

playing in a football match on Dec. 28. The deceased, who was playing a very fast game, slipped and fell, and at the same time received a severe kick, probably in the abdomen, while several other players fell upon him. His death resulted from hemorrhage, arising from injuries to the internal organs. The *Lancet* goes on to say, "If proof of this [the dangerous character of the game as played in England] be wanted, it is furnished by the fact that this is at least the third fatal accident directly due to football already recorded thus early in the season."

THE HEAVY MORTALITY among the Baptist missionaries in the Kongo country has led Dr. Prosser James to write a series of letters, embodying descriptions of the principal diseases of tropical countries. These letters are entitled 'Health on the Kongo,' and are intended for circulation among the missionaries and the station officials of the Kongo Free State. It is to be hoped that Dr. James has in this way contributed to the well-being of the voluntary exiles in central Africa. Mr. Stanley still persists, that, with care, a European may successfully resist the inroads of the malarial influences to which he subjects himself on emigrating to the banks of that river; and every particle of wisdom which it is possible to impart on how to travel in Africa, how to locate a station, how to eat, dress, work, and sleep, must be a god-send to the adventurers. It is just such information that the letters are intended to give.

AT THE LAST ANNUAL meeting of the trustees of the Mount Auburn cemetery of Boston, Mass., it was voted that the trustees consider the expediency of establishing a crematorium, or of adopting any other method of taking care of the dead so that the sanitary law shall not be violated. The committee appointed, consisting of Mr. Roger Wolcott and Dr. R. M. Hodges, report that the acts of incorporation of the cemetery only permitted interment. Cremation has been legalized by the legislature of Massachusetts during the past year, and the cemetery will be prepared to receive for sepulture the ashes resulting from the process of incineration, and would prepare depositories above ground, or columbaria in the hill-sides, for the reception and preservation of urns and other memorials. These actions of the legislature and trustees are worthy of note, as showing the wide interest cremation is now attracting in America, as well as in Europe.

RECENT PSYCHICAL RESEARCHES.

THE American society for psychical research held its annual meeting on Jan. 11 last, at Boston, the headquarters of the society. There has been a steady and rapid growth in the number of associates; and, as the various committees are now well organized and at work, it is hoped that the society will display still greater vitality in the future. This fair prospect has, however, been disturbed in one respect by the president of the society, Prof. Simon Newcomb, whose address was read at the meeting. He devoted his attention to the work that has been done upon thought-transference, especially by the original English society, and endeavored to discredit the investigations and conclusions published by the English committee. In brief, Professor Newcomb's position is, that the phenomena of thought-transference, as heretofore recorded, are very rare and quite unexplained. Now, they may be due, he says, either to an unknown law of nature displayed under conditions we cannot control, or else to special circumstances which are unknown to us. In the former case we might compare the phenomena with those of electricity, which were at first rare, obscure, and beyond our control. Professor Newcomb, however, turns all his arguments in favor of the second alternative; but, as briefly indicated in our comments this week, his logic is open to criticism. The length of the address precludes a fuller discussion of it before its publication.

Dr. H. P. Bowditch gave an informal account of some experiments, which indicated to a slight extent the power of reproducing drawings by thought-transference. Dr. C. S. Minot presented the results of an analysis of the figures obtained from the attempts to transfer the thought of a single digit from one person's mind to another's. It was noticed in the returns of experiments that there was one case in which the person guessed a larger number of digits correctly than was probable on mere chance. Now, it so happened that this person displayed the, presumably unconscious, habit of guessing the digits by skipping irregularly by two or three numbers from 0, 1, or 2, up to 8 or 9, and then back again. When, therefore, the thousand digits upon his record of guesses were tabulated, the result was obtained, that, upon the average, the fourth digit guessed by him before a 9 was 3.3; the third, 3.4; the second, 4.2; the first, 5.4. After a 9 he guessed down the scale with equal regularity. No other person showed this peculiarity: hence it was evident that this guesser had followed out his personal psychological bent, and had not been reading the mind of the agent, who had thought

of the digit to be guessed. This confirmed the conclusion otherwise reached, that this case of success, called case E in the first report of the committee on thought-transference, was the effect of coincidence. It was further shown that this same person had marked preferences for certain digits, as is seen in the following table :—

Digit.....	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	0
Number of times guessed.....	97	92	122	117	106	101	112	90	85	78

The order of preference then was, 3, 4, 7, 5, 6, 1, 8, 9, 0. Moreover, in this series, 532 odd numbers stand against 478 even ones. That the number-habit, or the tendency to guess certain digits over-often, is actual and constant, was proven by the fact that these idiosyncrasies were shown in each set of 100, although made at various times. Similar examinations of the digits guessed by other experimenters showed in every case a more or less marked and constant number-habit, distinct for each individual, thus giving more evidence that in every instance there had been an absence of mind-reading. Putting about 9,000 guesses by thirteen persons together, and averaging them, it was found that the digits are to be ranked in the following order of preference, which is certainly very curious : 3, 5, 4, 6, 2, 7, 8, 9, 1, 0. About as many prefer odd as even numbers ; but most persons prefer one or the other. Thus one guesses 466 odd and 534 even, but another 526 odd and 574 even. It is evident that the power of unconscious habit extends into details the most minute, and plays a much greater rôle in our mental life than is commonly admitted.

Professor Royce, on behalf of the committee on apparitions, announced the completion of a circular asking for the communication of stories to the committee. The speaker's remarks well expressed the attitude of the committee, which is sufficiently unlike that of the corresponding English committee to deserve mention. The starting-point is the viewing of the experiences in question as actual psychological facts ; in going further, the tendency will be, at least on Professor Royce's part, to study how far these experiences are governed by the dictates of folk-lore, and to eliminate those stories which belong in the already well-known class of hallucinations. The search for an objective basis for the experience, for a specific external cause, is incidental only, and must follow after the exclusion of cases explicable by folk-lore hallucinations, etc. The English investigators wish too obviously and too eagerly to demonstrate the objective foundation of apparitions, and so have quite omitted to subject their material to the study which must come first, if the work is to be sound. Apparently they already

accept an apparition seen by several persons as a *bona-fide* ghost, at least very probably. It need hardly be pointed out that the position taken by Professor Royce is much higher, his attitude more scientific, than this. The result of the committees' labor will therefore be awaited with great interest.

The meeting closed with some remarkable experiments by Dr. William James, who mesmerized Mr. Carnegie, one of the committee on hypnotism. While the latter was in the trance, Dr. James told him he could not see the chairman, with the effect of rendering him blind to that officer. Placing a prism in front of Mr. Carnegie's eye, so as to produce two images on his retina, Dr. James asked what he saw. The answer showed that he saw only one chairman, and therefore remained blind to one of the two images. This is believed to be quite a new fact in hypnotism. To show that although the subject adopts any suggestions made to him as to his sensory images, no matter how false the suggestion, yet he has extreme delicacy of perception, the following experiment was made : the subject was made to see an imaginary photograph of President Cleveland on a blank sheet of paper ; the photograph was made, in the subject's vision, to leave the sheet of paper and travel round the room ; behind Mr. Carnegie's back the paper was turned upside down ; the photograph was now made to seem to Mr. Carnegie to return to the paper, which was handed to him ; he immediately turned it about to its previous position. Thus an hypnotic subject can be made to believe in a sensation which is unreal, and yet can distinguish between the two ends of a blank piece of paper. Of course, the interest of these experiments is genuine only for those who have faith in the honesty of the two gentlemen. Those who do not wish to believe, may remain agnostic ; but even they have to submit to the truth when experiments are made with animals. It may be added incidentally that Dr. Minot, in his studies on the growth of animals, habitually, he informs me, hypnotized his hens upon the scale-pan to keep them still while being weighed, — a useful practical application of hypnotism.

V. P.

THE AMERICAN ENGINEERS' MEETING.

THE annual meeting of the American society of civil engineers was held in New York, Jan. 20–21. The last meeting of this society was held at Deer Park, Md., on June 24–26. At that meeting, it was reported, more business was transacted and more discussion elicited than at any previous convention of the society. It was a meeting in a