvious character of a person,

how he would act under given circumstances. But whence came to me the involuntary knowledge of accessory details, which were without any sort of interest, and respected people who for the most part were perfectly indifferent to me, with whom I neither had, nor wished to have, the slightest association? Or was it in each case mere coincidence? Or had the listener, to whom I described his history, each time other images in his mind than the accessory ones of my story, but, in surprise at the essential resemblance of my story to the truth, lost sight of the points of difference? Yet I have, in consideration of this possible source of error, several times taken pains to describe the most trivial circumstances that the dream-vision has shown me.

"Not another word about this strange seer-gift—which I can aver was of no use to me in a single instance, which manifested itself occasionally only, and quite independently of my volition, and often in relation to persons in whose history I took not the slightest interest. Nor am I the only one in possession of this faculty. In a journey with two of my sons, I fell in with an old Tyrolese, who travelled about selling lemons and oranges, at the inn at Unterhauenstein in one of the Jura passes. He fixed his eyes for some time upon me, joined in our conversation, observed that though I did not know him, he knew me, and began to describe my acts and deeds to the no little amusement of the peasants, and astonishment of my children, whom it interested to learn that another possessed the same gift as their father. How the old lemon merchant acquired his knowledge, he was not able

to explain to himself, or to me. But he seemed to attach great importance to his hidden wisdom."

It appears to me, my dear Archy, that the remarkable statement which I have thus put before you, completely establishes that, in reference to the past, the mind occasionally receives knowledge through other than the known and ordinary channels; and that the simplest and most natural interpretation of the facts narrated, is to suppose that, under special circumstances, one mind can put itself into direct communication with another.

And I think that these considerations give a front and plausibility to the hypothesis, that, in some cases of dreams and sensorial illusions, which have turned out true and significant intimations of the death of absent persons, there may have been at the bottom of them a relation established between the minds or nervous systems of the distant parties.

I will now go a step further, and throw out the conjecture, that the mind may occasionally assert the power of penetrating into futurity, not through a shrewd calculation of what is likely to come to pass, but by putting itself in relation with some other source of knowledge.

For I think it cannot be doubted that there is something in the superstition of second-sight, which formerly prevailed so extensively in Scotland, in the northern islands, and Denmark. Every one has heard and read of this pretended gift. I have no evidence, I must confess, to offer of its reality beyond that

which is accessible to every one. But I have heard several instances told, which, if the testimony of sensible people may be taken in such marvellous matters as readily as on other subjects, evinced *foreknowledge*. The thing foretold has generally been death or personal misfortune. Sometimes the subject has been more trivial. A much-respected Scottish lady, not unknown in literature, told me very recently how a friend of her mother's, whom she well remembered, had been compelled to believe in second-sight, through its manifestation in one of her servants. She had a cook, who was a continual annoyance to her through her possession of this gift. On one occasion, when the lady expected some friends, she learned, a short time before they were to arrive, that the culinary preparations which she had ordered in their honour had not been made. Upon her remonstrating with the offending cook, the latter simply but doggedly assured her that come they would not, that she knew it of a certainty; and true enough they did not come. Some accident had occurred to prevent their visit. The same person frequently knew beforehand what her mistress's plans would be, and was as inconvenient in her kitchen as a calculating prodigy in a counting-house. Things went perfectly right, but the manner was vexatious and irregular; so her mistress sent her away. This anecdote would appear less puerile to you, if I might venture to name the lady who told it to me, and who believed it. But, as I said before, I do not build, in this branch of the question, upon any special evidence that I have to adduce. I rely upon the mass of good, bad, and indifferent

proof there is already before the world, of the reality of second-sight. I have, of course, not the least doubt that more than half of those who have laid claim to the faculty, were not possessed of it. I have further no doubt that those who occasionally really manifested it, often deceived themselves, and confounded casual impressions with real intimations; and that they were nuisances to themselves and to their friends, through being constantly on the look-out for, and conveying warnings and forebodings; and that the power which they possessed, was probably never useful in a single instance, either to themselves or others—those only having gained by the superstition, who were mere rogues and impostors, and turned their pretended gift to purposes of deception.

I shall now proceed to inquire how far it is conceivable that the mind or soul, its usual channels of communication with external objects, the senses namely, being suspended and unemployed, may enter into direct relation with other minds.

There is a school of physiological materialists, who hold that the mind is but the brain in action; in other words, that it is the office of the brain to produce thought and feeling. I must begin by combating this error.

What is meant by one substance producing another? A metal is produced from an ore; alcohol is produced from saccharine matter; the bones and sinews of an animal are produced from its food. Production, in the only intelligible sense of the word, means the conversion of one substance into another, weight for weight, agreeably with, or under mechanical, chemical, and vital

laws. But to suppose that in order to produce consciousness, the brain is converted, weight for weight, into thought and feeling, is absurd.

But what, then, is the true relation between consciousness and the living brain, in connexion with which it is manifested?

To elucidate the question, let us consider the parallel relation of other imponderable forces to matter. Take, for instance, electricity. A galvanic battery is set in action. Chemical decomposition is in progress; one or more new compounds are produced; the quantitative differences are exactly accounted for. But there is something further to be observed. The chemical action has disturbed the omnipresent force of electricity, and a vigorous electric current is in motion.

The principle of consciousness is another imponderable force which pervades the universe. The brain and nerves are framed of such materials and in such arrangements, that the chemical changes constantly in progress under the control of life, determine in them currents of thought and feeling.

We must be satisfied with having got thus far by help of the analogy, nor try to push it further; for beyond the fact of both being imponderable forces, electricity and consciousness have nothing in common. They are otherwise violently unlike; or resemble each other as little as a tooth-pick and a headach. Their further relations to the material arrangements through which they may be excited or disturbed, are subjects of separate and dissimilar studies, and resolvable into laws which have no

affinity, and admit of no comparison.

But upon the step which we have gained, it stands to reason, that the individual consciousness or mind, habitually energizing in and through a given living brain, may, for any thing we know to the contrary, and very conceivably, be drawn, under circumstances favourable to the event, into direct communication with consciousness, individualised or diffused elsewhere.

Accordingly, there is no intrinsic absurdity in supposing that Zschokke's mind was occasionally thrown into direct relation with that of a chance visitor through favourable influences; that the soul of Arnod Paole, as he lay in his grave alive, in the so-called vampyr-state, may have drawn into communion the minds of other persons, who were thereupon the subjects of sensorial illusions of which he was the theme;—that the mind of Joan of Arc may by possibility have been placed in relation with a higher mind, which foreknew her destiny, and in a parallel manner displayed it to her.

Individual facts may be disputed or attributed to more coincidence, but as soon as their number and singularity and authentication take them out of that category, the explanation offered above cannot be put aside as *prima facie* absurd. Like other first hypotheses, indeed, it will, if received for a time, have ultimately to make way for a correcter notion. Still it will have helped to lead to truth. I am quite indifferent to its fate. But I am not indifferent to the reception the facts themselves may meet with, which I have adduced it to explain. It is true that nothing

can be more trivial and useless than the character in which they present themselves. Disconnected objectless outbreaks, they seem, of some obscure power, they may be compared to the attraction of light bodies by amber after friction, and are as yet as unmeaning and valueless as were the first indications of the electric force. Therefore, doubtless, are they so commonly disregarded.

It is not indeed unlikely that, on looking closer, a number of other incidents, turning up on trifling or important occasions, may be found to depend on the same cause with those we have been considering—things that seem for a moment odd and unaccountable, something more than coincidences, and are then forgotten. The simultaneous suggestions of the same idea to two persons in conversation, the spread of panic-fears, sympathy in general, the attraction or repulsion felt on first acquaintance, the intuitive knowledge of mankind which some possess, the universal fascination exercised by others, may be found, perhaps, in part to hinge on the same principle with Zschokke's seer-gift.

Among the odd incidents which this train of reflection brings to my mind, (which you are at liberty to explain in the way you like best,) I am tempted to select and mention two that were communicated to me by Admiral the Honourable G. Dundas, then a Lord of the Admiralty, and in constant communication with his colleague, Sir Thomas Hardy, from whom he received them. They were mentioned as anecdotes of Lord Nelson, to show his instinctive judgment of men. They both go further.

When Lord Nelson was preparing to follow the French fleet to the West Indies, Captain Hardy was present as he gave directions to the commander of a frigate to make sail with all speed,—to proceed to certain points, where he was likely to see the French, —having seen the French, to go to a certain harbour, and there wait Lord Nelson's coming. After the commander had left the cabin, Nelson said to Hardy, "He will go to the West Indies, he will see the French, he will go to the harbour I have directed, but he will not wait for me. He will return to England." He did so. Shortly before the battle of Trafalgar, an English frigate was in advance of the fleet looking out for the enemy; her place in the offing was hardly discernible. Captain Hardy was with Nelson on the quarter-deck of the Victory. Without any thing to lead to it, Nelson said, "The Celeste" (or whatever the frigate's name may have been)—"the Celeste sees the French." Hardy had nothing to say on the matter. "She sees the French; she'll fire a gun." Within a little, the boom of the gun was heard.

Socrates, it is well known, had singular intimations, which he attributed to a familiar or demon. One day being with the army, he tried to persuade an officer, who was going across the country, to take a different route to that which he intended; "If you take that," he said, "you will be met and slain." The officer, neglecting his advice, was killed, as Socrates had forewarned him.

Timarchus, who was curious on the subject of the demon of Socrates, went to the cave of Trophonius, to learn of the oracle about it. There, having for a short time inhaled the mephitic

vapour, he felt as if he had received a sudden blow on the head, and sank down insensible. Then his head appeared to him to open and to give issue to his soul into the other world; and an imaginary being seemed to inform him that, "the part of the soul engaged in the body, entrammelled in its organisation, is the soul is ordinarily understood; but that there is another part or province of the soul, which is the demon. This has a certain control over the bodily soul, and among other offices constitutes conscience. In three months," the vision added, "you will know more of this." At the end of three months Timarchus died.

Again adieu. Yours, &c.,
Mac Davus.

V.—TRANCE AND SLEEPWALKING

Dear Archy.—The subjects which remain to complete our brief correspondence, are Religious Delusions, the Possessed, and Witchcraft.

In order that I may set these fully and distinctly before you, it is necessary that you should know what is meant by Trance.

You have already had partial glimpses of this comprehensive phenomenon. Arnod Paole was in a trance, in his grave in the church-yard of Meduegua: Timarchus was in a trance in the cave of Trophonius.

But we must go still further back. To conceive properly the nature of trance, it is necessary to form clear ideas of the state of the mind in ordinary sleeping and waking.

During our ordinary waking state, we are conscious of an uninterrupted flow of thought, which we may observe to be modified by three influences—the first, suggestions of our experience and reflections, impulses of our natural and acquired character; the second, present impressions on our senses; the third, voluntary exertion of the attention to detain one class of ideas in preference to others.

Further, we habitually perceive things around us, by or through sensation. But on some, and for the most part trivial occasions, we seem endowed with another sort of perception, which is either direct, or dependent on new modes of sensation.

Again, the balance of the mental machinery may be overthrown. The suggestions of the imagination may become sensorial illusions; the judgment may be the subject of parallel hallucinations; the feelings may be perverted; our ideas may lose connexion and coherence; and intelligence may sink into fatuity.

So much for our waking state.

During sleep, there are no adequate reasons for doubting that the flow of our ideas continues as uninterrupted as in a waking state. It is true, that some persons assert that they never dream; and others that they dream occasionally only. But there is a third class, to which I myself belong, who continually dream, and who always, on waking, distinctly discern the fugitive rearguard of their last sleep thoughts. The simplest view of these diversified instances, is to suppose that all persons in sleep are always dreaming, and that the spaces seemingly vacant of dreams, are only gaps in the memory; that all persons asleep always dream, but that all persons do not always remember their dreams.

The suggestive influences that modify the current of ideas in sleep, are not so numerous as those in operation in our waking state.

The principal, indeed in general the exclusive, impulse to our dreaming thoughts, is our past experience and existing character, from and in obedience to which, imagination moulds our dreams.

Not that sensation is suspended in sleep. On the contrary, it appears to have its usual acuteness; and impressions made upon our senses—the feelings produced by an uneasy posture, for

instance, or the introduction of sudden light into the room, or a loud and unusual noise, or even whisperings in the ear—will give a new and corresponding direction to the dreaming thoughts. Sensation is only commonly not called into play in sleep: we shut our eyes; we even close the pupils; we cover up our ears; court darkness and quiet; knowing that the more we exclude sensible impressions the better we shall sleep.

But the great difference between sleeping and waking, that which indeed constitutes the essence of the former state, psychically considered, is the suspension of the attention—all the leading phenomena of sleep are directly traceable to this cause: for example—

In sleep we cease to support ourselves, and fall, if we were previously standing or sitting. That is, we cease to attend to the maintenance of our equilibrium. We forget the majority of our dreams: attention is the soul of recollection.

Our dreams are often nonsense, or involve absurdities or ideas which we know to be false. The check of the attention is absent.

Our ideas whirl with unwonted rapidity in our dreams; the fly-wheel of the attention has been taken off.

When we are being overcome with sleep, we are conscious of not being able to fix our attention.

When we would encourage sleep, we endeavour to avoid thoughts which would arouse the attention.

Though the sensibility of our organs is really undiminished, *it seems to be lowered* in sleep, because then no attention is given

to common sensation.

Sleep, however, it should be added, may be either profound, or light, or imperfect; in the two latter cases, the attention seems to be less completely suspended.

So, in sleep, it is the attention alone that really sleeps; the rest of the mental powers and impulses are on the contrary in motion, but free and unchecked, obtaining their refreshment and renovation from gambolling about and stretching themselves. The inspector only slumbers; or, to use a closer figure, he retires to a sufficient distance from them, not to be disturbed by any common noise they may make; any great disturbance calls him back directly; likewise, he sits with his watch in his hand, having a turn for noting the flight of time.

In contrast with the above conception of the states of sleeping and waking, the alternations of which compose our ordinary being, I have now to hold up another conception, resembling the first, of which it is the double,—but vaguer, more shadowy, of larger and gigantic proportions, from its novelty astonishing, like the mocking spectre of the Hartz; which is yet but your own shadow cast by the level sunbeams on the morning mist.

All the phenomena embodied in this conception, I propose to denominate Trance. But let me premise that all do not belong to every instance of trance. If I undertook to specify the external appearances of the human species, I must enunciate among other things, as colours of the skin, white, yellow, brown, black; as qualities of the hair, that it is flowing, soft, lanky, harsh, frizzled,

woolly; but I should not mean that every human being presented all these features.

Then, as our ordinary being presents an alternation of sleeping and waking, so does trance-existence. There is a trance-sleep and a trance-waking to correspond with ordinary sleep and ordinary waking.

As natural sleep has different degrees of profoundness, so has trance sleep. They present a latitude so extensive, that it is convenient and allowable to lay down three different degrees or states of trance-sleep.

Then, of trance-sleep first, and of its three degrees.

The deepest grade of trance-sleep extinguishes all the ordinary signs of animation. It forms the condition in which many are buried alive. It is the so-called vampyr state in the vampyr superstition. [See Letter II. of this series.]

The middle grade presents the appearance of profound unconsciousness; but a gentle breathing and the circulation are distinguishable. The body is flexible, relaxed, perfectly impassive to ordinary stimuli. The pupils of the eyes are not contracted, but yet are fixed. This state is witnessed occasionally in hysteria, after violent fits of hysteric excitement.

In the lightest degree of trance-sleep, the person can sustain itself sitting; the pupils are in the same state as above, or natural; the apparent unconsciousness profound.

Two features characterise trance-sleep in all its grades. One, an insensibility to all common stimulants, however violently

applied; the other, an inward flow of ideas, a dream or vision. It is as well to provide all words with a precise meaning. The term vision had better be restricted to mean a dream during trance-sleep.

The behaviour of Grando, who had been buried in the vampyr state, when they were clumsily cutting his head off, makes no exception to the first of the above positions. He had then just emerged out of his trance-sleep, either through the lapse of time, or from the admission of fresh air, or what not.

It will not be doubted that the mind may have visions in all the grades of trance-sleep, if it can be proved capable of them in the deepest; therefore, one example will suffice for all three cases.

Henry Engelbrecht, as we learn in a pamphlet published by himself in the year 1639, after a most ascetic life, during which he had experienced sensorial illusions, was thrown for a brief period into the deepest form of trance-sleep, which event he thus describes:—

In the year 1623, exhausted by intense mental excitement of a religious kind, and by abstinence from food, after hearing a sermon which strongly affected him, he felt as if he could combat no more, so he gave in and took to his bed. There he lay a week without tasting any thing but the bread and wine of the sacrament. On the eighth day, he thought he fell into the death-struggle; death seemed to invade him from below upwards; his body became rigid; his hands and feet insensible; his tongue and lips incapable of motion: gradually his sight failed him,

but he still heard the laments and consultations of those around him. This gradual demise lasted from mid-day till eleven at night, when he heard the watchmen; then he lost consciousness of outward impressions. But an elaborate vision of immense detail began; the theme of which was, that he was first carried down to hell, and looked into the place of torment; from thence, quicker than an arrow, was he borne to paradise. In these abodes of suffering and happiness, he saw and heard and smelt things unspeakable. These scenes, though long in apprehension, were short in time, for he came enough to himself by twelve o'clock, again to hear the watchmen. It took him another twelve hours to come round entirely. His hearing was first restored; then his sight, feeling, and motion followed; as soon as he could move his limbs, he rose. He felt himself stronger than before the trance.

Trance-waking presents a great variety of phases; but it is sufficient for a general outline of the subject to make or specify but two grades—half-waking and full-waking.

In trance half-waking, the person rises, moves about with facility, will converse even, but is almost wholly occupied with a dream, which he may be said to act, and his perceptions and apprehensions are with difficulty drawn to any thing out of the circle of that dream.

In trance full-waking, the person is completely alive to all or most of the things passing around him, and would not be known by a stranger to be otherwise than ordinarily awake.

I propose to occupy the latter half of this letter with details of

cases exemplifying these two states. Those which I shall select, will be instances either of somnambulism, double consciousness, or catalepsy, the popular phenomena of which I take this occasion of displaying. By these details the following features will be proved to belong to trance-waking.

1. Common feeling, taste, and smell, are generally suspended in trance-waking. In trance half-waking, sight is equally suspended. In trance full-waking, every shade of modified sensibility up to perfect possession of sensation, presents itself in different cases, and sometimes in successive periods of the same cases.

2. The general diminution or suspension of sensation is, as it were, made up for, either by an intense acuteness of partial sensation, often developed in an unaccustomed organ, or by some new mode of perception.

3. The memory and circle of ideas are curiously circumscribed.

4. To make up for this, some of the powers of the mind acquire concentration and temporary increase of force, and occasionally new powers of apprehension appear to be developed.

5. Spasms of the muscles, generally tonic or maintained spasms, but sometimes, having the character of convulsive struggles, are occasionally manifested in trance. And they may bear either of two relations to it. They may occur simultaneously with trance-waking or alternately with it, and occupying the patient's frame in the intervals of trance.

In the ordinary course of things, trance-sleep precedes trance-waking, and follows it. So that some have described trance-waking as waking in trance. Trance-sleep may come on during ordinary sleep, or during ordinary waking. By use the introductory and terminal states of trance-sleep become abridged; and sometimes, if either exist, it is so brief, that the transition to and from trance-waking out of and into ordinary waking, *appears* immediate.

Now to illustrate the phenomena of trance half-waking, by describing somnambulism.

A curious fate somnambulism has had. When other forms of trance have been exalted into mystical phenomena and figure in history, somnambulism has had no superstitious altars raised to her—has had no fear-worship—has at the highest been promoted to figure in an opera. Of a quiet and homely nature, she has moved about the house, not like a visiting demon, but as a maid of all work. To the public, the phenomenon has presented no more interest than a soap-bubble or the fall of an apple.

Somnambulism is a form of half-waking trance which usually comes on during the night, and in ordinary sleep. When it occurs in the daytime, the attack of trance is still ordinarily preceded by a short period of common sleep.

The somnambulist then, half waking in trance, is disposed to rise and move about. Sometimes his object seems a mere excursion, and then it is remarked that he shows a disposition to ascend heights. So he climbs, perhaps, to the roof of the

house, and makes his way along it with agility and certainty: sometimes he is observed, where the tiles are loose, to try if they are secure before he advances. Generally these feats are performed in safety. But occasionally, a somnambulist has missed his footing, fallen, and perished. His greatest danger is from ill-judged attempts to wake and warn him of his perilous situation. Luckily, it is not easy to wake him. He then returns, goes to bed, sleeps, and the next morning has no recollection of what he has done. In other cases, the somnambulist, on rising from his bed, betakes himself to his customary occupations, either to some handiwork, or to composition, or what not.

These three points are easily verifiable respecting his condition. He is in a dream, which he, as it were, acts after his thoughts; occasionally he remembers on the following day some of the incidents of the night before, as part of a dream.

But his common sensibility to ordinary impressions is suspended: he does not feel; his eyes are either shut, or open and fixed; he does not see; he does not observe light, and works as well with as without it; he has not taste or smell: the loudest noise makes no impression on him.

In the mean time, to accomplish the feats he performs, the most accurate *perception* of sensible objects is required. Of what nature is that of which he so marvellously evinces the possession? You may adopt the simple hypothesis,—that the mind, being disengaged from its ordinary relations to the senses, does without them, and perceives things directly. Or

you may suppose, if you prefer it, that the mind still employs sensation, using only impressions that in ordinary waking are not consciously attended to, for its more wonderful feats; and otherwise common sensation, which, however generally suspended, may be awakened by the dreaming attention to its objects.

The following case of somnambulism, in which the seizure supervened, in a girl affected with St Vitus's dance, and combined itself with that disorder, is given by Lord Monboddo: —

The patient, about sixteen years of age, used to be commonly taken in the morning a few hours after rising. The approach of the seizure was announced by a sense of weight in the head, a drowsiness which quickly terminated in sleep, in which her eyes were fast shut. She described a feeling beginning in the feet, creeping like a gradual chill higher and higher, till it reached the heart, when consciousness or recollection left her. Being in this state, she sprang from her seat about the room, over tables and chairs, with the astonishing agility belonging to St Vitus's dance. Then, if she succeeded in getting out of the house, she ran at a pace with which her elder brother could hardly keep up, to a particular spot in the neighbourhood, taking the directest but the roughest path. If she could not manage otherwise, she got over the garden-wall with surprising rapidity and precision of movement. Her eyes were all the time fast closed. The impulse to visit this spot she was often conscious of during the approach

of the paroxysm, and, afterwards, she sometimes thought she had dreamed of going thither. Towards the termination of her indisposition, she dreamed that the water of a neighbouring spring would do her good, and she drank much of it. One time they tried to cheat her by giving her water from another spring, but she immediately detected the difference. Towards the end, she foretold that she would have three paroxysms more, and then be well—and so it proved.

The following case is from a communication by M. Pigatti, published in the July Number of the *Journal Encyclopédique* of the year 1762. The subject was a servant of the name of Negretti, in the household of the Marquis Sale.

In the evening, Negretti would seat himself in a chair in the anteroom, when he commonly fell asleep, and would sleep quietly for a quarter of an hour. He then righted himself in his chair, so as to sit up. [This was the moment of transition from ordinary sleep into trance.] Then he sat some time without motion, as if he saw something. Then he rose and walked about the room. On one occasion, he drew out his snuff-box and would have taken a pinch, but there was little in it; whereupon he walked up to an empty chair, and addressing by name a cavalier whom he supposed to be sitting in it, asked him for a pinch. One of those who were watching the scene, here held towards him an open box, from which he took snuff. Afterwards he fell into the posture of a person who listens; he seemed to think that he heard an order, and thereupon hastened with a wax-candle

in his hand, to a spot where a light usually stood. As soon as he imagined that he had lit the candle, he walked with it in the proper manner, through the *salle*, down the steps, turning and waiting from time to time, as if he had been lighting some one down. Arrived at the door, he placed himself sideways, so as to let the imaginary persons pass, and he bowed as he let them out. He then extinguished the light, returned up the stairs, and sat himself down again in his place, to play the same farce over again once or twice the same evening. When in this condition, he would lay the tablecloth, place the chairs, which he sometimes brought from a distant room, and opening and shutting the doors as he went, with exactness; would take decanters from the *beauffet*, fill them with water at the spring, put them on a waiter, and so on. All the objects *that were concerned in these operations*, he distinguished where they were before him with the same precision and certainty as if he had been in the full use of his senses. Otherwise he seemed to observe nothing—so, on one occasion, in passing a table, he upset a waiter with two decanters upon it, which fell and broke, without exciting his attention. The dominant idea had entire possession of him. He would prepare a salad with correctness, and sit down and eat it. Then, if they changed it, the trick passed without his notice. In this manner he would go on eating cabbage, or even pieces of cake, seemingly without observing the difference. The taste he enjoyed was imaginary; the sense was shut. On another occasion, when he asked for wine, they gave him water, which he drank for wine,

and remarked that his stomach felt the better for it. On a fellow-servant touching his legs with a stick, the idea arose in his mind that it was a dog, and he scolded to drive it away; but the servant continuing his game, Negretti took a whip to beat the dog. The servant drew off when Negretti began whistling and coaxing to get the dog near him; so they threw a muff against his legs, which he belaboured soundly.

M. Pigatti watched these proceedings with great attention, and convinced himself by many trials that Negretti did not use his senses. The suspension of taste was shown by his not distinguishing between salad and cake. He did not hear the loudest sound, when it lay out of the circle of his dreaming ideas. If a light was held close to his eyes, near enough to singe his eyebrows, he did not appear to be aware of it. He seemed to feel nothing when they inserted a feather into his nostrils. The ordinary sensibility of his organs seemed withdrawn.

Altogether, the most interesting case of somnambulism on record, is that of a young ecclesiastic, the narrative of which, from the immediate communication of an Archbishop of Bordeaux, is given under the head of somnambulism in the French Encyclopædia.

This young ecclesiastic, when the archbishop was at the same seminary, used to rise every night, and write out either sermons or pieces of music. To study his condition, the archbishop betook himself several nights consecutively to the chamber of the young man, where he made the following observations.

The young man used to rise, to take paper, and to write. Before he wrote music, he would take a stick and rule the lines with it. He wrote the notes, together with the words corresponding with them, with perfect correctness. Or, when he had written the words too wide, he altered them. The notes that were to be black, he filled in after he had written the whole. After completing a sermon, he read it aloud from beginning to end. If any passage displeased him, he erased it, and wrote the amended passage correctly over the other; on one occasion he had to substitute the word "*adorable*" for "*divin*;" but he did not omit to alter the preceding "*ce*" into "*cet*," by adding the letter "*t*" with exact precision to the word first written. To ascertain whether he used his eyes, the archbishop interposed a sheet of pasteboard between the writing and his face. He took not the least notice, but went on writing as before. The limitation of his perceptions to what he was thinking about was very curious. A bit of aniseed cake, that he had sought for, he eat approvingly; but when, on another occasion, a piece of the same cake was put in his month, he spit it out without observation. The following instance of the dependance of his perceptions upon, or rather their subordination to, his preconceived ideas is truly wonderful. It is to be observed that he always knew when his pen had ink in it. Likewise, if they adroitly changed his papers, when he was writing, he knew it, if the sheet substituted was of a different size from the former, and he appeared embarrassed in that case. But if the fresh sheet of paper, which was substituted for that written

on, was exactly of the same size with the former, he appeared not to be aware of the change. And he would continue to read off his composition from the blank sheet of paper, as fluently as when the manuscript itself lay before him; nay, more, he would continue his corrections, and introduce the amended passage, writing it upon exactly the place on the blank sheet which it would have occupied on the written page.

The form of trance which has been thus exemplified may be therefore well called half-waking, inasmuch as the performer, whatever his powers of perception may be in respect to the object he is thinking of, is nevertheless lost in dream, and blind and deaf to every thing without its scope.

The following case may serve as a suitable transition to instances of full-waking in trance. The subject of it alternated evidently between that state and half-waking. Or she, could be at once roused from the latter into the former by the conversation of her friends. The case is recorded in the Acta Vratisl. ann. 1722, Feb. class iv., art. 2.

A girl seventeen years of age was used to fall into a kind of sleep in the afternoon, in which it was supposed, from her expression of countenance and her gestures, that she was engaged in dreams which interested her. After some days, she began to speak when in this state. Then, if those present addressed remarks to her, she replied very sensibly; but then fell back into her dream-discourse, which turned principally upon religious and moral topics, and was directed to warn her friends how a

female should live, Christianly, well-governed, and so as to incur no reproach. When she sang, which often happened, she heard herself accompanied by an imaginary violin or piano, and would take up and continue the accompaniment upon an instrument herself. She sewed, did knitting, and the like. But on the other hand, she imagined on one occasion that she wrote a letter upon a napkin, which she folded with the intention of sending it to the post. Upon waking, she had not the least recollection of her dreams, or of what she had been doing. After a few months she recovered.

I come now to the exemplification of full-waking in trance, as it is very perfectly manifested in the cases which have been termed double consciousness. These are in their principle very simple; but it is not easy in a few words to convey a distinct idea of the condition of the patient. The case consists of a series of fits of trance, in which the step from ordinary waking to full trance-waking is sudden and immediate, or nearly so, and either was so originally, or through use has become so. Generally for some hours on each day, occasionally for days together, the patient continues in the state of trance; then suddenly reverts to that of ordinary waking. In the perfectest instances of double consciousness, there is nothing in the bearing or behaviour of the entranced person which would lead a stranger to suppose her (for it is an affection far commoner in young women than in boys or men) to be other than ordinarily awaked. But her friends observe that she does every thing with more spirit and better

—sings better, plays better, has more readiness, moves even more gracefully, than in her natural state. She has an innocent boldness and disregard of little conventionalisms, which imparts a peculiar charm to her behaviour. In the mean time, she has two complete existences separate and apart, which alternate but never mingle. On the day of her first fit, her life split into a double series of thoughts and recollections. She remembers in her ordinary state nothing of her trance existence. In her trances, she remembers nothing of the intervening hours of ordinary waking. Her recollections of what she had experienced or learned before the fits began is singularly capricious, differing extraordinarily in its extent in different cases. In general, the positive recollection of prior events is annulled; but her prior affections and habits either remain, and her general acquirements, or they are quickly by association rekindled or brought into the circle of her trance ideas. Generally she names all her friends anew; often her tone of voice is a little altered; sometimes she introduces with particular combinations of letters some odd inflection, which she maintains rigorously and cannot unlearn.

Keeping before him this conception, the reader will comprehend the following sketch of a case of double consciousness, communicated by Dr George Barlow. To one reading them without preparation, the details, which are very graphic and instructive, would appear mere confusion:—

"This young lady has two states of existence. During the time that the fit is on her, which varies from a few hours to three days,

she is occasionally merry and in spirits; occasionally she appears in pain and rolls about in uneasiness; but in general she seems so much herself, that a stranger entering the room would not remark any thing extraordinary; she amuses herself with reading or working, sometimes plays on the piano and better than at other times, knows every body, and converses rationally, and makes very accurate observations on what she has seen and read. The fit leaves her suddenly, and she then forgets every thing that has passed during it, and imagines that she has been asleep, and sometimes that she has dreamed of any circumstance that has made a vivid impression upon her. During one of these fits she was reading Miss Edgeworth's tales, and had in the morning been reading a part of one of them to her mother, when she went for a few minutes to the window, and suddenly exclaimed, 'Mamma, I am quite well, my headach is gone.' Returning to the table, she took up the open volume, which she had been reading five minutes before, and said, 'What book is this?' she turned over the leaves, looked at the frontispiece, and replaced it on the table. Seven or eight hours afterwards, when the fit returned, she asked for the book, went on at the very paragraph where she had left off, and remembered every circumstance of the narrative. And so it always is; as she reads one set of books during one state, and another during the other. She seems to be conscious of her state; for she said one day, 'Mamma, this is a novel, but I may safely read it; it will not hurt my morals, for, when I am well, I shall not remember a word of it.'"

Конец ознакомительного фрагмента.