

some point in science. Yet this intent activity is ruled by no purpose and has no aim. The real agents in it know nothing of it. The observers of the recent eclipse found themselves at their posts, because of no purpose, but because their bodies went there on their own account. The experimenter in the laboratory, who fancies that he is adjusting his apparatus to an ideal conception, is quite mistaken. The nerves conduct the experiment and produce the illusion, being meanwhile unconscious in both. Unless we allow something more than nerves, we must admit that they are the sure and only scientists. To the unenlightened this must appear to be an extreme supposition, and doubtless many will resent it as a caricature. No one, it will be said, could ever believe that nerves left to themselves would produce the "Principia" or the "Mécanique Céleste." This is probably true, but a good many have said things which led by a short way to the conclusion. All the tendencies of pure intellect are said to be in this direction; and to deny it is to deny the "persistence of force." To suppose it otherwise is to assume something in connection with the nerves which is not nerves, but which exercises a measure of control over them; and this is a dreadfully antiquated notion—indeed, quite paleontological. Nor let anyone think that by experiment he can determine whether his volitions count for anything in the course of physical events: for consciousness—the only witness in the case—is ruled out as incompetent. Nor would it avail to protest, for that would be set down at once as "theological rancour;" and besides, thousands of theologians have perished miserably in their gainsayings of science. As for the advanced thinker, none of these things move him. He is as indifferent to logic and absurdity as his nerves. He cares only to know that a view is "in harmony with the tendencies of advanced thought," and that is ample proof and defence. If said tendencies should change, he would change also; but it is vain to hope for change on other conditions. He cannot depart from the traditions of the elders. He cannot defile the graves of the prophets of his sect. Any absurdity rather than disloyalty and