On Divination and Analogous Phenomena Among the Natives of Natal.

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MAY 15TH, 1871.

GEORGE HARRIS, Esq., V.P., *in the Chair.*

THE Minutes of the last Meeting were read, and confirmed.

The following New Members were announced: ANTHONY OWST ATKINSON, Esq., LL.D., etc., Kingston-upon-Hull; and JAMES TEMPLE, Esq., 62, Belsize Park Gardens, and Lazewood Park, Tunbridge Wells.

The following presents were announced, and the thanks of the meeting voted to the respective donors:—

FOR THE LIBRARY.

From the EDITOR.—The Food Journal, No. 10, vol. iii.

From the SOCIETY.—Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bengal, part i, No. 4.

From the AUTHOR.—A Memoir on Indian Survey. By Clements R. Markham.

From the EDITORS.—Archiv für Anthropologie. 1871.

From the SOCIETY.—Monthly Notices of Papers and Proceedings of the Royal Society of Tasmania. 1868-9.

From Hon. E. G. SQUIER.—Annexation of Santa Domingo.

From the SOCIETY.—Mittheilungen der Anthropol. Gesells. in Wien, No. 8.

From the AUTHOR.—Della Capacita dell' Orbita nel Cranio Umano. Prof. P. Mantegazza.

From the AUTHOR.—The Pharaoh of the Exodus. R. J. Campbell.

From J. F. COLLINGWOOD.—The Darwinian Theory Examined. Anonymous.

From the EDITOR.—Nature, to date.

From the INSTITUTE.—Journal of the Royal Institution of Cornwall, No. 12.

From the SOCIETY.—Proceedings of the Royal Society, No. 128.

From the EDITOR.—Revue Bibliographique Universelle, vol. vi, part 6.

The following paper was read:

On DIVINATION and ANALOGOUS PHENOMENA among the NATIVES of NATAL. By the Rev. Canon HENRY CALLAWAY, M.D., Local Secretary of the Anthropological Institute.

OF all the various branches of natural history, there are none so calculated to interest man as the natural history of Man. And of all the various subjects comprised in the term, "the natural history of man", there is perhaps no one more interesting, and at the same time more difficult to investigate, than those phenomena which result from his mental endowments.

There are certain extraordinary mental phenomena which have

occurred at all times, and in every stage of human culture and condition of society, in which all have more or less believed, but about which there have been the most diverse opinions. Some have been disposed to treat all such phenomena as delusions, or as something bordering on insanity. Many have sneered at them, and tried to laugh them down. Some have ascribed them to imposture, and have refused to believe in them at all; whilst others have most devoutly believed in them, and supposed them to be occasioned by visitations from the spirit-world; and the witch has been supposed to have communion with the devil, and to have obtained from him in barter for her soul some worthless power of doing evil for the mere sake of doing it, notwithstanding the utter impossibility of understanding the value of such a bargain to either of the contracting parties. And the diviner has been supposed to be indebted for his knowledge to good or evil spirits, according to the character of his divinations.

The disposition to believe in spiritual agencies as a means of escaping from the necessity of patient observation, and the labour of collecting facts and tracing them to their causes, has very much diminished of late years. It was a great mistake at all times, and has at all times led to confusion, misunderstanding, and suffering to refer any peculiar phenomena either in the outer world or in the human mind to the direct agency of supernatural good or evil powers, who are supposed to override or set aside the ordinary laws of the universe, and come in with a special agency to effect some special object.

Having a conviction of the absolute harmony and, if I may so speak, legal administration of the universe, I feel no disposition unnecessarily to call in spirits to explain such phenomena, or to look to the exorcist to prevent their recurrence. For many years I have had my attention directed to such phenomena, and I have asked myself whether they may not all be referred to some common law of human nature. At any rate, I am persuaded, it will be better to believe this and to work towards it. At the same time I hold it to be utterly unscientific to deny the existence of spirits, or to refuse to allow the possibility of their playing any part in the affairs of man. The pure physicist tells us that it is out of his sphere to determine whether there are such spiritual entities or not. His work lies among material facts; he cannot collect facts from the spirit-world. This may be so; and undoubtedly so long as he finds natural conditions sufficient for the explanation of such mental phenomena, he wisely abstains from seeking for other causes. But if he cannot collect facts to prove the existence of spirits, nor trace evidence of their continually traversing the order of things in this lower world—at least he cannot disprove this existence. Such facts may elude his obser-

vation, or he may not yet understand how to search for them, or what kind of facts to look for. It would be therefore unscientific in him to act the dogmatist, and to imagine that his ignorance or incapacity has proved a negative. And for my part, I accept the arguments of the metaphysician as having amply proved the existence of a spiritual entity in man, distinct from the material organisation, in which it works and by which it is brought into relation with the external world. And I shall always speak in this belief in the following paper:—

The subject which I propose to discuss before this Society is, “Certain Mental Phenomena occurring among the Natives of Natal, and which form the Basis of their System of Divination.”

But before I can well apply any facts to the support of my theory on the subject, I must discuss some preliminary matters in connection with certain other phenomena, which I suppose to be analogous, and by understanding the real nature of which we may at last be helped to get a glimpse of the possible explanation of the more difficult phenomena.

I propose, then, to speak of, 1, Dreams; 2, Sympathy; 3, Presentiment; and I think, as we go along, we shall see that most of the mental phenomena, which form the subject of this paper, may be arranged under one or the other of these heads.

1. *The Dream*.—None of us believe that a dream is occasioned by the actual presence of the object of which we dream. Yet it is a very common opinion throughout the world, and was probably at one time universally believed, that a dream results from the object coming to us, or that our spirit goes to the object; as when we dream of being carried away by the molten lava of a burning mountain.

Thus the natives of Natal believe in the real objective presence of the person of whom they dream. And one of the great arguments used by those who have but little faith in the legends of the people, against the Stongo, or spirit of a dead man, being a snake, is founded on this mistaken idea of the nature of a dream: they say the dead man always comes to them in the form which he had whilst living, and therefore he has not been turned into a snake.

But what is a dream? Let us coin a word, not altogether unobjectionable, I allow, but a word which will express in one what a dream really is. A dream is—brain-sensation. In the brain we find the real seat of the senses. It is there, and not in the distal extremities of the nerves, not in the organs of sense, that the mind takes cognisance of external things.

A step further. These conditions of the brain, usually resulting from impressions conveyed to it from external objects, may exist without such objects being present. In many diseases the pa-

tient, without the action of any external objects, has impressions such as are ordinarily produced by their presence. There may be a disagreeable smell without anything to produce it, noticed by the patient only. He may have strange or painful sensations in various parts of his body without any external cause. He may see persons or things, familiar or strange; or hear sounds articulate or otherwise.

This, then, is what I mean by brain-sensation—a condition of brain which, without external causes, is attended by feeling, hearing, and sight, just as it would if there were external causes in operation, capable of producing such sensations. This condition of brain, which produces the dream, may be absolutely subjective, or only partially so. It is absolutely subjective when it is produced by the memory and imagination. It is partially so when something external, similar to or entirely different from that dreamt of, sets the memory or imagination at work. The memory in sleep is very peculiar, and sometimes calls up the past with a greater vividness than when the person is awake. When dreams are partially subjective, there is some external impression which determines the dream,—becomes a starting-point on which there is built up a fanciful combination. In all these cases we presume that the same condition of brain is produced, as would be produced if the objects dreamt of were actually present.

Let us pass from the dream—by one step. A person dreams of an absent or dead friend, he wakes suddenly, the impression of the dream remains; with open eyes and wakeful mind he still sees the image of the dead; and nothing will dissuade him from the conviction that he has actually seen a spirit.

But there are waking dreams. There are innumerable instances in which, entirely without the presence of external objects, the brain is impressed as though such objects were present. There is the same kind of subjective brain-sensation when a man is awake, as produces dreams when he is sleeping. The case of Nicolai, the bookseller, whose room was to him apparently always full of company, is well known to most. But these spectres—as I prefer to call them, rather than spectral illusions—are extremely various. Sometimes appearing for a moment only, and then vanishing; sometimes existing as a permanent companion; sometimes solitary and unvarying; sometimes in large numbers, and of an ever-changeful character.

There is another set of these spectres, which are only seen when the eyes are shut, thus excluding the possibility of their being occasioned by external things. These, as well as the others which I have been mentioning, are met with for the most part in disordered, generally exhausted, or super-excited condi-

tions of the brain ; and many who have been subject to these brain-sensations either become deranged or die of brain-disease. Others have the power of calling up spectres when they wish—that is, they can, by an effort of the will, induce that condition of brain, which I have called brain-sensation. This is a very important fact in the investigation of the causes of such phenomena. Generally speaking, the subjects of these spectres can distinguish the spectres from real objects. But Dr. Abercrombie has recorded the case of a gentleman who was always accompanied by spectres, which he had great difficulty in distinguishing from real objects, so that if he met a friend he had to ask if it were he or his spirit !

Hitherto our attention has been directed to spectral vision or *brain-sight*. But there are mental phenomena of precisely the same nature, in which sounds and voices are heard. These sounds may vary from the tinkling of a bell, or a call of the name, to the constant, or almost constant, presence of a talking, though invisible, companion. It is very possible that the demon of Socrates, and the nymph of Numa Pompilius, are to be referred to this order of phenomena. And I am myself acquainted with persons who, when in certain states of mental exaltation, have long discourses spoken to them—in prose or verse—in such a way that they seem to be as much a something uttered without them and independent of the working of their own minds, as the harangue of an orator, and the reading of a poet. These are cases of *brain-hearing*—that is, there is, I presume, the same condition of brain as there would be if the sounds actually reached it through the ear.

You will see at once how this theory explains the case of those fanatics, who suppose they have received a call to do some great or good, or some debasing and wicked, thing—to evangelise the world, they being utterly unfitted by mental endowments, training, or religious or moral character, for such a work—or to overthrow the established order of society, expecting, but not having given to them, the power which the inner voices have promised them for the purpose of carrying out their ruinous projects. Such men are devout believers in the reality of these voices, which they suppose come from heaven, and that to disobey or to resist them is a sin against God.

There is another class of such phenomena to which I can only just allude. It is said that certain families and localities are the subjects of them. Thus, a death in certain great Irish families is said to be heralded in by the scream of the banshee ; some in Scotland by a voice of a more plaintive and gentle character. Others have a visit from a headless lady dressed in white, or from a brown lady, or a white bird flutters at the window.

Then some particular localities are said to have their own spectres. These may address themselves to the eye or ear.

I confess I am unable to explain such matters as these. They require further investigation. The sound may be external,—real sound produced by some unknown cause. And local spectres, if they are seen by persons who know of the bad fame of the place in which they appear, may be explained on the supposition that they are mere instances of brain-sight, caused by the imagination. But when they are seen by persons wholly unacquainted with the history of such appearances, it is very difficult to know to what we can attribute such phenomena. But it is probable that if fully and cautiously investigated, either they would break down altogether, or we should be able to refer them to known, though at present concealed causes.

Let us now proceed to the second division of our subject, that of Sympathy and Presentiment.

It will be clear when I speak of sympathy, I am not intending to speak merely of that form of it which is produced by the external knowledge of facts, capable of calling forth sympathy or compassion. This is a kind of sympathy which requires no illustration. And it does not belong to the subject we have in hand, except in such cases as those in which it gives rise to remarkable phenomena of an epidemic character. But there is a sympathy of another kind, which brings people into relation with each other without external visible causes. And under the term Sympathy I here mean a being brought into communion with others, a having a common feeling with others, or having a consciousness, more or less accurate, of what is going on in places at a distance, or in reference to things with which the mind has no visible external means of communication. This far-sightedness may be as regards space or time; when it exists in reference to things going on at a distance, it is called sympathy, when in reference to things which are to happen by-and-bye, it is presentiment or prophecy.

And I think I shall be able to adduce a sufficient number of instances to satisfy you, that as in the dream there is brain-sensation, either entirely independent of external things, or only partially dependent on them, so there may be brain-sensations leading to a distinct consciousness of what is going on in the minds of others either present with us or absent from us; and also of places or of things without any visible external causes whatever. Or to bring the meaning of what I would say at once before you in one clear, distinct sentence—there is a power of clairvoyance, naturally belonging to the human mind, or, in the words of a native speaking on this subject, “there is some-

thing which is divination within man"; words strangely like those of Socrates, who, in his "Apology", speaks of "natural inspiration" as being that under which poets act as well as prophets and seers.

The most simple form in which this power is manifested is in those unreasoning sympathies which draw people at first sight to each other; there is a mutual consciousness of mutual adaptation one to the other. Or in those unreasoning sympathies which repel them, where there is a mutual consciousness of mutual unfitness one for the other. Or the sympathy and repugnance may be on one side only. We have all perhaps known instances in which a full, joyous, social intercourse has been damped or entirely stopped by the entrance of an unknown stranger, or, it may be, of a person well known, but who, from some unknown cause, by his mere presence, casts a depression over the company. All feel it. No one can explain it. On the other hand, perhaps, we have all known instances in which the presence of another, with or without words, seems to shed a genial glow around, to give a sense of comfort and support.

Then it is very commonly believed that blood relations can recognise each other by sympathy, and that, though having never seen each other, or having been separated from each other before knowledge existed, yet on meeting they feel a mutual attraction which leads to the discovery of their relationships. The belief in this sympathetic recognition of blood relations one of the other, is an article of the untaught Zulus' creed.

To the same class of phenomena belong those unreasoning apprehensions of coming evil, or anticipations of coming joy, which are sometimes realised. Then further, without any apparent reason, one is sometimes drawn to a certain place, or urged to do a certain thing, and remarkable results follow. Or without knowing why, we go and put our hand on something we have lost, and have for some time vainly searched for. Or we are held back from doing a thing, or from going to a certain place, sometimes against our will and judgment, sometimes with a distinct but unfounded presentiment of evil; and the result shows that the evil would have reached us, had we not attended to the warning. We must not, however, omit to note that it not unfrequently happens that such impressions are utterly wrong and unjustified by the result. They may not only be unreasoning, but utterly unreasonable.

The natives of Natal believe in this kind of sympathy, by which they are made conscious of what is happening at a distance from them; and there are certain recognised signs among them by which it is attended. Thus they may have an absent friend brought forcibly before them, as being in some danger, and

at the same time be affected with the *coeliac* passions. Or tears may come into their eyes without any known cause. Or there may be simply a something in them,—an inner voice, which tells them that their friend is ill or dead.

An old man who had cataract in each eye referred his blindness to the following circumstance. He said his son had gone out to battle. During the day he was suddenly seized with blindness, and felt at the same time a strong impression that his son was killed. This turned out to be the case.

Or sympathy with the absent may be felt only at night. During sleep he sees his friend, as he is lying sick or dead; and sometimes, it is said, if he has been killed, he sees the very wound that has caused his death.

Umpengula was engaged in service at Pietermaritzburg. He dreamt that he saw his brother Undayeni, dressed in his finest attire and dancing at a wedding. On awaking he had a strong impression that his brother was dead. He could not shake off the impression, and involuntary tears came continually into his eyes, and he looked constantly in the direction by which a messenger must come from his home. During the morning a messenger came. On seeing him, he said, "I know why you are come—Undayeni is dead." He was dead.

But here again I would point out what is a very important fact when we come to consider the real significance of such phenomena, that, on another occasion, he had a similar impression that he should receive intelligence of my own death, which, as you see, turned out to be false.

We all probably know more or less of what is called "second sight", which appears to be a kind of sympathetic and prophetic instinct—a natural clairvoyance. It is often an hereditary gift, and what is more remarkable, is often possessed only when at home in the northern island homes of the seers. When they quit there, the power of second sight ceases, to return again when they return to their native place. We thus have suggested to us another cause of these remarkable phenomena, that they may be excited by endemic or local circumstances. And we are reminded of the Delphic prophetess who became ecstatic, and gained her power of divination, such as it was, by inhaling the fumes which proceeded from a cavern over which the temple was built.

I have been told that a member of my own family possessed a somewhat similar gift, that is, she was the subject of impressions, and saw spectres, by which she knew beforehand and prophesied of deaths and marriages which would occur in the neighbourhood of where she lived.

Let us now proceed to consider certain phenomena which

occur among the natives of Natal : 1, phenomena occurring spontaneously in certain exalted conditions of mind ; 2, self-mesmerism ; 3, the native system of divinations.

1. *Phenomena occurring Spontaneously.*—Soon after being connected with the natives as a missionary, I became acquainted with the curious fact that they are almost always subject to visions and strange delusions of the senses during the early period of their conversion. A man has been aroused by some means from a heathen train of thought ; often by means unknown to himself—by something working in him, as he thinks, independently of any external thing ; sometimes something that has been heard in a sermon, or a remark in conversation, or in a book, or even the mere presence of another convert among his acquaintance, excites reflection. He becomes wretched, he knows not why. He is filled with an unreasoning fear. He dreads he knows not what. His external condition is such that he cannot retire to a secret chamber. But he is driven to pray to an unseen, unknown, uncomprehended power. He cannot pray in the midst of his friends and relatives. They would laugh at him ; perhaps beat him ; perhaps give him medicines to expel the new fancies. So, in obedience to the inner impulse, he goes to some retired spot in the bush, or to some secret ravine, and there kneels and cries to one he knows not. Whilst praying, he closes his eyes, and at once sees various kinds of fearful things. He sees, perhaps, a deadly snake coming towards him, with open mouth and fierce eyes, ready to attack him. Or he hears, as it were, the stealthy tread of the leopard, and the gentle crackling of the broken twigs, as he comes on for his final spring ; or he sees his eyes glaring on him through a neighbouring thicket. Or he sees a man approaching him with angry gestures, armed with an assagai to stab him. He starts up in dismay, to escape the threatened danger, in the reality of which he fully believes. But, on opening his eyes and looking around, there is nothing but the same quiet scene which he saw on his arrival.*

Being unable to explain such things—believing, as they do, that a dream is occasioned by the presence of a real object—they believe that these visions are occasioned by real objects too. Many are horrified, and imagine it is the spirits of their ancestors come to express their displeasure at their impious departure from the religion of their fathers. They desist from praying, and return to heathendom with all their old faith and notions greatly confirmed.

Or they may go to some friend who is a Christian, and

* An illustration of those phenomena may be seen in the autobiography of Usetemba Dhladhla, which has been translated and published.

consult him. Or they may ask the meaning of such things of the missionary. The former tells them that all natives, in the transition stage between unbelief and faith, see such things, and details his own experience. The latter may tell them it is a delusion. Both tell them not to heed such things, but to persevere. If they take this advice, and persevere for a few times, and disregard whatever presents itself, these visions pass away, and are never seen again. But such things are quite common in the most untutored savages.

An old woman, a heathen, who probably had never before spoken with a missionary, was brought to me by her son. She appeared to be in perfect bodily health; but she would not remain at home during the night, but went out constantly to wander on the mountains, because, she said, she heard the spirits of the dead calling her to become a diviner. Here was a very common symptom of incipient insanity; the brain hearing, or rather conveying sounds to the mind without any cause of sound. She thought she heard voices: they were internal or brain-voices, continually calling her to go to certain places, or to perform certain actions.

The power of divining generally begins in a native by some such disturbances of the nervous system as I have been describing. I have lately had an opportunity of inquiring into a case of this kind, the particulars of which I will proceed to detail.

A native of Springvale, a convert of some ten or eleven years' standing, suddenly left the station. He has always manifested great uncertainty of character, and a very impressible nervous system. It appears that for several years he has from time to time seen subjective apparitions, and been in the habit of dreaming strange life-like dreams. But superstition, and the still lingering within him of his old heathen notions, withheld him from making one a confidant in the matter; but he did mention it to some old people in the village, who were not likely to be able to help him in any way. At length, after a prolonged confinement to the house from a broken thigh, he was suddenly seized with the belief that the spirits of the dead were calling him to become a diviner; that is, he had subjective or brain-voices speaking to him. He gave no heed to the voices at first; but, at length, he told the head-man of the village that the spirits were calling him, and he must leave us.

Understanding that there was little chance of my being able to get an interview with him, I sent a man, in whom I could trust, to investigate the case for me. He gave me the following account of its origin and progress.

He said he was suffering from a disease which he did not

understand; that it had destroyed his religious faith and his natural affection for his children, which had been very great. It had also destroyed his affection for men. There was now no one he loved. He wished to be away far from all human intercourse. The disorder began some years ago. He first had a sensation of something creeping up from his fingers and toes, passing up his legs and arms, and settling in his shoulders, producing there a sense of oppression and of great weight. The shoulders is the place where the Itongo is supposed to have some especial residence.

After a time he began to see things when he lay down. Then songs, which he had never heard, would come up of their own accord to his mind. Then in his dreams he passed from place to place, and supposed that in this way he had become acquainted with the whole country. "I see also," he said, "elephants and hyenas, and lions and leopards, and full rivers. All these things come near to me to kill me. Not a day passes without my seeing such things when I lie down." And let us think how great must be his terror, when he believes that these things actually come to him. Then he sometimes thinks he is flying high in the air. And if he tries to get rid of such things by praying, it seems only to cause the visions to multiply in number and frightfulness. "By prayer," he said, "I seem to summon all kinds of death to come and kill me at once." Now he has continual internal voices calling him at night, and telling him to go to some particular spot, or to dig up roots which are medicinal. He frequently obeys and finds nothing. Or if he finds a plant and digs it up, he does not know its properties, and throws it away. Sometimes he refuses to obey. Sometimes the voices tell him to go to a certain thicket, and he will find a buck entangled. He goes, but finds nothing. The voices also command him to slaughter cattle continually; but he refuses. All sounds are distressing to him. He has quitted kraal after kraal because he is unable to bear the barking of the dogs: and one reason assigned for not returning to his home is the dread of the ringing of the bell.

He told the men that I sent to him that he saw them coming the day before; but they were white men. And he was very ill on their arrival, because a white man had entered the hut during the night, and struck him on the thigh which had been broken. He arose from his sleeping mat and threw ashes over him. But the excitement had left him very ill. He is not always the same. On Sundays he is quite well, and imagines he knows when it is Sunday by his freedom from visions, and general sensations of relief. He will eat only a few kinds of food,—meat, the dregs of native beer mixed with boiled maize and wild herbs,

It is probable he was thus communicative with my messenger in the expectation of convincing him that he was being called by the spirits of the dead, and that he could not do otherwise than obey them.

His friends, looking on these symptoms as indicating the disease which precedes the power to divine, treat him with great gentleness and deference. The two questions they had to determine between were these:—1, whether they should call in a doctor who should so treat him that the power of divining might be fully developed in him; or, 2, whether they should call in a doctor to lay the spirits, and restore him to his usual health. They concluded to call in a doctor to lay the spirits, notwithstanding having been warned by another that by doing so they might cause his death.

A spirit is laid in this way. Emetics of a certain kind are given, which they suppose have the power of expelling from the system some matter which causes the disease. That which is ejected is taken, mixed with sundry medicines, and buried in an ant-heap some distance from the kraal. They adopted this plan, and the man was at once convulsed, and remained in convulsions for many days. They called his wife. She insisted that they should dig up the medicine, and went herself and destroyed the charm by opening the place where it was buried.

Thus things remain at present. What the future will be we cannot say. He may die of the disease, or become insane; this, however, is said by the natives not to be common. Or he may become a diviner. Or if he would submit himself to proper care and treatment, may be restored to perfect health. He regards as the immediate exciting cause of the disease in its aggravated form, a visit from his father-in-law, who told him that two of his brothers had become diviners in the Zulu country. He was silent, but was at once impressed with the conviction that in his own case, too, the visions and voices, and dreams were premonitions of a future eminence, such as that to which his brothers had attained. One of his sisters, too, in this country had had similar premonitory symptoms. It is a fact of considerable importance that it is a disease which runs in the family. It is said that his father, who was a steward to the Lulu king, had similar symptoms. The king did not like to lose his steward, so when he heard it, he sent his men and took away all his steward's cattle. And "that," my informant shrewdly remarks, "was the medicine which cured him."

I have entered into this lengthy detail of the case, not only because it is one which has come under my own observation, but because it may be regarded as a type of what the natives call "the disease which precedes the power to divine." But to sketch the progress of such cases, I must draw from other sources.

Such symptoms as I have mentioned having continued for some time, the progress is something as follows. The person is heard singing at night. The songs are often good, always new—so new and so good that the whole kraal will sometimes arise and join in them. Or he is observed to come home early in the morning, having been wandering about the country all night, bringing with him certain plants, which he tells them the spirits have pointed out to him, and revealed their medicinal powers. Or he leaves his home, and wanders for an indefinite period on the mountains and in the open country; and comes back daubed with clay, which he says he has obtained by living for some time in a pool with the rainbow, which the natives suppose to be an animal; and having his body festooned with snakes. After a time he declares himself to be a diviner; and his friends put his powers to the test by concealing things, which he has to detect by his clairvoyant ability. If he succeeds, his fame is spread abroad among the people, and they are called to be witnesses of his power. They send him away into the bush, and hide all kinds of things in all kinds of places. He returns, and if he finds them, or the majority of them, he is declared to be a diviner by acclamation.

We should not omit here to mark that these diviners, in their initiations, adopt a very similar process—fasting, watching, and bodily austerities—to that of the old Egyptian hermits, and other notabilities; and that the results in each case are similar, visions, inner voices, and clairvoyance.

2. *Self-Mesmerism Practised by the Natives.*—I cannot better introduce this subject than by the words of a native:—"Among black men there is a certain inner power of divining. When a thing is lost which is valuable, they begin to search for it at once; when they cannot find it, each begins to practise this inner divination, and tries to feel where the thing is; and not being able to see it, he feels internally a pointing, which says if he go down to such a place he will find it. At length he feels sure he shall find it; then he sees it and himself approaching it; before he begins to move from where he is sitting he sees it very clearly indeed, and there is an end of all doubt. That sight is so clear, that it is as though it was not inner sight, but as if he saw the very thing itself, and the place where it is. So he rises quickly and goes to the place. If it is a hidden place he throws himself into it, as though he was impelled by something to go as swiftly as the wind. And he really finds it, if he has not been merely guessing with his brain, but has practised the true inner divination. But if it has been from mere head-guessing, and knowing that he has searched in such a place and such a

place, and then it must be in such another place, he generally misses the mark."

It is extremely interesting and remarkable that in order to excite this inner power into activity, these savages adopt a plan precisely similar to that of certain mystics when they are waiting for inspiration. Like them, they attempt to effect intense concentration and abstraction of the mind,—an abstraction even from their own thoughts, and, according to the statement, by this self-mesmerising process, become clairvoyant.

Here is an instance or two in which this "inner divination" is put to a practical application: It is said that when boys are herding cattle they often leave them to join others in a game of play. Hence it often happens that, when they return towards evening, several of the herd are missing; they sometimes search here, there, and everywhere they can think of to no purpose. They then agree to sit down and abstract themselves from all external things. Whilst thus abstracted, an intimation arises within them, or one of them, that the cattle are in such a place; and the faith in the truth of the intimation is so strong, and the impulse to go to the place so irresistible, that the subject of it arises and runs off full speed to the place and finds the cattle. It is said that it is not every boy that has the power; some have it more than others; some never have it at all. Others, on the contrary, have it so strong and clear, that they are soon looked up to by their fellows, who follow them with the same confidence as a pack of dogs will the yelp of some well known hound when he has taken up the scent. It is said that native waggon-drivers, when they have lost their oxen, sometimes adopt this plan with success.

Sometimes persons who wish to inquire of a diviner will agree to conceal from him the object of their visit; so when they come to his hut they pretend to be mere passing travellers. But after sitting still awhile he becomes sensible of the object of their visit. He tells them he saw them before they reached his place, by his inner sense, and knows that they come to inquire of him; that being a real diviner, he has no need of assistance from them. He orders them to leave the house, and promises he will presently bring them the information they want.

In Zululand, in order to prevent intelligence being carried to intended victims, the chief does not acquaint his troops with his intentions till the time of their setting out to destroy the inhabitants of some devoted kraal. It is said to be no uncommon thing for the head of such kraal to have a presentiment of impending danger. He is first sensible of bodily uneasiness and great restlessness. He then sits still, and practises that "inner divination", or self-mesmerism, which the herd boys practise;

and in this state he becomes conscious—that is, has a brain-vision of the approaching army; and tells his people to quit at once their village and hide themselves in the woods. As they quit their kraal he will sometimes halt them again, to feel an inward intimation of the path they are to take. It is said that in this way many escape that would otherwise be massacred.

Many of us will no doubt remember examples of similar occurrences among other people.

3. *The Native System of Divination.*—There still remains for us to consider their system of divination. There are several kinds of diviners among them. They are called “iziniyanga zokubula”, and are of four kinds: 1, iziniyanga zesityupa, or thumb-diviners; 2, those who divine by means of pieces of stick or bones, who are called Omabukula izinti and Amatambo; 3, iziniyanga ezadhla impepo—diviners who ate impepo; 4, and lastly, those who are called Abemilozi, which perhaps we cannot better translate than by “those with familiar spirits.”

1. The thumb-doctor is so called because in divining he requires the assistance of those who come to inquire, which is given by pointing with the thumb whenever he says anything approaching to the truth. It appears to be a mere system of guessing. The diviner asks sundry questions of those who come to inquire. His questions are put, however, in an affirmative form. He begins, perhaps, by saying, “you have come to inquire about a person who is ill?” As this is a very common cause which leads people to diviners, he is very likely to be right the first time. This assertion is received with great outcry. They cry “hear, hear!” smite the ground with branches, and point towards him with the thumb and say, “Eh, eh!” By this means he gets on the scent, and in the same way he gets gradually to know the age, sex, condition, etc., of the patient. And having, by help of those who consult him, learnt all these particulars, he sums it up in one grand oracular declaration: You come to consult about a sick person. It is an old man. It is the head of the kraal. You who come to me are his children. His eldest son is not here, however; but the second son. He is ill in such and such a manner. You do not suppose it is a mere disease. It has been brought about by poisons. You suspect some one. That one whom you suspect is a near relation. I must not mention him, etc.

In fact, he merely relates to them in his own words, in a direct and connected form, that which they have already told him in a disjointed, disconnected manner. The stronger mind governs the feebler, and leads it as it wills. It is very much like the game played by children, hiding and seeking. As the seeker

approaches the thing concealed, they say, "You are hot"; or if he is going away from it, they are either silent, or say "You are cold—very cold—very cold," and thus bring him back to the place of concealment.

An account of some such process adopted by a man called "a white witch" will be found admirably told in a novel which I remember reading manner years ago, but to which I cannot refer, called "Sir Launcelot Greaves." The country bumpkin is made the dupe of the more intelligent; he first worms out of him by a series of artfully continued questions the secrets of his history and his connections, and then tells back to his astonished ear the information he has thus gained, which sounds to the rustic like a revelation from heaven. The natives themselves place very little confidence in doctors of this kind, but regard them as mere extortioners, who possess a greater power of devouring food than of divining. They are called Amabuda, that is, babbling, talkative, lying deceivers.

It may be worth remarking that in Abyssinia there is a word, probably of the same origin as this. Bouda is a term applied apparently to a demon or evil spirit which possesses people,—to a sorcerer, who has communication with the demon, very much like the Umtakati of Natal in his character, but having much greater power, and exercising it not by the coarse means of medicines and charms, but by a kind of spiritual influence:—it is also applied to the person possessed, and the disease which arises as the result of possession. The disease consists of a remarkable disturbance of the nervous system, resembling hysteria, and is sometimes, in certain unhealthy seasons of the year, epidemic. To counteract the Bouda, there is a host of exorcists, who exercise an extraordinary power over the patients, and, by adopting a strange system of treatment, relieve them.

2. The diviners who use sticks or bones are supposed to be of a more trustworthy character. The Omabukula izinti has three sticks, which by some means or other he causes to move about, and jump. It is said that if inquiry be made for a sick man, the sticks or one of them will be made to leap towards the person inquiring, and fix itself on that part of the body which corresponds with that which is diseased in the patient. Or if they ask a question, for instance, "is the brother of the patient here?" it will at once arise and jump on him if present.

The Amatambo or bones are each named,—man, cow, dog, etc. When the inquirer comes, without asking any questions the diviner throws his bones on the ground; if he comes to ask anything about a man, the man-bone shows agitation;—if about a cow, the cow-bone moves, etc. Of course one is unable to pass any opinion on this subject, not having seen any exhibition. But it is probably a sleight-of-hand system.

3. Diviners who ate *impepo* are supposed to be possessed of real powers of divination. The *impepo* is a medicine, which is used as incense in sacrifices, and to make the spirits of the dead propitious and their revelations clear. The diviner uses it frequently, and sleeps with it near his person. We may suppose that these diviners are persons who possess some natural clairvoyant and prophetic power. We have now seen enough to render this supposition not only quite possible, but probable. They hold the same position among the natives as prophets and seers and oracles among other people. And as in those other cases we find a great deal of mistake mixed with a little truth, so among the Zulu diviners a thorough sifting may find a few grains of real wheat in the midst of much chaff. But it appears to me one of the most unwise things to pooh-pooh it as a system of mere imposture and deceit practised by intelligent men on the credulity of the ignorant. It has been beautifully said, "a scientific truth is a very sacred thing." Every true man of science would feel this. But if a scientific truth is a sacred thing, so also are those individual scientific facts sacred upon which the truth is erected. The diviner, being naturally of an impressible nervous system, or, as the natives say, "having a soft head", only awaits some concurrence of circumstances,—illness, it may be, suffering, famine, excitement,—to bring out the latent power, similar to that which is found occurring in every part of the world. He then subjects himself to a discipline of fasting, watching, and bodily exhaustion, by which the natural power is fully developed. In some instances he practises the system of self-mesmerism; in others, he appears in a lazy, dreamy state to be cognisant of things beyond the power of the senses.

4. Those with familiar spirits are the most remarkable. The diviner of this order does nothing apparently. He merely sits still, and the answers are given by voices at a distance from him, which are supposed to be the voices of the spirits which are his familiars. But perhaps I cannot better bring before you the particulars of this class than by giving you two accounts which I received from eye-witnesses: A native kraal among the Amadunga, on the Tukela, having had some quarrel with their people, came into the neighbourhood of the lower Umkomanzi, and settled with a relative among the Amahlongwa. They lived with him as dependents in his village. Soon after settling there a young child was seized with convulsions, and, at once alarmed, they determined to consult a woman, living at some distance, celebrated as one who divined correctly by the aid of familiar spirits. Some young men, cousins of the child, went to consult her. On entering her hut and saluting her, she merely responded, but said nothing for some time. But at length, having taken

some snuff, she yawned, stretched, and shuddered, as is the custom with diviners when about to be the subjects of inspiration. She then said : " They who divine are not yet come ; " that is, the spirits.

They remained waiting a long time, until they almost forgot the object of their coming ; at last a voice as of a very little child, proceeding from the roof of the hut, saluted them. They started, and looked to see whence the voice came. The spirits said : " Why are you looking about ? We merely salute you." They replied : " We look about because we cannot see where you are." The spirits replied : " Here we are. But you cannot see us. You will be helped not by seeing, but by hearing what we say." The case then proceeded exactly as in common divinations, excepting only that the woman was apparently passive, and the conversation was carried on by the voices, and the revelations made by them.

The spirits began by saying : " You have come to enquire about something." They were silent, and the woman said : " Tell them. They say you come to enquire about something." They smote the ground in token of assent. They continued, " That about which you come is a matter of great importance. An omen has appeared in some one." Again they smote the ground, assenting, and asked : " How big is the person in whom the omen has appeared." The spirits replied : " It is a young person." They smote the ground vehemently here, because, as they said, " they saw she had hit the mark."

The spirits then went on to say, the omen was bodily ; that the person affected was a boy ; that he was still young, too young to go out to herd. All this being assented to in like manner, the spirits went on feeling their way, as it were, to these things. They said : " Strike the ground, that we may see what it is that has occurred to the body of this little boy. There he is—we see him, it is as if he had convulsions." This was assented to with a most earnest sniting of the ground. The spirits said : " What kind of convulsions are they ? Ask of us." The enquirers told the spirits they were going the right way, and required no assistance of them. They replied : " We told you to ask, because perhaps we are going wrong." They then went on to detail in a most minute and correct manner the time when the first convulsions took place, and the character of the attack, and what was done and said by the mother of the child and others. All this having been assented to, the spirits continued : " The disease resembles convulsions. You have come to ask us the cause." They replied : " Yes, truly, spirits, we wish to hear from you the disease and its cause ; and also the remedy." The spirits promised to inform them, but first told them other particulars of their history. The

boy was the only child of his father. He was their brother. But not really their brother, but their cousin; he was their brother because their fathers were brothers. They then went on to say: "Smite the ground that we may see which is the older of the two. We say, boys, your own father is dead. Smite the ground that we may see where he died. There he is, we see him. He died, boys, in the open country. He was stabbed with an asagai. By what tribe was he stabbed? He was stabbed by the Amazulu on this side the Tukela. That is where your father died, boys."

They then told them that the disease was not properly convulsions, but was occasioned by the ancestral spirits, because they did not approve of their living in their relative's kraal, but wished them to have their own kraal. They told them among what tribe they were living, and to what tribe they belonged. That the person with whom they lived was their cousin on the mother's side. They exonerated the cousin from all blame, saying: "We see nothing wrong in the village of your cousin. He is good. Even no practising of sorcery there. We see that the village is clear of that. You eat with your eyes shut, for you have no reason to complain. What we tell you is this. It is the ancestral spirits that are doing this thing."

They then proceeded to tell them the remedy. "We have pointed out to you the ancestral spirits as the cause of this disease. When you reach home you shall take a goat. There it is -- a he-goat. We see it." They said: "How do you see it?" The spirits replied: "Be silent. We will tell you, and satisfy you as to its colour. It is white. That is it which has just come from the other side of the Ilovo, from the Amanzimtote. It is now a large he-goat. You shall sacrifice it, and pour its gall on the boy. Go and gather for him Itongo medicine. We see the Itongo. It says that your village must be removed from its present place and stand alone. Does not the Itongo ask, why you have lived so long in the village of another? The he-goat you will sacrifice to your grandmother. It is she who refuses to allow the child to die. Your grandfather has earnestly wished to kill him. We tell you this to satisfy you. We tell you that if the disease returns you may come again and take back your money. Now we have divined for you, so give us our money. They offered the money; and the spirits told the woman to take it. She took it, at the same time warning the spirits, that if it turned out that they had spoken falsely, she would give it back again.

The narrator, who was one of the persons engaged in the inquiry, goes on to say, "The woman with the familiar spirits sat in the middle of the hut, at the time of full daylight. The spirits cannot divine by themselves; when they are going to divine their

possessor goes with them. The possessor of them cannot divine ; she usually says very little, and she too inquires of the spirits, asking, ‘ So and so, when you say that, do you tell the people who have come to inquire of you the truth.’ They replied they did tell the truth and that the people would see.” So the possessor of the spirits took the money; and the spirits said : “ Go in peace, and give our services to the people.”

They went home, sacrificed the goat, poured the gall on the child, plucked for him Itongo medicine, and gave him the expressed juice to drink, and made immediate arrangements for building themselves a new kraal. *And the child never had an attack of convulsions after; and is living to this day, a strong healthy, young man.* The name of this woman is Umkankazi. She lived on the Umtwalume, by the sea; a day and a half journey distant from the kraal of those who inquired of her. They had never seen her before.

Now we shall be all ready with our explanations. We may say she had gleaned and treasured up in her memory the history of these people ; that she had secret intelligence of all things going on around her ; that she had been told of their having brought home a white he-goat only a few days before going to inquire of her ; that the recovery of the child was a mere coincidence, and that the voices were produced by ventriloquism. Whether this is a correct explanation or not, the woman displayed much ability in playing her part. And where the spirits assert that they see, we are reminded of the old seers who, in their state of ecstasy, peered into the distant void, and saw visions of the past, present, or future, which sometimes proved to be a scenic exhibition of real fact displayed to their inner sense, and which they had no external means of knowing.

We have seen that various causes are capable of producing a similar condition of brain to that which is produced by the presence of external things, and so affecting the mind in the same way as it would be affected by objects actually present. Among other causes was mentioned the mind itself: we said that it is able, by an exertion of the will, to raise a spectre. We have also seen that the will of one person can in like manner be exerted on the mind of another, and cause it to feel and think as he pleases and to see spectres. It may, therefore, turn out to be really a fact that good and evil spirits also, in accordance with common belief in all ages of the world, act on the human mind in the same way, and may produce illusions of the eye, ear, or general sensation, by acting on the brain in a way similar to that of diseased blood, medicines, mesmerism, a person’s own will or that of another. At least, as men of science, we must admit that, allowing the existence of an Eternal Spirit, and of spirits of an inferior

order, there is not only nothing impossible, but, on the contrary, there is the utmost probability that they should be in some relation to man, and be able to act in some way or other on the human mind. And the various facts we have been considering, proving that the mind can be acted on by powers without itself and independent of material agents, seem at least to intimate the mode in which that action may be effected, that is by producing in the brain a condition similar to that which is necessary to convey to the mind a knowledge of the outer world. And as it is necessary, in order that one mind should be able to act on another, that the two minds should be in a certain relation to each other, so we may suppose that the mind is capable of being influenced by either good or evil spirits only when it is in a state of sympathetic relation with them.

And it is possible that, by a careful collection and consideration of facts which it is now very much the fashion with men of science to set aside as belonging to accidents and coincidence, we may be led to conclude that whilst such phenomena, occurring as they do at all times of the world, in all conditions of society, and in persons holding the most opposite religious creeds, cannot be ascribed to the direct agency of good or evil spirits alone, yet they may be intimations that not only can the soul of man look out on the world around him, and become cognisant of it through the organs of sense, but that it can look in another direction, and without the organs of sense obtain a knowledge both of what is going on in the world beyond the sphere of the senses, and even look into futurity, and hold communion with the invisible world of spirits.

DISCUSSION.

MR. J. W. JACKSON said: I trust that the paper to which we have just listened will prove but one of a series on this and similar subjects. We want to know more of the psychology of the savage. He has long been portrayed with more or less of accuracy from without. Here we are enabled to contemplate him, in a measure, from within. And whatever we may think of the *manner* in which Dr. Callaway has executed his well-intentioned task, we should not withhold our warmest approval of the purpose itself, that is, a delineation of savage belief in the supernatural from the standpoint of the savage himself. And if missionaries and travellers would only follow the good example of the reverend doctor, we should soon be in possession of data that could not fail to throw considerable light on the constitution and action of the human mind, as manifested not only in the simpler stages of social progress, but also in the earlier grades of humanity's organic development. Hitherto, from a variety of causes, this phase of anthropological investigation has been largely neglected, but the time is obviously approaching when not only the dreams, presenti-

ments, divinations, and ghosts of Caffres, but also of people nearer home, will be considered as legitimate subject-matter for inquiry. One thing is already clear, namely, that the psychology of the savage does not differ from that of the civilised man, nearly so much as might be supposed. His susceptibilities to, and consequently his impressions from, the supersensuous sphere, are radically the same as those of his more highly-organised and more educationally-developed brother. It yet remains, however, to be decided whether they may not differ in *form*, and in any future inquiries of this kind I would recommend that we endeavour to discover whether there be any distinctive characteristics attaching to the Negroid, Turanian, and Caucasian types in their experiences of the supersensuous, and their conceptions of the supernatural.

Mr. DENDY regarded this as the most prolix and monotonous paper read before the Institute during this session ; indeed, it was a real infliction. What in it that was new was not true, and what was true was not new. The idea of spiritual influence over the true savage was an illusive fallacy, which no man of real science ought for a moment to entertain. The notion of phreno-magnetism, indeed the once popular phrenology itself, is a mere delusion, or the trick of an empiric. He would, therefore, blot out the word phrenology, the doctrine of the diaphragm, and craniology, the indications (?) of the skull, from our discussions on the Science of Man. He differed, *toto cælo*, from Mr. Jackson, to whom he would propose the term "noosology", the doctrine of the mind, or "encephalology", the science of the brain. He believed that the vaunted phenomena of the medium may be explained by the action of physical force without the agency of a spirit. He had himself presumed, some years ago, to illustrate this in "A Gleam of the Spirit Mystery." The anecdotes of the prophetic clairvoyance of the Kaffirs and the Zulu ought to raise a blush in those who cite them as spiritual phenomena ; if we hear nothing from south-eastern Africa more rational, the sooner the district is tabooed the better. He was sorry to be thus severe, but the caprices of this pseudo-philosophy were so much below common sense, that he was certain they would not, for a moment, be accepted by the Anthropological Institute. The reference to the cerebral pathology of these cases is but a repetition of long-accepted facts in psychology.

The CHAIRMAN (Mr. G. Harris) observed that he thought the question had been fairly and comprehensively treated in the paper which had been read, and that our acquaintance with the notions of savage races with regard to topics of this nature was calculated to throw much valuable light on the subject. The general question was, he believed, well deserving of inquiry, and strictly within the province of the Anthropological Institute. It was one which ought to be discussed without passion or prejudice, but into which, unfortunately, passion and prejudice had been to a large extent introduced. Extraordinary, too, had been the oscillations between credulity and scepticism with regard to the subject. At one period every shadow was regarded as an apparition. At another period every apparition was regarded as a

mere shadow. Both modes of dealing with the matter were alike, and equally unphilosophical. No doubt the majority of cases of supposed apparition were the result of delusion, disease, or imposture. But this did not prove that every case of the kind might be so accounted for. What he desired to see effected, and what he thought was strictly within the province of a philosophical society, like the Anthropological Institute, to effect, was to lay down a strict test, which might be applicable to all cases of this kind, and by which the truth of them might be tried, and the evidence by which they were supported fairly and dispassionately examined and closely scrutinised. It was quite possible to frame such a test, and to apply it; and this was the only fair, and satisfactory, and philosophical mode of disposing of the entire subject.

Major Owen, Mr. Prideaux, and Mr. Charlesworth also took part in the discussion.

The meeting then adjourned.

MAY 29TH, 1871.

PROFESSOR BUSK, F.R.S., *Vice-President, in the Chair.*

THE minutes of the last meeting were read and confirmed.

The following new member was announced: GEORGE LATIMER, Esq., of Puerto Rico, West Indies, and Windham Club, London.

The following paper was then read :

A DESCRIPTION of the QUISSAMA TRIBE. By F. G. H. PRICE,
F.R.G.S., M.A.I.

It is my intention to-night to read you a brief description, including a few of the most striking manners and customs, of the Quissama or Kisama tribe. They inhabit that portion of Angola which lies on the south of the Quanza river, occupying an extensive tract of country between the Atlantic seaboard on the west, and extending beyond the Libollo Alto on the east.

This country has recently been visited by Mr. Charles Hamilton, who has kindly furnished me with his notes, and given me every particular that came under his observation concerning these but little-known people. As far as I have been able to ascertain, this country has never been explored by any Englishman. The natives are currently reported, by the Portuguese in Angola, to be cannibals, which circumstance causes them to be held in great dread by those people.

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