

of the book? The science of the thing passeth my comprehension at present—I have yet to make up my mind on the subject and will require to cogitate and read upon it for some time longer, before I venture upon a judgment or an opinion.

THE DOCTOR.—Said with the caution of your country. The book is written in an easy epistolary style, a little too verbose perhaps, but then you know Gregory is an awful German scholar, and has picked up this style in his study of that language. It is the reputation which he enjoys in the scientific and literary world, which probably arouses the jealous enmity of others less gifted. It is no small praise that such a man as LIEBIG should have sent him the manuscript of one of his best works to translate for publication.

THE MAJOR.—Oh he has great talent. I could tell you some amusing anecdotes of him in years gone by. Do you think he has made out a good case for his science?

THE DOCTOR.—He puts the argument for unprejudiced investigation fairly and forcibly. He applauds his correspondent for "a rational incredulity, without any share of that irrational scepticism which is often applied to new investigations." Dwelling on the fallacy of the latter spirit, he declares that time alone can conquer it, and thus illustrates his position:—

"Time put an end to the violent opposition which was offered to the system of Copernicus, on the ground that it not only contradicted the evidence of our senses, according to which the sun revolves round the earth, but was directly contrary to the plainest declarations of Scripture. It was time which, aided by the discovery of the New World, finally established, in the public mind, the truth that the earth is spherical; a truth rejected by the most learned professors, on account of the inherent absurdity of the idea of antipodes, its necessary consequence; of the impossibility of the existence of countries, where men walked head downwards, and trees grew downwards in the air from their roots in the soil; and also on account of its inconsistency with the scriptural truth, that the heavens are spread over the earth like a tent. Let us think of Columbus trying in vain to convince geographers and astronomers of the probable existence of a western hemisphere, and branded by them as an adventurer and impostor, up to the day of his sailing on his first voyage, and only two years before his return to Spain, with his ships laden with the gold of the new continent: let us think of his fate, and we can easily see how the promulgator of true facts in Animal Magnetism may be decried and reviled as a visionary and a cheat.

"Time alone established the doctrine of the circulation of the blood, a doctrine so obviously founded on the most easily observable facts, that we can hardly now conceive how it could be doubted. Many learned doctors rejected it till their dying day. And, at the present day, it is Time which is gradually but surely dissipating the prejudices which we can all remember to have seen in full

vigor against Geology, because, in the opinion of many good men, it contradicted the Mosaic account of the creation. Men now begin to perceive that, the better geology is understood, the more perfectly does it harmonize even with the brief account given by Moses; and that, to reconcile them, we need not to abandon one established fact. No one thinks now of maintaining that mountain ranges, of miles in depth, bearing, in unmistakable characters, the evidence that hundreds and thousands of generations of living creatures lived, died, and were embalmed in the rock during its formation; that such masses of rock were formed in their present shape within one or even six of our present days. Time is producing the conviction that the facts of geology, like those of astronomy, cannot really clash with scriptural truth; in short, that one truth cannot possibly contradict another truth; and that, instead of injuring the scriptural truth, geology, like all true science, serves only more firmly to establish it. So also will it be with the truths of Animal Magnetism."

Again in reasoning on the general tenor of the objections raised against the study he writes:—

"There are some things which we know to be impossible. It is, for example, impossible for two and two to make more or less than four. It is impossible for the three angles of any triangle to exceed or fall short of two right angles, or 180°. It is impossible for a living or dead mass of matter to be in two or more places at the same time. But it will be found on examination, that none of the facts, alleged to occur in Animal Magnetism, are impossible in this sense. They are only, at the utmost, exceedingly difficult, or rather, it is exceedingly difficult to account for or explain them. We cannot even say that it is impossible to transmute lead into gold; for we are ignorant of the intimate nature of these metals; nay we only call them elements or simple bodies, because we cannot prove them to be otherwise. And, even if they were absolutely simple, it is not inconceivable, nor absolutely impossible, that they might be mutually convertible, and that the difference in their properties might depend on a mere difference in the mode of arrangement of the ultimate atoms, these last being, in their own nature, all identical; just as phosphorus, sulphur and carbon, three non-metallic elements (as far as we know) appear to us each of them in at least two totally distinct forms, differing as much from each other as sulphur does from phosphorus, or phosphorus from carbon, that is, in physical external properties. And yet, while we cannot say that the transmutation of lead to gold is impossible, no one has, in modern times, professed to transmute lead into gold, and still less has any one ventured to say that all can accomplish that transmutation. Whereas, the alleged facts of Animal Magnetism have not only been repeatedly observed and produced by well-qualified experimenters, but they have been described in such a way as to enable all, who choose, to produce them at pleasure.

It is, therefore, in the highest degree illogical to reject these facts, because of their alleged impossibility or incredibility; which can mean nothing more, than that we find it impossible to