

their defenders; and now they 'waver like a wave of the sea, tost to and fro.' The true and the false are mingled inextricably. Old things have passed away, and the world is yet in pangs of travail with the new; and we who are born in this age with thinking minds, are looking on amazed: with hands able, and hearts longing to engage, we must rot in inactivity; for we find no longer anything sacred, under whose banner we can act. The old is annihilated, and the new is yet unborn; and we verily grope as it were in darkness, 'one clutching this phantom, another that.'

I think that we may now suspend our discussion—

LAIRD.—Na' sa fast, good Doctor; before ye suspend, just gie us your own theory. Ye hae na' yet committed yersel'; while the Major and I ha'e baith advanced our opinions, or perhaps ye agree wi' ane o' us.

DOCTOR.—I agree with either of you. Nonsense, Laird, far from it. I can not myself advance any decided opinion on the data already in my possession; indeed, I could not conscientiously do so, but I have no objection to adopt the words of a "Report on Table-moving," published in a late number of the *Medical Times and Gazette*, as my own.

The latter part of the experiment, namely, the rotation of the table—involves a fallacy, for the rapidity of its movement is in no degree owing to any inherent power of motion in itself, but is solely due to the force unconsciously exerted on it by the experimenters, and the velocity of the motion is entirely and directly proportionate to the amount of force expended upon it, in addition to the momentum it has already acquired in passing from a state of rest to one of motion. * * * * * It must, however, be admitted, that the *first* movement of the table is not so easily explained, for the results of our own experiments and those of others fully deserving of confidence, have placed the fact beyond a doubt, that this movement of the table is performed without any *conscious* effort on the part of the experimenters. It remains, therefore, to be shown by what mechanism this effect is produced, and we shall have no difficulty in solving the problem by reference to physiological principles which are well known to the profession. The fact is, that the movement in question is due to the *involuntary* muscular action at the ends of the fingers, exerted upon the table. The *direction* of the movement is regulated, not by the *will*, but by the dominant *idea* in the mind, and the term *idea-motor* may very properly express the action in question. It is necessary, however, to explain more fully the class of effects to which the term *idea-motor* may be applied.

It is well known that the movements of the human body may be divided into *voluntary* and *involuntary*. The actions of walking, of playing musical instruments, &c., are instances

of the first; those of circulation and digestion are examples of the second. But there is also a class of actions comprising the ordinary phenomena of motion, which are not certainly under the control of the *will*, but which, nevertheless, are directed by the emotions in the *ideas*. Thus, the somnambulist walks in obedience to some mental impulse, the will is dormant; and the person who dreams, often executes movements in which the will has no part, but which are excited by *ideas*, or emotions. Again, although the will has no control over the action of the heart and arteries, yet the *ideas* and *emotions* exercise a distinct influence upon these organs; and when attention is directed to their pulsations in nervous persons, the movements have been accelerated, or retarded, or have become intermittent. Now, in all these cases, the *ideas* or the emotions act upon and direct the movements without the intervention of the will. In the case of table-turning, the *ideas* are concentrated upon the expected movement, and the muscular apparatus of the fingers obeys, unconsciously to the experimenter, the dominant impression in the mind. It is found that a small table is moved more readily than a large one, and it is moved more easily upon an oil-cloth than upon a carpet; it is moved more easily by females than by males, because, in the former, the muscles are more mobile, *the will less strong*, the motions more acute, the *ideas* more vivid. It is said, that young persons succeed better than persons advanced in years,—a fact which may be readily explained on the same principles. * * * It is very certain, that each trial renders the 'table-mover' more ready at exhibiting the required phenomena, more under the dominion of *ideas*, and less under the dominion of rational will. Each trial, then, must weaken the intellectual powers, must make the experimenter less a man, and more an instinct-governed animal. The peculiar state of mind induced, is not, perhaps, either hysteria or insanity; but it is akin to both. And now, gentlemen, again I beg you to suspend further discussion on this subject; and, until either of you can advance some more sensible theory, than that you have already put forth, I think the matter had much better be dropped.

LAIRD.—Ye canna' get a better theory.

DOCTOR.—A truce, Laird, I would read you some extracts from Mrs. Stowe's "Key to Uncle Tom's Cabin," and my notes thereon; I know that neither you or the Major would ever take the trouble to wade through that voluminous work, consisting as it does of a mass of documents, which, no matter how ever well they may serve to illustrate the original and immortal "Uncle Tom," yet would fail to interest the most enthusiastic admirer of its celebrated authoress. I therefore propose to give you the cream, without the trou-