

## GOETHE'S VIEWS ON TELEPATHY.

BY THE EDITOR.

GOETHE was neither a spiritualist nor a materialist. He had common sense enough not to accept the superstitions of ghosts and spooks, but on the other hand he could not be prevailed upon to join the opposite camp of those who would deny the very existence of mind and its significance. He lost no opportunity to ridicule such shallow rationalists as Nicolai of Berlin, whose zeal to exterminate spirits consisted in a repudiation of spirit.

Though Goethe was very reluctant to accept the marvelous stories of telepathy he knew full well that man's mind is capable of understanding things which are not directly approachable by the senses, and that in the same sense the mind penetrates to distant places. This view with its rational explanation is very drastically and simply set forth in a poem entitled "Effect at a Distance." Telepathy is indeed possible, but the true telepathy is no mysterious power, but mere logical deduction. Nor are our mental functions thought waves which proceed in undulations from man's brain outside to other parts of the world. Man's judgments are simply an interpretation of the facts presented to him in sensations, and this power of the mind yields most marvelous results. Frequently it enables man to know with great clearness as well as positive certainty things that have happened long ago or at a great distance. Just as the presence of a star is indicated by the sense impression of a speck of light on the retina of the eye, so a certain symptom may betray a situation of the occurrence of an event which itself could not be observed, and this is true telepathy undeniable by the grossest materialist. On this telepathy is based our communication by telephone, telegraph and wireless telegraphy; electric waves of a short or long duration are transferred, so-called dots and dashes and their several combinations represent the several letters of the alphabet, as well as other symbols, known to the operators at both ends. There

are electric waves, not thought waves, that go to a distance, but the mind deciphers the meaning that is given to the different forms of the transmitted undulations. This is the method by which science discovers the hidden secrets of natural laws, the origin of creation, the development of evolution, etc. Such telepathy is possible and the law of its operation will be seen to be very simple indeed. Scarcely ever has any more humerous and at the same time more instructive presentation of the problem been given than is set forth in Goethe's poem, a versified translation of which is here attempted. It reads thus:

## EFFECT AT A DISTANCE.

The Queen has a party, the candles are bright,  
 Her guests a game start playing;  
 She says to her page: "Thy foot is light,  
 Fetch the counters," and then adds, saying:  
 "They lie to hand  
 On my dresser stand."  
 The lad is quite nimble and zealous,  
 He hies to the end of the palace.

Beside the Queen, her sherbet sips  
 A pretty maid of honor,  
 She brings the cup so hard to her lips  
 That some is spilled upon her.  
 A cry of distress  
 For the exquisite dress!  
 And, with the fresh stains from the chalice,  
 She runs to the end of the palace.

The damsel and the returning boy  
 In the lonely hall were meeting;  
 None knew of their love, but neither was coy  
 With open arms of greeting.  
 Glance spoke to glance  
 Of the glorious chance;  
 And, heart to heart, in seclusion,  
 They kissed and embraced with effusion.

At last they tore themselves apart,  
 The maid to her chamber was slipping;  
 The youth returned with a beating heart,  
 O'er swords and flounces tripping.  
 The Queen's eye, trained,  
 Saw the lad's vest stained,  
 Like the Queen of Sheba in glory,  
 She knew at once the whole story.

She addressed her lady in waiting, elate,  
"You argued, with insistence,  
Some time ago in our little debate,  
That the mind does not act at a distance;  
That the presence we face  
Alone we can trace;  
To the distance are reaching no forces,  
Not even the stars in their courses.

"Some sherbet, you see, has been spilled at my side.  
And lo! you may call it a wonder!  
It stained the vest of the lad that hied  
To the end of the palace yonder.  
Have a new one my boy,  
Because I enjoy,  
That a proof for my views you unfolded;  
I'll pay it, nor shall you be scolded."

(Translation by P. C.)