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THE
High School Monthly.

I wish no other herald,
No other speaker of my living actions,
To keep mine honor from corruptions,
Than such an honest chronicler.
—Shakespeare.

Vol. I. FEBRUARY. No. 3.

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1890.

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THE HIGH SCHOOL MONTHLY.

VOL. I. NEW GLASGOW, N. S., FEBRUARY, 1891. NO. 3.

Spiritualism.

Not long ago a friend of mine, lately returned from the United States, was telling of the wonderful things he saw in that country. And among other things he described what happened to a select spirit-*sance* in the city of Boston, to which he had the good fortune to gain an entrance. His imaginative faculty was strongly worked upon by the mysterious performance of a "medium." He witnessed the summoning up of spirits from the "vasty deeps" of the nether world; he saw their presence manifested in table-jumping and table-talking, in the strange spelling of the index-finger of a planchette. The result was that he left the *sance* a thorough-going believer in spiritualism, and now entertains his friends with marvellous doctrines of unseen spiritual agencies that are undreamt of in ordinary philosophy.

His explanation of these manifestations of occult power is rather interesting, because it partly coincides with that given by the Rev. R. W. Dibdin, M. A., who in the year 1853 took pains to investigate this subject. (I may here remark in passing that this was the year in which a table-turning and table-talking epidemic raged thro' almost the whole civilized world.) The substance of that explanation (my friend's) may be set down in the following words:—

"Do I believe in Spiritualism? Why 'how can I doubt the evidence of my own senses? You believe in the evidence of your senses and I think I should be allowed the same privilege. I speak what I saw, and whatever I might think of it 'the facts remain the same. At first the

"party sat for a considerable time in a state of expectation, with the whole attention fixed on the table, and eagerly looking to the fixed sign of the anticipated motion. One or two slight changes heralded the approaching revolution. At first the revolution only continued as far as the length of their arms. Then the motion of the table changed from a walk to a run, until it actually spun around so fast that they could no longer keep up with it. I saw, too, the pointer of a planchette spell out the day month and year of a friend's death, which occurred a decade ago and which we had almost forgotten ourselves!"

"What is my explanation of the mystery? Well, to tell the truth, I believe these marvels are due to Satanic agency. Devils alone (and not departed spirits), are the agents in these cases. One thing I always noticed, was that, while the future was a sealed book to them—they did not pretend to tell the future, or if they did they utterly failed—they were able accurately to describe the past. The Devil knows all things that have happened, but he cannot tell the future, for God keeps the future in his own hands until it be accomplished."

My friend does not stand alone in absurd belief of this kind. Multitudes of cultured and intelligent men at the present time believe the same thing. They receive as genuine messages supposed to be transmitted by good spirits of departed relatives and friends to those whom they have left behind them on earth. As a recent author says, "The fact that such beliefs are entertained by 'educated' men and women only shows another aspect of that myth-making tendency which has al-

ways characterized human nature." It is seen most strongly developed in the ancient pagan nations, in the refined Greek as well as the barbarous Scythian, —in the Pythonism of the former, and in the sorcery of the latter. It is seen in the religious enthusiasm of the Middle Ages, and in the superstitious beliefs of modern lives, now happily almost dead. The Epidemic Delusions of the 14th and 15th centuries, the witch persecutions in England and Scotland, the Highland Ghost-Seer, the Boston Medium, the Red Indian Medicine Hat, all betray the same weakness and are to be placed in the same category. The shuddering at a spilled salt-cellar, an unequal number seated down at table, midnight crowing or the crying of dogs; the nervous timidity of the nightly pedestrian who journeys—

Like one that on a lonesome road
Doth walk in fear and dread,
And having once turned round walks on,
And turns no more his head;
Because he knows a frightful fiend
Doth close behind him tread;

these are all to be placed in the same category. It is superstition vile and gross, that evil influence which has been the bane of mankind for so many centuries. It is, if you will, that nightmare of ignorance which the world, awakened from its long sleep by the rough shaking of the hand of Science, has scarcely yet thrown off.

The phenomena of Spiritualism are viewed in different ways by different persons. Some there are who refuse to believe in the genuineness of any of the asserted facts and designate them as "all humbug." Their condemnation of the thing in toto, as well as of its upholders, is unsparing. But "such persons have to explain the fact that it is impossible to go into any kind of society, literary or scientific, professional or lay, genteel or simple, without finding a large proportion of intelligent and truthful persons, such as would be regarded as trustworthy on all other subjects, who

"affirm that they have been themselves actors in some or other of the performances in question, and that however strange the phenomena may seem, they are nevertheless genuine."

Others again, the Common Sense class of persons, admit the least strange of the facts and dismiss the rest as "all imagination."

The medical world, recognizing the hysterical constitution in a large proportion of the subjects of spiritualistic agency, has generally satisfied itself with the phrase "all hysterical." If this be so, how do they explain the fact that sensible, level-headed men are often found to be as good subjects of "spiritualistic influence" as those hysterical females, who are deservedly regarded with so much suspicion? Not so with the earnest seeker after truth. He sees here a body of facts that loudly call for a scientific and painstaking investigation. Putting aside those cases in which there is wilful deception on the part of medium or clairvoyant, he seeks for a rational explanation of the seeming mystery. Professor Faraday, in the spirit of the true philosopher, first demonstrated (by devising a very ingenious indicator, which responded to the slightest pressure) that the table is really moved by the hands placed upon it, notwithstanding the positive statement of the performers to the contrary. The difficulty in this case was to convince the performers. They were positive that, as they were not conscious of any effort, the table must have been propelled by some other agency. But the absence of conscious effort on their part is no proof to the contrary. For it is within the experience of every one that muscular movements are being continually executed without effort, as in the case of a man who continues to walk about, to eat his dinner, read a newspaper or play on a musical instrument, whilst his whole attention is given to some deeply interesting train of thought.

The facts of table-talking (which in 1853 first grew out of table-turning) and also

of spirit-writing, yield a satisfactory explanation to the truth-loving enquirer. In such cases the supposed communications of the mediums are nothing but the products of their own automatic mental operations, guided by the principles of suggestion. The person for whom the enquiry is being conducted is really the one who gives the clue to the required answer. This of course is quite unintentional on the part of the latter. But the majority of persons, in such positions, cannot even by the strongest effort of the will avoid making some slight "inventions of expression." They cannot help showing what is the letter or figure they expect, when the pointer of the planchette comes to it. Accordingly, from such indications of assent or dissent, the mediums (consciously or unconsciously, as they are fraudulent or honest) take their cue, and respond or spell out the required answers.

The following is a standard case in which the methods of the craft are exemplified, tho' here the medium (Mr. Foster) was a fraud:—

Mr Foster had arrived in London only a few days previous to our meeting with him. We were not introduced to him by name, nor do we think he could have any opportunity of knowing our persons. Nevertheless he not only answered, in a variety of modes, the questions put to him respecting the time and cause of the death of several of our departed friends and relations, whose names we had written down on slips of paper, which had been folded up and crumpled into pellets before being placed in his hands; but he brought out names and dates correctly in large red letters on his bare arm, the redness being produced by the turgescence of the minute vessels of the skin, and passing away after a few minutes like a blush. We must own to have been strongly impressed at the time by this performance, but on subsequently thinking it over, we could see that Mr. Foster's divining power was probably derived from his having acquired the faculty of interpreting the movements of the top of a pen or pencil, tho' the point and what was written by it was hid from his sight, with the aid of an

observing power sharpened by practice, which enabled him to guide his own movements by the indications unconsciously given by ourselves of the answers we expected. For tho' we did our utmost to repress every sign of anticipation, we came on reflection to an assured conviction that Mr. Foster had been keen-sighted enough to detect such signs, notwithstanding our attempts to baffle him. For, having asked him the month of the death of a friend, whose name had previously appeared in red letters on his arm, and the year of whose death had been correctly indicated in another way, he desired us to take up the alphabet card and to point to the successive letters. This we did, *as we believed*, with pendulum-like regularity; nevertheless distinct raps were heard at the letters J, U. When, however, on the next repetition we came to L, M, N, Mr. Foster was obviously baffled. He directed us to "try back" two or three times, and at last confessed that he could not certainly tell whether the month was June or July. The secret of this was that *we did not ourselves recollect*. The trick by which the red letters on his arm were produced was afterwards discovered by the inquiries of our medical friends.

Cases of this kind—which seem so easily disposed of by the phrases "all humbug," "all imagination,"—are in truth neither one nor the other, but find their explanation along with the other phenomena of Expectant Attention and the Controlling Influence of a Dominant Idea. They all plainly show how in certain persons, in a certain state of mental concentration, or emotional activity, the expectation of a result is sufficient to determine the muscular movements by which it is produced. There may not be the slightest voluntary effort—indeed the will may be strongly exercised to prevent such effort. The faces of many people are as a book in which the ordinary practised eye can read the symbols of the subject's thought. Most of those who read this article are doubtless able to recall occasions on which they watched the play of some friend's features and shrewdly guessed at the passing thoughts. Indeed it is almost certain that a quick intuition,

which gives one a clue to the current of thought in another's mind, may be extraordinarily exalted by an entire concentration of attention.

Thus understood Spiritualism loses its mystery. The hair no longer rises in fright at mention of its reported uncanny achievements. The spirits, leaving the leg of the table and the pointer of the planchette, vanish into thin air; and rational minds look forward to a speedy termination of the reign of superstition and foolish fear.

[N. B. The writer has to credit "Carpenter's "Mental Physiology" with many ideas in the above article.]

Exaggerations.

In looking over an old country journal published about the year 1881 my attention was drawn to an article on "exaggerations." I soon became interested in it and thought a few of the best points together with some original ideas would not be out of place in the MONTHLY.

Nothing is more characteristic of the present age than the tendency to exaggeration of language which prevails among all classes. The equivalents for the adverb "very" in the form of "awfully," "fearfully," "tremendously," &c., have become so common in the course of ordinary conversation that they are scarcely looked upon as slang now, and are uttered freely, even by the educated of both sexes, without a moment's appreciation of their true depth of meaning. Sometimes their peculiar phase of expression takes another form, converse as to its appreciation, but precisely the same in effect—that is, a ridiculous diminution or understatement of magnitude. This, we hear a "few," "rather," "slightly," "some-what," &c., used to denote an amount for which the strongest terms would be appropriate. This English writer says that the greatest number of these sayings are of transatlantic origin, the dry humor of our cousins abounding in like phrases. Although these expressions are deliberate-

ly untrue, they are not used with an intention to deceive. For instance, Artemers Ward tells us that on his recovery from fever he was so thin that, standing edgewise, he could not be seen at all, and that you might have cleaned the stem of a tobacco-pipe with either of his legs, he certainly does not mean us to believe that his emiaction had actually reached that painful extent. So, too, Dickens, in his preface to *Barnaby Rudge* describing one of the two living originals from which raven Grip was drawn, can scarcely intend that we should accept literally the statement that the bird ate a staircase, consisting of six wooden steps and a landing, before succumbing to a pound of white-lead taken internally.

"You might have heard a pin drop," is a tolerably strong expression in itself frequently used in speaking of a sudden silence among a multitude of people, but the assertion that in a crowded hall at a critical moment the stillness was so perfect that the accidental dropping of a pin reverberated like thunder" goes further. And the nigger must be black indeed upon whose skin charcoal made a white mark.

An American had been bragging for some time of various marvellous feats of swimming which he had witnessed or performed; when an Englishman, who had listened in silent incredulity, bathought himself that he would defeat, or try to defeat, the bcastral "Colonel" with his own weapons. The old country he considered was able to beat the new at any thing—even at firs—if her sons tried; so he suddenly spoke up.

"Well, yes Colonel," struck in the Britisher, "those were big swims, I admit, that you say you've seen; but I've known one that beats yours all hollow. Two years ago, I started from Liverpool to New York in one of the Cunard boats: There was a little commotion on the wharf at leaving, and a man dived into the water; but we took no particular heed of it. Next morning, we remembered it, though, for, sure enough there was

a man swimming abreast of us at the rate of fifteen knots an hour. We called out to him and threw him a rope, but he refused all assistance. At night of course we lost sight of him; but when the sun rose there he was again, striking out as lively as possible. And so he stood by us all the way across, sometimes diving under our keel, and coming up on the other side; sometimes playing round us like a dolphin, now on his back and now on his side; now turning head over heels, wheel-fashion. But about two hours before we reached New York, he began to forge ahead, and soon distanced us altogether; and when we got alongside, we found him standing on the quay, dressed to receive us."

The Yankee had eyed the speaker fixedly during his narration. "That's a true yarn, I s'pose, stranger?" he said interrogatively.

"O yes, quite true; I saw it myself," was the reply.

"You saw that man swim across from Liverpool to New York alongside your steamer all the way?"

"Exactly."

"Stranger, did you know that man?"

"Well, no!" answered the Englishman cautiously; "I did not know him; but, I saw him, nevertheless."

"Stranger, I was that man."

Women Warriors.

If we go away back to the year A. D. 61 we can read of Boadicea whose name is made immortal in Cowper's poem entitled "Boadicea," the first stanza of which commences:—

"When the British Warrior Queen
Bleeding from the Roman rods" etc.

Boadicea, the Queen of Icen, was shamefully scourged by the Romans, to whom her husband had left half his wealth. In the absence of the Roman ruler from Britain she stirred up a revolt and placing herself at the head of an army, marched to London, to avenge her wrongs and deliver her country. London

was reduced to ashes and seventy thousand Romans were massacred. The Roman general returning to Britain met Boadicea in a great battle in which Boadicea was defeated and eighty thousand Britains killed. Boadicea knowing what her fate would be, if she fell into the hands of the Romans, poisoned herself, rather than be taken prisoner.

In the year 1428 while the English were besieging Orleans in France for seven months and the besieged were nearly destitute, a maiden from the little village of Domremy near Lorraine, sought the King Charles VII of France, and told him, that she believed herself to be raised up by Divine power to deliver her country from the English. This maiden was Joan of Arc, who was destined to take a place in history, as one of its bravest women. She took the position at the head of the French army for the relief of Orleans and cheering the soldiers by her bravery she compelled the English to raise the siege in May 1429. She then led the French to Rheims and gained two victories over the English on the march, but on the 23rd of May 1430 Joan of Arc was captured by the English and on May 30th of the following year burnt as a witch in the market-place at Rouen. Charles VII, who owned his crown to her, did not make one effort to save her. We can imagine Joan of Arc if living in Shakespeare time saying as she walked to the stake:—

"Blow, blow, thou winter-wind,
Thou art not so unkind
As man's ingratitude."

LEO.

His family and friends were there,
His Uncles, Cousins Aunt's.
And all were sure that for the prize,
Their Johnny had best chance.

'Twas Johnny's turn to speak his piece,
He said, with outstretched hands:
'Under the spreading blacksmith tree,
The village chestnut stands."

The High School Monthly.

Edited and published by and for the students of the New Glasgow High School.

Don. F. Fraser, Editor in Chief.

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The High School Monthly,

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In our School Board's yearly report, we notice with much pleasure that a proposal is made for the erection of a new High School building to cost from \$10,000 to \$20,000. This is a move in the right direction, the only fault is that it should have been done years ago. Nevertheless on behalf of the school, we thank the Board heartily for their action in this matter and assure them that their names will be long cherished by High School students past and present for their initiation of the movement. They propose to call a meeting of the rate payers in regard to this matter and we hope soon to see it take prominent shape.

One word more in regard to the above. We note that Montreal is building a new High School and that one feature of its structure will be a gymnasium. Let this branch of education which is as important as any other, not be forgotten by us but let us have a regular course of gymnastic drill, so that the physical as well as the mental powers may be developed.

"Hy Skule."

That youth who "blew off the gush" about being out in Dakota wearing a wide rimmed broncho says we should have known he meant a sombrero.

Clifford has developed into "quite a man" now. He wears *long pants*. So does Bert.

A problem for the juniors:—Calculate the number of tricks of the High School clock since Dec. 31, 1890?

We bet our pea-nuts on Smithy for the Poet Laureatship.

There is nothing like a rubber strap to straighten out evil doers, so Dugassures us.

The English Prof. is of the opinion that *Roberts'* knowledge of the dress of Ancient Roman ladies is not as extensive as his knowledge of those of the present day.

One of the Ass'n. Editors has gone in the Biscuit trade. We will expect this enterprising senior to advertise in the MONTHLY; we have an whole inch to spare and will take trade for it.

Since the above has been written the trader has come forward of his own free will with the following:—

FOR SALE

AT (the usual) cost:

6 boxes Fresh Ginger Snaps. Call early and get your pick. G. M. R.

He dreamed a dream and this is what he dreamt.

High School Notes.

Great interest was manifested among the students in the recent elections. So strong did the feeling become that it was decided to hold an election of our own and candidates were forthwith chosen by the respective parties. Polling took place on the morning of Thursday 5th and resulted in the election of the Liberal candidates by majorities of 27 and 24 respectively over their Conservative opponents.

We note that many of the schools throughout the province are raising con-

tributions for the "Spring Hill Relief Fund." We beg to call the attention of our students to the matter and hope they will act accordingly.

We shall have to ask the indulgence of our readers for this issue of the "MONTHLY" being a few weeks behind time. Our "copy" was all ready but on account of the election the printing offices were over crowded with matter.

Miss Annie Hutton MacKenzie, for the past year or more, *facile princeps* of the third year, has left for Halifax. Miss Mackenzie has had an exceptionally brilliant career since entering the High School and on more than one occasion led her class at the Terminals.

We note with pleasure that two of our former students, Miss Sadie Murray of the 3rd and Mr. D. H. Shaw of the 2nd year, are with us again.

The High School is well represented at Dalhousie this winter by the following well-known contingent:—Messrs. John A. McGlashen, James W. Tupper, J. B. McLean, Henry Graham, Jas. G. Fraser, Willard Thompson and Milton D. Grant. The three former will graduate in the spring.

Examination Results.

THIRD YEAR.—*Latin*: R. McGregor, 83; W. M. Sedgewick, 70. *Geometry*: Annie H. McKenzie, 93; Dollie McKaracher, 87. *French*: Arthur Scott, 69; Hannah McKenzie, 59. *Physics*: Annie A. McKenzie, 94; Anna Sutherland, 80. *English Literature*: Annie H. McKenzie, 79; Christina Grant, 75.

SECOND YEAR.—*Arithmetic*: Alexander Campbell, 61; Mary H. McDougall, 60. *Geometry*: Mary H. McDougall, 35; Jessie A. Cameron, Minnie S. Fraser, 71. *Book-keeping*: Jessie Cameron, 67; Mary McDougall, 65.

FIRST YEAR.—*Arithmetic*: Fraser Cunningham, 85; Tena McLean, 77. *Essays*: Lionel Stewart, 89; Georgie McQueen, 87. *Book-keeping and Geography*: George Thompson, 69; H. T. Townsend, 67.

Growth.

The processes of growth are not fully understood. The chief reason no doubt, being that nothing ever stops growing until life becomes extinct.

Take for instance a plant. The seed is cast into the ground from which it springs: First of all we see only a tiny blade, but as time advances it develops into a shrub, tree or whatever may have been the nature of the seed.

As with vegetable so with animal life. Shakespeare says: "Man has seven stages."

Life begets life, so thought begets thought, and may we not say thoughts beget acts.

A person who commits murder does not begin by being a murderer nor a thief by stealing. It is generally some little wicked feeling within allowed to grow that produces such bad effects. But on the other hand good thoughts produce good actions. Truly Emmerson has said:—"That only which we have within can we see without. If we meet no gods it is because we harbour none."

As the world grows older, customs, that a short time ago were unheard of, are now thought necessary to our daily life, such as travelling by rail, lighting by electricity, telephone communication, etc.

Everything is advancing. One of the most striking illustrations is the advance in education, especially the education of women. Two centuries ago women were thought accomplished if they could spin, look after their homes, and perhaps dance. Even Byron in describing the women of his day speaks thus:—"Some waltz; some draw; some fathom the abyss of Metaphysics; others are content with music; the most moderate shine as wits."

Lady Jane Grey, we are told, studied Latin and Greek and was, no doubt, looked upon with holy horror. The charming Fanny Burney, whom Johnson admired so much, had to hide her book lest she be called a blue-stocking. Compare the past with the present, all over our land, colleges are being erected for women with

women at their heads, where the education received is on a par with any of the male colleges. And, more than that the male colleges are open to receive women, and have they not proved themselves able to compete with their brothers?

Miss Fawcett proved herself more than able when she came out above the senior wrangler at Cambridge last year. Nor is her's the only case. There are scores of others that we have not time to mention, some even in our own province. And why should it not be so? Adolph Monod, I think, says:—"The fate of the nation lies concealed in the hand of a woman."

We have only taken a hasty view of a few things that have grown or advanced but perhaps it will give a vague idea of how things have changed by growth. And so the world will go on improving and changing until there is no more room for improvement or change.

A Few Whispers Picked up By Our Reporter.

Murmurings heard through the window
"Tell her I will send it" Query! "Who is
"her?"

Can any one of our scholars explain
the following which was found on the
floor of the schoolhouse. What student
is pouring out the vials of his wrath on
his teacher.

"The teacher came down like a wolf
on the fold,
His eyes they were gleaming with
anger like gold
The chalk on his coat looked like foam
on the sea
While his voice rolled like thunder on
deep Gallilee.

Students and readers will find it greatly
to their own and the MONTHLY'S advan-
tage to patronize our advertisers. They
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rates.

Mrs. Van Baerle, who died at Brussels recently, in her ninety-first year, was the widow of an English officer of ancient Dutch lineage, the daughter of Sir Thomas Hislop, Bart, a distinguished Indian veteran, and was present at the world-famed ball, given by the Duchess of Richmond on the eve of the Battle of Waterloo, where, a girl just verging on sixteen, she "came out" dancing her first dance with Sir Hudson Lowe. The grave of Mrs. Van Baerle will not be far from the monument which covers the remains of James Lord Hay, who went straight from the same ball-room to his death at Quarter Bras. That celebrated poem by Lord Byron, on the eve before the battle of Waterloo, will be remembered with renewed interest, after reading about the death of one who had been present at, engaged in the dance, and saw and conversed, probably, with many a one there, that has since gone to their long home.

"There was a sound of revelry by
night,
And Belgium's capital had gathered
her beauty and her chivalry."

MUSEUM.—The following donations have been made to the museum by Mr. Lionel Stewart, of the High School: Granite from New Hampshire; rock salt from Petite Annis Island, Mississippi; amethyst and cacholong from Cape Blomidon, N. S.; lead ore from Guysboro, N. S.; copper ore from Margaretsville, Annapolis Co.; apatite from Georgia, fossil shell from Gulf of Mexico, a beautiful specimen of crystalized calcite from Mammoth Cave, Kentucky; shells from St. Paul's Bay, Malta; a collection of shells and pebbles from Giant's Causeway, an historical relic in the shape of a fragment of a burst bomb shell from the field of Gettysburg.

THE LAST.

To SWEET Laura, songs and verses—

("—Hollo! up there! Callin' time!
Po'try masheen's clean'd-out,—busted,
An' ther' ain't another rhyme!")

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