

MISCELLANEOUS.

THE OLD STATESMAN'S THOUGHTS¹.

BY WEI CHENG (A. D. 581-643).

[Wei Cheng was scarcely less eminent as a scholar than a soldier. After passing through the troublous times previous to and at the commencement of the T'ang Dynasty, he obtained high office as preceptor of the heir apparent and censor, and on his death received an honorary title. He is known as one of the Emperor T'ai Tsung's three mirrors, which were: copper as a mirror for the person, the past as a mirror for politics, and man as a mirror to guide the judgment in ordinary affairs. He was also the author of a much admired memorial to the Emperor setting forth "Ten Thoughts" for the correction of the disorders which had spread over the country at the time of the change of dynasty. The following lines are probably reminiscent of that period. Wei is not represented in either of the two favorite Chinese poetical compilations.]

What time the land was busy with the chase
'T was I alone foresaw the conflict near.
Though fallen our arguments on evil case,
The country's good remained my purpose clear.
One hope I saw:—to seek our Emperor Lord,
Urging my horse beyond the frontier pass.
Who else could bind the south as with a cord,
Or quell our eastern enemies in a mass?
And so, by crooked paths, I took the ascent.
Now rose, now sank the fertile plains below.
On withered trees I saw the birds lament,
And nightly heard the gibbons tell their woe.
A thousand *li* of earth I viewed with awe
From perilous passes on the mountain sheer.
To shrink from danger is our nature's law,
But in his heart the patriot knows no fear.
Twice made was ne'er a promise of Chi Pu,
And Hou Ying's word stood firm as first set down.
Touch, then, the heart: the actions answer true.
Tell me not of ambition and renown.

MR. KREBS'S DISCLOSURE OF PALLADINO'S TRICKS.

In reply to a question concerning Eusapia Palladino of recent notoriety, who left for Europe at the end of last summer enriched by a harvest of Amer-

¹ Translated by James Black.

ican dollars and a number of unexpected experiences, we wish to state that we did not enter into the problem of the genuineness of her phenomena, because her seances have been frequently discussed in other periodicals. The first exposure seems to have been made by Mr. Stanley L. Krebs whose statement appeared in the *Journal of the Society for Psychical Research* for June and July, 1910. However, since the circulation and use of the *English Journal of the S. P. R.* is strictly limited to members of that society, Mr. Krebs's account has not become so generally known as it deserves.

Her phenomena as observed in America fall into seven classes: (1) levitations of a table, (2) rappings, (3) touches, (4) breezes, (5) lights, (6) materializations, (7) movements in and about the cabinet. The conclusions of Mr. Krebs are as follows:

"1. She uses no confederate.

"2. All the phenomena are produced in a space or area that is within reach of the arm and leg of the medium, still further lengthened by the use of a flower-stand as a 'reacher,' and a shoe edge as a fulcrum for levitations.

"3. Personally I do not believe Eusapia Palladino has any extraordinary psychic or telekinetic power. Her whole performance seems to me, on the basis of what I saw and felt, to be the deception of two senses, sight and touch, assisted by intentional suggestions.

"Instruments of precision from the scientific laboratory are not needed here. The problem, in my judgment, lies in quite a different and far simpler field—that of clever detection.

"From my experience of these two sittings, I would make the following suggestions to future investigators:

"1. The medium was always dressed in a black dress. If she were dressed in white her whereabouts and movements could easily be seen in the dark room. This would be the simplest test of all, and I therefore place it first.

"The cabinet was painted black on the inside. The table which 'John' moved so frequently was made of plain unpainted pine boards; why then had the cabinet to be painted, and painted black? The answer is simple, namely: to render the sleeves of her black dress unseen when she thrust her arm inside. And another thing may be explained by this black sleeve and black background, namely, that it isolates her hand for the sense of sight, so that sitters, seeing a pale white hand in the cabinet, will exclaim: 'I see a hand unattached; just a hand; no arm with it.' If she wore a white dress this illusion of sight could not take place.

"2. Another simple precaution would be to place the medium at the broad side of the table and have only one person in control of both her hands and both her feet at one and the same time.

"3. I would also suggest a square table, each side of which is at least three feet in length. This width would compel the 'controls' to sit so far apart that their feet could not be pressed simultaneously by only one foot of the medium; and she should then keep her hands on the table top in full view.

"4. Since she asks to be tied, her two ankles should be tied together with a slack of only four or five inches—not more—and her two wrists together with a similar slack.

"5. But if she will allow none of these test conditions, then I would advise the sitter who desires to verify my observations for himself to secure the place of left 'control,' since that appears to be the more active side. He will then

have more numerous opportunities of detecting the various movements here described."

We must remember that Mr. Krebs is not an unbeliever. He is well known as a lecturer in psychic research and believes in the possibility of telekinetic, telepathic, and kindred psychic phenomena. He would have hailed the opportunity to meet a genuine medium, but he failed to do so. He is an active member of both the English and American branches of the Society for Psychical Research, but being anxious to have psychic phenomena established as scientific facts, he has been a foe to fraud, and his critical ability is shown by his exposure of the Misses Bangs of Chicago, which appeared with an introductory note by Dr. Hodgson in the *Journal of the S. P. R.* (Jan. 1901, X, pp. 5-16). By profession he is a clergyman of the German Reformed Church, but he is also a graduate of the Chicago College of Psychology and has always taken particular interest in attempts to popularize the science. At present he holds the position of president of the American University of Trade and Commerce, founded in Philadelphia by John Wanamaker.

Soon after Mr. Krebs's exposure other investigation followed. Professor Münsterberg caught Palladino's foot in the attempt of accomplishing her miraculous feats in a purely mechanical way. Thereupon a formidable array of seven university professors, mainly of Columbia, trapped her by watching her operations with the assistance of two spies hidden under the chairs. Eusapia was in the best of spirits and confessed that conditions were favorable. The report of the seance reads as follows (*ibid.* 336) :

"The evening proved rich in phenomena. The table rapped, rocked, tilted on two legs and on one, and left the floor completely. Under lowered lights (signaled for by five raps of the table) the curtains blew apart; a swelling appeared under the left curtain; the curtain was blown over the table; a tabouret emerged from the cabinet, was balanced for a moment, repeatedly advanced and retreated, and at last was lifted and deposited on the seance table; later a hand appeared against the cabinet over Eusapia's head; there were more bulgings of the curtain, more levitations; and then the seven raps of the table, indicating the close of the seance, followed by a violent outburst from Eusapia when the sitters continued to retain their positions. Such, with omission of all detail, was the seance. The phenomena were those most commonly associated with this 'medium.'"

The affidavits of all witnesses proved that every one of Eusapia's phenomena were accomplished by trickery and the explanations tally exactly with those given by Mr. Krebs. We may further mention a report by Professor Jastrow in the *American Review of Reviews*, which fully confirms these exposures and possesses the additional advantage of being illustrated. In spite of these reverses Madame Palladino has some loyal adherents, among whom we may mention Mr. Hereward Carrington.

It would be advisable not to take any further trouble to investigate mediums unless they agree to subject themselves to the conditions proposed by Mr. Krebs. They should have their cabinets painted white, not black. They ought to be dressed in white, and perform only in full light with the spectators all around, or if the spirits refuse to operate except in the dark the medium's robe should be saturated with luminous paint. But most of all, they should be expected to present real psychic or spiritual phenomena and reveal something that is worth knowing, not merely to rap tables, to materialize in shadowy forms, to produce unexpected touches and to show lights which can be imitated

by any phosphorescent substance. Moreover whenever they send messages, let them contain something worth knowing and give us some valuable information of a positive nature either concerning this world or the next.

We must confess that it is almost incredible that any one can still believe in the supernatural powers of a pretender whose fraud has become so apparent and unquestionable. It seems that a medium has simply to dupe some uncritical man of great scholarship or learning or fame. Uncritical he must be because otherwise he could not be easily deceived. But we must bear in mind that a man may be very learned and yet be lacking in common sense. Such was the famous Professor Zöllner. A man may be a good psychologist; such was Lombroso, and yet he could be induced to believe in Eusapia's powers. A man may be a great logician as is Professor Hyslop, and yet may believe in the genuineness of Mrs. Piper's trances and the importance of her spirit communications. A man may be a great astronomer like Flammarion, and yet may entertain fantastic views as to the nature of the soul.

THE ÆONIC NUMBER OF BABYLON.

BY ALAN S. HAWKESWORTH.

Dr. Theophilus G. Pinches, LL. D., M. R. A. S., of London, considers "Some Mathematical Tablets of the British Museum" in the *Hilprecht Anniversary Volume*, and gives lengthy lists of the different fractional parts of 12,960,000, the "grand number" of the Babylonian æon, and the fourth power of their unit 60. This "grand æonic number," as Greek students will remember, was also that of Plato, who doubtless inherited it from Babylon. Dr. Pinches remarks that the scribe who had learned these tables by heart, possessed in them multiplication tables in the sexagesimal scale, and all things needed to make them accomplished arithmeticians. I fear, if this be true, that I am stupider than I thought I was; for, personally, if I were confined to such tables alone, I would be poorly equipped. But as sexagesimal tables they are quite interesting.

BOOK REVIEWS AND NOTES.

TILES FROM THE PORCELAIN TOWER.. By *Edward Gilchrist*. Cambridge: Riverside Press, 1906. Pu. 90.

The writer has lived for many years in China and this little volume is a collection of translations and original poems on miscellaneous subjects.

The porcelain tower stood at Nanking and was counted as one of the wonders of the world. It was destroyed in 1853 in the T'ai Ping rebellion which was a national movement aiming to replace the present mongrel government by a Chinese dynasty whose name should be "Great Peace" or *T'ai Ping*. Strange to say these Great Peace people had embraced Christianity. It was a native Chinese Christianity, but nevertheless they believed in the Old and New Testament and besides God worshiped Jesus as their saviour and as their elder brother, the mediator between God and mankind. But with the Old Testament they had inherited a hatred of everything that was non-Christian and so they destroyed both Buddhist and Taoist temples, even refusing the customary honors to Confucius. In Nanking the porcelain tower fell as an object of their fanaticism. Mr. Gilchrist dedicates to its ruins the following sonnet: