

audience did not consist of Latin scholars, they naturally corrupted the words into a formula that was easier pronounced.

The verb "to hocus-pocus" thus acquires the meaning "to transform, to metamorphose," or "to disguise a change."

That the formula itself became the name of the man who pronounced it, is a change in the meaning of words that occurs frequently. Even as early as 1655 Ady in his *Candle in Dark* (29) speaks of a man

"That went about in King James his time. . . who called himself, The Kings Majesties most excellent Hocus Pocus, and so was called, because that at the playing of every Trick, he used to say, '*Hocus focus, tontus talontus, vade celiter jubeo,*' a dark composure of words, to blinde the eyes of the beholders, to make his Trick pass the more currantly without discovery."

ELECTRICITY AND THE BODY OF RESURRECTION.

Mr. Charles Hallock's proposition made in the November number of *The Open Court* has produced quite a stir in certain circles. Letters on the subject were received both at the editorial office of *The Open Court*, and by the author, and we publish here some of the correspondence that has reference to the subject, together with a few editorial comments.

A LETTER FROM A COLLEGE PROFESSOR.

To the Editor of The Open Court:

I have read with great interest the article by Mr. Hallock, on "The Body of the Future: Is It Electrical?" and also the editorial comments, in the November issue of *The Open Court*. Permit me to ask why Mr. Hallock's theory in its main features may not be eminently reasonable, if the new view of the electrical nature of matter be true?

Authorities in physics like Sir Oliver Lodge, and Professor Fison, and others equally as eminent, have said within a few months that the "so-called atom," which has played such an important part in modern science, "is now displaced from its fundamental place of indivisibility." It has been divided and shown to be composed of electricity. Very recent investigations point to the conclusion, which these scientists are announcing as true, that "the fundamental ingredient of which . . . the whole of matter is made up, is nothing more nor less than electricity, in the form of an equal number of positive and negative charges." This is the doctrine toward which the best modern scientific research surely points. It will be at once seen that it secures that "unification of matter such as has through all the ages been sought; it goes much farther than had been hoped, for the substratum is not an unknown and hypothetical protyle, but the familiar electric charge."

If, as these authorities in physics, are beginning to say, the essence of matter is electricity, why may not Mr. Hallock's main position that there will be a future body and that it will be electrical be reasonable? The electrical nature of matter is likely to lead to a radical change in some modern scientific views, and among them the conception of death and the existence of the body after death.

My main point is this: on the supposition that the New Testament statements about a body after death, or the resurrection body, are true, why may not the electrical theory of the nature of matter give us some idea of the nature of that body and make credible some passages in the New Testament that have hitherto been regarded as inconsistent with what has been supposed to be true of matter?

It is announced that experiments conducted very lately in England show that one form of matter, one so-called original element, has been actually changed into another element. Some very eminent scientists, it is reported, declare that they have accomplished this result. This would be in harmony with the electrical nature of matter and would also have an important bearing on the subject under consideration.

It seems to me that recent discoveries in physics require us to develop a very different philosophy from that formulated years ago under erroneous ideas of the nature of matter. Not a little dogmatic science of other days will have to be abandoned, it seems to me.

H. L. STETSON.

KALAMAZOO, MICH.

A LETTER FROM AN ASTRONOMER.

Mr. Hallock received the following interesting communication from Mr. Edgar L. Larkin, Director of the Lowe Observatory, a man "who constantly looks heavenward":

"Dear Sir:

"I read your article with interest. I have been writing for months in the papers that nothing exists but electricity. *It is matter* and may assume protean forms. Of course our spiritual bodies are merely one phase of electricity, souls, minds, spirit also—every entity in existence. Thousands of verses not only in the Hebrew but in many other Oriental scriptures are cleared up by this cardinal fact. Many mystical facts in 'spiritualism' are also explained by electrical hypothesis. I allude to 'refined' matter in my book *Radiant Energy*.

EDGAR L. LARKIN."

A LETTER TO THE EDITOR FROM MR. CHARLES HALLOCK.

To the Editor of The Open Court:

I told Professor Larkin that electricity is *not* matter. It is a *substance*, an element, capable of being changed into another element, as has been demonstrated by eminent English scientists. It pervades the whole system of created things, the air, the sea, the land, objects organic and inorganic, animate and inanimate, animals, plants, marine forms, insects and all the rest, manifesting itself transcendently in the lightning and in the aurora borealis, and extending beyond the confines of the universe into the unknown realm of the infinite. Matter rots, decays, perishes, but electricity is imperishable.

Hitherto the Creator has manifested Himself to mankind through material objects, because man is "of the earth earthy" and perceives with his physical senses. In his spiritual existence his faculties will be different, and he will see marvellous phenomena which are not perceptible now. Christ has promised this. Electricity is the connecting link between the material and the immaterial. It is the most potent, subtle, and mysterious of all palpable and impalpable media. Our carnal bodies are already charged with it: then why may not or spiritual bodies or soul-envelopes be composed of it entirely? "As the lightning cometh out of the East and shineth unto the West, even so shall the coming of the Son of Man be." (Matt. xxiv. 23.)

Electrical phenomena are constantly occurring which point toward the final consummation and explain the problem of the immortal body. Suggestions to this end are ever present; but our mortal comprehensions are so obtuse that we fail to perceive their significance. These phenomena, both in nature and in invention, are

marvellous and inexplicable, unless my theory be accepted; but they forecast the existence which is to come. They are "mighty in operation."

The word "body" implies something visible and tangible, and electricity is transcendently palpable when applied.

If spirit or soul exist here, or anywhere, expressing itself through body or substance (other than matter), then individuality and personal recognition may continue for eternity, otherwise recognition would not be possible. Immortality is conceivable with electricity *in esse* as a factor.

CHARLES HALLOCK.

EDITORIAL COMMENTS.

It is true that all the facts of physics go far to suggest (perhaps even to support) the theory that matter is condensed ether, and we may add, it is also quite probable that electricity, which, barring light, is the most important phenomenon of ether in motion known to us, will be found to play a more prominent part in nature than could be anticipated in former times. But all these theories are far from substantiating the assumption that the body of the resurrection is electrical, or, to go further still, that there is any body of resurrection at all in the sense of traditional religious conceptions. On the contrary, if these theories concerning matter and ether be true, it would only indicate that our present world-system built up of atoms might finally be dissolved again into its primordial ether. The atom has so far resisted analysis and it is likely that all the methods at the disposal of scientists will fail to resolve it, but if the atom be a compound we may be sure that in the long run of world cycles, it will finally be dissolved again into its elements. All compound bodies within the reach of our experience, even the eternal rocks, so called, break up into their ingredients, and there is no reason to doubt the universality of the law (so energetically enunciated in Buddhist metaphysics), that all compounds are subject to disintegration.

Professor Dubois-Reymond proved that electrical phenomena play some important part in muscle-activity, and Prof. Augustus Waller of London has brought to light further interesting facts. He proves that electric fluctuations take place so long as a substance (be it animal or vegetable) is still alive, and the absence of electricity indicates absence of vitality. But all this does not prove that electricity alone without any bodily substratum may constitute a person, that such a person after death should retain the shape of the material body, and that his electrical body should float about after the manner of the ghosts of folk-lore.

Mr. Hallock succeeded in proving the presence of folklore in the Bible, but no amount of Biblical quotations will prove that the folklore view is tenable before the tribunal of science.

I will not venture here to state the reasons that prevent me from accepting the theory of an electrical body of resurrection, for that would lead me too far and it is difficult to say why a thing is not. I will limit myself only to the positive statement that the monistic drift of modern science, especially our revised notions of ether and electricity, contain not the slightest argument in favor of proving that the soul should be possessed of an electrical resurrection-body. We might as well assume that a dynamo which has been built to change molar motion into electricity would, if broken to pieces, continue as a purely ethereal dynamo, and that it would thus form a superior kind of machine, a *maakheru* dynamo.

The theory of a transfigured body, *maakheru* as the Egyptians called it, is so natural a fabrication of human fancy that it originated among all nationalities

finding expression in the folk-lore tales of ghosts. It embodies in a mythological form the truth of man's immortality, and gives it a concrete and tangible shape. Yet after all, the theory that ghosts, spirits, or whatever you may call the disembodied souls, may be electrical phenomena, is a bold assumption which appears to me only a modern expression of a very ancient, not to say antiquated, belief, based upon a wrong conception of the soul.

The most remarkable attempt at verifying the belief in ghosts has been made in recent times by F. W. H. Myers, in his posthumous book *Human Personality and Its Survival of Bodily Death*. It is a stupendous work written with great earnestness and quoting many strange events and psychic experiences. And yet we cannot say that Mr. Myers has succeeded.

P. C.

NOTES.

Mrs. T. R. Foster of Honolulu has donated one thousand dollars to the educational enterprise of the Anagarika Dharmapala, and Mr. Charles Viggars has gone to India to take charge of the school.

A memorial of Dr. Marie Elizabeth Zakrzewska has been published by the New England Hospital for Women and Children, Boston, Mass., and is to be had in paper for 20 cents, cloth 40 cents, at the hospital, Dimock Street, Roxbury. Dr. Zakrzewska was the pioneer of woman physicians, and her death, together with her last message which was read by a friend at the funeral, was published some time ago in *The Open Court*.

Modern theology is so little known outside of academic circles that publications of theologians of scientific standing are commonly regarded as rank "freethought" and as "bold attacks upon the most sacred tenets of the Christian faith." One instance will suffice. An article written on the origin of Christmas and published in William Smith's *Dictionary of Christian Antiquities*, (pp. 357-358,) was reprinted in *The Open Court*. The author, a theologian of good standing, quotes the sermon of Ambrose, Pope Leo the Great's letter on the subject, a homily of ancient date attributed to Chrysostom, etc., which prove that the birth of Christ was celebrated on the day of the birth of Mithras, and that the choice was done deliberately because it was most appropriate for the purpose. The collection of these historical facts, made by a representative Christian scholar, is commented upon in *The Daily Picayune* as "an assault on the principal mystery of the Christian faith," and comments of this kind are not uncommon. While among European theologians the god-conception of the editor of *The Open Court* is commented upon in a friendly way, there are circles among the laity (of course not among academical theologians) in which his work is considered as decidedly irreligious.

Among the theological scholars there are many who have adopted the scientific world-conception; among the clergy there are a few, but the laity, and among the laity those elements which predominate in the vestry, are a brake on the wheel of progress. The fact is stated not to blame them, but as a fact that is not always clearly understood.