

care of this unfortunate class.—*Lutheran Observer*.

[We join the *Observer* in its suggestions, and add that frequent appeals are made to us by persons in every part of the country for advice in regard to a suitable place in which such unfortunates may be educated; and we are led to infer that greatly increased facilities are needed. We will not stop here to discuss the questions as to what are the *causes* of imbecility; but to urge upon the authorities their duties in the care and education of imbeciles and idiots.]

CAN ELECTRICITY BE PRODUCED FROM THE HUMAN BODY?

THE *London Spiritualist* not long since contained a statement made by Mr. C. F. Varley, the well-known electrician, on the supposed production of electricity by the living human body. He says the sparks produced by combing the hair, by drawing off silk stockings, or by rubbing the feet on the carpet, are illustrations of frictional electricity, which in no way depend on vitality, but are due solely to the proper conditions in the substances rubbed together and in the atmosphere. He then comments on another form of supposed bodily electrification, which has led many people to suppose that the brain was an electrical battery sending electricity through the nerves to contract the muscles, and which is produced as follows: The terminals of a very sensitive galvanometer are connected each with a separate basin of water. If the hands be then placed one in each basin, on squeezing one hand violently a positive current is almost always found to flow from that hand, through the galvanometer, to the other hand which is not compressed.

While experimenting night after night on this subject in 1854, Mr. Varley found that after squeezing the hand, opening the clenched fist produced a momentary increase of power instead of a decrease; and when the wind was from the southwest, the power was less than one-fourth as strong as when it was from the northeast. The former wind was found to be slightly negative to the earth; the latter was invariably powerfully electro-positive. On trying to exhibit these currents on one occasion and finding them to be very weak, Mr. Varley washed his hands thoroughly in water containing a little liquid ammonia, in order to decompose the grease in the pores of the skin. The

result was diminution instead of an increase of the power. On washing his hands, however, with a very weak nitric acid, and afterward with water, he obtained more power on squeezing his hands than he had ever done during the most persistent east wind. This led to an explanation of the phenomena as one due to chemical action alone, the act of squeezing the hand violently forcing some perspiration out of the pores. By dipping one hand in a solution of ammonia and the other in one of nitric acid, and then washing both in water, squeezing either hand produced a current in the same direction; and when both hands were placed in the water and a little acid dropped on one of them, a current was instantly generated without any muscular exertion. Mr. Varley finds no evidence that electricity exists in or about the human body, either as a source of motive power or otherwise; and would explain all the feeble electricity which has been obtained from the muscles as due to different chemical conditions of the part of the muscle itself.

CALVIN SISCOE POWERS, PHRENOLOGICAL LECTURER, ETC.

THE portrait evinces an excellent physical condition, and a temperament conducive to both physical and mental vigor. As Mr. Powers weighs two hundred and fourteen pounds, and is solidly and compactly built, it may be inferred that his alimentary functions are admirable. The great bulk of the man appears to reside in the region of the chest, the expansion of which corresponds with his large head, which is a trifle less than twenty-four inches in circumference. Such cerebral capacity requires a superior vital organism for its adequate sustenance, otherwise there would be a failure of mental power.

Those large perceptive faculties associated with that broad head and ministered to by an active and even excitable temperament make the man alive, energetic, and pushing. He is eager to acquire information, and eager to use or disseminate it. He is somewhat restless in this respect, eagerly availing himself of opportunities to apply his views of life mental and life physical.

The portrait, however, is not well adapted to the purposes of phrenological exegesis, although it conveys some apt notion of what Mr. Powers is like. There is an element of

the patriarchal in that flowing beard and mild countenance.

MR. POWERS was born in Johnstown, Canada West, in the month of September, 1826. His father, Samuel W. Powers, is of Revolutionary stock, and formerly resided in Vermont. When the subject of our sketch was

CALVIN SISCOE POWERS.

about four years of age, his parents removed to Elizabethtown, Canada West. After remaining there about eight years, they removed again to Newcastle, in the same province, where the greater part of Mr. Powers' life was spent. His early education was obtained chiefly at district schools, and his opportunities for attending them were limited. In the spring of 1847 he entered the dry-goods store of a brother-in-law, and acted in the capacity of book-keeper and general assistant. Here he remained five years. An unexpected incident led him to become connected with a person engaged in marble-cutting and statuary. Having some taste for art, he not only attended to the management of the business, but also acquired a practical knowledge of the details of marble-cutting. He exhibited a piece of statuary, fashioned by his own hand, at a fair in Cobourg, Canada West, and was awarded the first prize for works of art. In the fall of 1855 he became interested in the publication of a politico-literary newspaper, entitled the *Newcastle Garland*. While prosecuting his journal enterprise, he also continued his studies in sculpture, and acquired considerable local notoriety. For several years he found his employment lucrative, so that he accumulated considerable property.

At Newcastle he became intimately acquainted with Rev. William Ormiston, who is now settled in New York, and whose reputation as a pulpit orator is somewhat extended. The loss of his property through the duplicity of an agent compelled him to make a new beginning, and in the furtherance of his interests he spent two years in traveling through New England as business agent, shorthand reporter, newspaper correspondent, and lecturer. He delivered lectures on various subjects, politics included. During the canvass which resulted in the first election of Mr. Lincoln to the Presidency, he occasionally interested himself in behalf of the "martyr," speaking when occasion offered, and writing and reporting for the press. His first introduction to the career of a phrenological lecturer occurred in 1861, when he delivered a lecture before a Western literary society on the subject of "Phrenology vs. Bumpology." The success that attended the delivery of this lecture induced him to become a practical phrenologist. In that capacity he has traveled tens of thousands of miles, and lectured in nearly all the large towns of Minnesota, Wisconsin, Michigan, northern Illinois, and northern and central Iowa. The press generally in these States speaks most favorably of Mr. Powers' abilities as a speaker and examiner, and his success has been fairly demonstrated, both by the popular esteem expressed for him in those districts which he has visited, and by the pecuniary returns from his labors. The country has need of a hundred such teachers.

THE GRAVE AND THE ROSE.

FROM THE FRENCH OF VICTOR HUGO, BY MARY H. GILBERT.

To the rose the dark grave said :

" With the tears upon thy brow.

By the pale, meek morning shed,

Flower of love, what makest thou ? "

To the grave the red rose said :

" Sepulcher, what makest thou

With thy gaping gulfs so dread,

Laying low each noble brow ? "

The rose said : " Oh, darksome grave !

Of these tears I amber make ;

Lo ! perfumes the sunshine lave,

Tears to sweetness I awake. "

To the rose the dark grave said :

" Plaintive flower, souls come to me

Immortality to wed,

Angels of the skies to be. "

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