philosophy, and by St. Paul, one of the greatest of both Jewish and Christian philosophers of his time. The Chairman also reverted to the philosophy of evolution as a philosophy of the causes of the phenomena of life, and which, taken in connection with the correlation of physical forces, first shown by Faraday in modern times, will give a new view to many questions of the day, as has been already shown by the philosophical works of Herbert Spencer. He thought it only right to observe, however, that the same method was followed by him forty years ago, and that he had acquired much information from the writings of philosophers of the 17th century, when the discoveries of Newton led to changes in philosophy, and to discussions like those of the present day. The doctrine that motion or energy is indestructible, and is never lost, but only transferred, was explicitly stated by Grew in his Cosmologia Sacra. What he (the Chairman) had developed most especially in regard to mental science and the practice of medicine, both in mental and general diseases, was the doctrine of the law of reversion as correlative with that of evolution, and of both as correlative with the laws of development and nutrition, not only of all living things, and of granules and cells, but of the molecular evolution and reversion of their chemical constituents. Here was a field for working at what comes before us in daily life, which is "the prime wisdom." There are insuperable difficulties, doubtless, in the way of ascertaining the relations between conciousness and organisation, some of which the Chairman named, but it was a serious fallacy in method to conclude, from our ignorance of things, that they are non-existent. He did not say, therefore, that plants are unconscious, because that which in us corresponds to vegetative life is so. He could not, in fact, solve the question, except metempirically, or by speculation, but if he were obliged to come to a conclusion on the question, the answer would be a modified acquiescence in the affirmative, assuming also that there may be very different states of consciousness from those of mankind.

CASE AND AUTOPSY OF A KALMUC IDIOT.

At this stage Dr. JAMIESON, of Aberdeen, took the chair.

Dr. FRASER read a paper on a "Case and Autopsy of a Kalmuc Idiot." (This will appear with illustrations in a future number.)

Dr. IRELAND said, that in the absence of Dr. Brodie, he wished to make a few remarks. The paper had interested him extremely, and he hoped it would open the field for a new type of idiocy. He believed this co-relation of structure sometimes gave a clue to a line of research. It was difficult to see the connection between the different peculiarities which Dr. Fraser had so carefully studied. But it was possible that by comparing them with healthy individuals they might be able to get at a specific generalisation. He could not say that he ever met such a type or felt in his own mind the necessity of classifying it. But the subject was almost entirely new to him, and he would certainly look and see whether he could find any members of the class which Dr. Mitchell and Dr. Fraser had described. He did not think that there were any Kalmucs in the East, and he thought they should exclude this kind of patronymic from the kingdom of Fife (laughter). He did not quite understand that all the features that constituted a type had been observed by Dr. Mitchell. He certainly had good hopes that Drs. Mitchell and Fraser would yet work out something in regard to the matter worthy of notice. In regard to an allied type of idiocy he must say that he did not think he had seen cases of Cretins in this country. Some asserted that Cretins were a very distinct form of idiot. If they tried to describe the Cretin they would find that the exceptions were as great as the rule. He could not make out that they could prove the existence of Cretins in Scotland. He said if he were classifying the Kalmuc idiot he would put him under his own "Congenital" class. He had stated his belief that the class of congenital idiots, when it was fairly worked out, would be resolved into two or three classes. He would be very well pleased to see a sub-class of idiocy erected.

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The CHAIRMAN said it struck him that the term Kalmuc was a very objectionable term. He thought there was nothing marked about the Kalmuc, and there was no reason for nicknaming an idiot by calling him a Kalmuc. He thought this uncalled-for term should be departed from. Why did they call such an one a Kalmuc? The idiot is no more a Kalmuc than any other human being.

Dr. FRASER—It is so called on account of the form of the eyes and the size of the head.

IMPULSIVE INSANITY.

Dr. MACLAREN read a paper on "Impulsive Insanity."*

The CHAIRMAN said he thought this was a very interesting paper, and he would be glad to hear observations upon it. His own idea was that it was a case of epilepsy—a variety of epilepsy—and was one of those to which criminal insanity belonged, and he asked whether the lady had been under any treatment at all.

Dr. MACLAREN replied that she seemed to have been greatly over-drugged.

Dr. CLOUSTON said his idea was that it was most closely allied to epilepsy, but not quite that disease. There were many of the features of the case that made it very analogous to what was called automatism. Looked at from a physiological point of view the case was one of automatic and unconscious cerebration. On the previous day he had met the lady walking with two attendants. They had each hold of one hand, and seemed to be somewhat afraid of her. He told them to let go her hand and she would walk with him. She walked round the asylum grounds perfectly well except on passing a heap of manure, when she ran towards it and tried to take hold of the spade that was in it. He afterwards asked her why she went to the manure. "Well," she replied, "I never can pass a heap of manure without an impulse to go to it, because when I was a girl I denied Christ." He asked "How?" She said, "Because when I was once told some good thing had to be done, I made an excuse and would not do it. I went out after I had said so, and I thought that as I had denied Christ I would take to very low work to make up for it, and the first thing that I saw was some dung, which I at once began to spread." It appeared that her pastor had quoted a particular passage of Scripture with reference to the meaning of denying Christ, and she had never passed a heap of dung ever since without having an impulse to go and spread it, thinking at the same time of that passage, and repeating it aloud. This was certainly an automatic action of the brain, or, as some physiologists would call it, a reflex action, and illustrated the morbid brain-working which resulted in those impulsive acts, described by Dr. Maclaren. I believe she had been heavily drugged by bromide of potassium, chloral, and other drugs. Since she came to Morningside she had got scarcely anything of that kind; nothing but fresh air and food, and in some respects, she was better in regard to her mental state, but these impulsive attacks came on, and during each of her conditions the very same association of ideas and reflex acts occurred. In the one case she was conscious, and in the other unconscious, which was very interesting as regards the mode of action of the higher centres of the brain, that being entirely independent of what is called consciousness. He thought the paper was very interesting and well written.

Dr. CAMPBELL said that there were many people who believed that hæmatoma was caused by injury. Now he would like to know Dr. Maclaren's experience on that subject in regard to what he had seen at Morningside. He directed attention to the occurrence of impulsive acts the result of masturbation.

Dr. MACLAREN said his opinion was that it might occur independently of injury.

LUNACY ACTS.

Dr. SKAE then read "Remarks on Lunacy Acts (Scotland)," by Dr. Rorie.

The CHAIRMAN said it was a great practical inconvenience to certify every-

* See "Medical Times and Gazette," Jan., 1876.

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