

alleged disease, or, if actually sick, are fully cured. The best answer that mental healers can make to this charge is, that, whether right or wrong in their judgments of what ails their patients, they act precisely as any sensible physician would under like circumstances, and try to relieve the disease. In a chapter on the creeds of mental healers, we find that these differ to a considerable degree among the different schools or sects: for these points of difference we shall have to refer our readers to the book itself. Mr. Barrows states that it would not be putting the case too strongly to say that the theory of the mental healers, carried to the highest point, traces every form of disease, as well as sin, to mental causes, which may be removed and the effects destroyed. Even death itself they hold to be an illusion, that may be dispelled by a full reception of the truth and consequent right thinking. Thought creates a world for each one of us; thought makes the body; and all physical phenomena, whether of disease or health, are due to thought. In commenting on this view of the subject, the author says, that, if utterances like these seem extravagant, it should not be forgotten that a new truth — and every truth we grasp is new to *us*, though old to all the world beside — is apt to intoxicate its possessor, and become to his infatuated sense the universal solvent of the enigmas of life. Time and experience may safely be left to adjust the value of these claims; but meanwhile it is not the mark of wisdom to fear or ridicule them. We must confess, that, after a very careful reading of Mr. Barrows's book, we are as much in ignorance of just what is the basis of the mental healer's claim as we were before. They seem, indeed, to be divided into more sects or schools than those usually called physicians. Some of their claims, as quoted by Mr. Barrows, are simply absurd. Take this one, for example. It is an extract from one of the text-books of mental healing prepared for the guidance of students who intend to practise that method. If the case to be treated is a consumptive, begin your argument by taking up the leading points that this disease includes, according to belief, showing it is not inherited, that inflammation, tubercles, hemorrhage, and decomposition are but thoughts, beliefs, mental images before mortal mind, not the immortal Mind: hence they are not the truth of man, and should be treated as error, put out of mind, and then they will disappear from the body. That Mr. Barrows is a firm believer in mental healing is apparent from his writings; and that he himself believes that some of its teachers and practitioners make ridiculous claims for it, also seems to be clear. We are inclined to agree with some of the writers to whom he refers, — with Dr. Buckley, for instance, who acknowledges that most extraordinary recoveries have been produced, some of them instantaneously, from disease in some cases generally considered to be incurable by ordinary treatment, in others known to be curable in the ordinary process of medicine and in surgery only by slow degrees, — but can hardly be convinced that the case quoted from 'Nature and the Supernatural,' by Rev. Horace Bushnell, ever occurred, certainly not under just the circumstances as given, where a child ill with scarlet-fever was, immediately after a prayer made by his father, completely cured, so as to pronounce himself quite well and ask for his dinner. Mr. Barrows refers to the late Dr. Austin Flint with great respect for his opinions; and if mental healing, as he states, simply emphasizes the highest doctrines of the medical schools as announced by Dr. Flint, then we willingly acknowledge that there is much in it to demand consideration and recognition. Dr. Flint, in one of his addresses, said, "Let it be popularly known that most medicinal agents are curative, not directly but indirectly, by the removal of obstacles in the way of recovery; that Nature is always the efficient curative agent, and therefore that the physician is Nature's servant, not her master." We confess to a feeling of disappointment when we finished reading this book of Mr. Barrows. His preface seemed so fair and unprejudiced, that we expected to get a plain statement of the facts, particularly as he had stated that he had enjoyed exceptional facilities for study and investigation. If mental healing "is to get and retain a hold upon the popular attention," and if "the subject needs only to be presented to educated, thoughtful persons in the right way, to appeal to their intelligence and convince their reason," we fear it must be done in a much simpler, more matter-of-fact, and less metaphysical manner than has been done by the author of 'Facts and Fictions of Mental Healing.'

## NOTES AND NEWS.

THE officers for the next meeting of the American Association were nominated as follows: president, J. W. Powell of Washington; vice-presidents, Ormond Stone of the University of Virginia (Mathematics and Astronomy), A. A. Michelson of Cleveland (Physics), C. E. Munroe of Newport (Chemistry), Calvin M. Woodward of St. Louis (Mechanical Science), George H. Cook of New Brunswick (Geology and Geography), C. V. Riley of Washington (Biology), C. C. Abbott of Trenton (Anthropology), C. W. Smiley of Washington (Economic Science and Statistics); permanent secretary, F. W. Putnam of Cambridge (office Salem, Mass.); general secretary, J. C. Arthur of La Fayette; secretary of the council, C. Leo Mees of Athens; secretaries of the sections, C. L. Doolittle of Bethlehem (Mathematics and Astronomy), A. L. Kimball of Baltimore (Physics), William L. Dudley of Nashville (Chemistry), Arthur Beardsley of Swarthmore (Mechanical Science), George H. Williams of Baltimore (Geology and Geography), N. L. Britton of New York (Biology), Frank Baker of Washington (Anthropology), Charles S. Hill of Washington (Economic Science and Statistics).

— The arrangements for the tenth annual meeting of the American Society of Microscopists are now definitely made. The society convenes in Pittsburgh, Penn., Aug. 30, 1887, and will probably continue its sessions four or five days. There will be a field-excursion to Chartiers, and the society will be invited to visit the extensive steel-works of Carnegie, Phipps, & Co., at Braddock. The party will go by steamer up the historic Monongahela: a field-excursion has been planned in connection with this pleasure-trip. There will be collected a temporary library of rare books and manuals. A considerable number of volumes have been promised. These will be under the constant care of a librarian.

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR.

*\*\* The attention of scientific men is called to the advantages of the correspondence columns of SCIENCE for placing promptly on record brief preliminary notices of their investigations. Twenty copies of the number containing his communication will be furnished free to any correspondent on request.*

*The editor will be glad to publish any queries consonant with the character of the journal.*

*Correspondents are requested to be as brief as possible. The writer's name is in all cases required as proof of good faith.*

## An Insect-Fight.

AN observation quoted by Professor Morse in his address before the American Association last night is so exactly confirmed by a recent observation of my own, that it seems worth while to put it on record.

While sitting in a hammock slung between two large maple-trees on the lawn, I heard a loud buzzing and fall of something behind me, and, looking around, I saw on the grass a locust (cicada) in the grasp of a large insect, evidently of the wasp family, but which I am not sufficiently well posted in entomology to name. It had brown wings, and large abdomen colored black or dark brown with white spots. The whole length of the insect was about thirty-five or forty millimetres. When first seen, the struggling locust was on its back; the wasp extended above it head to head, and industriously plying its sting between the abdominal wings of the locust. The locust quickly became quiet, and then the wasp, maintaining its former position, which it did not at any time abandon, grasped the head of the locust by the middle pair of legs, and, using the other four legs for locomotion, started to drag it through the short grass toward one of the trees. There was no hesitation or uncertainty, but the wasp started at once in a straight line for the foot of the tree. On reaching the tree, the wasp began without pause to carry its burden up the trunk, using its four legs for walking, as before, and assisting itself to sustain the weight of the locust by putting its wings in operation. In this way, with a few brief pauses as if to rest and get better hold, in one of which it hung for a moment apparently by one leg, the locust was carried up among the branches of the maple, some twenty feet or so, where it became difficult for me to follow its motions. After reaching such a height, the wasp flew off in a straight line through the branches, and went out of sight. I think it carried the locust with it, but the height was so great that I could not be positive. At any rate, the locust did not fall to the ground, although, as the