persons, some of them quite insane, can read my mind while theirs is sealed to me. My nervous system daily responds to the force of others' will, while I cannot make any one sick at the stomach except with ipecac, &c., nor give them pain in the head unless with a hickory stick or some of its relations.

Brown Sequard's idea, that the nerve force cannot travel beyond the nerve filaments may be correct. Then the phenomena may result either from all mind being, like all matter, in perpetual and instant communication, or from the vibrations of a universal medium communicating the acts of one mind to another. In proof that it was not due to prepossession or dominant ideas—Carpenter's device for getting rid of facts which he cannot explain—I adopted several explanations of the sensations before settling upon what I am now convinced is the true one.

I have written this letter to call the attention of the public, and especially Superintendents of Insane Hospitals, to the subject, and to ask for information of similar experiences. I would also be greatly obliged if some one would send me a book, or the title of one, in which such matters are fairly discussed.* A PATIENT.

Marriages between First Cousins.

Mr. George H. Darwin, M.A., has undertaken a series of laborious and painstaking enquiries into the proportion of first cousin marriages to all marriages in the population, and into the effects of such marriages on the health of the progeny. The method which he pursued in his enquiry, and the results which he obtained, will be found described in an elaborate paper in the "Journal of the Statistical Society" for June, 1875.

To sum up the results of the whole investigation: It seems probable that in England, among the aristocracy and gentry, about 4 per cent. of all marriages are between first cousins; in the country and smaller towns between 2 and 3 per cent; and in London perhaps as few as 1½ per cent. Probably 3 per cent. is a superior limit for the whole population. Turning to lunatic and idiot asylums, probably between 3 and 4 per cent. of the patients are offspring of first cousins. Taking into account the uncertainty of my methods of finding the proportion of such marriages in the general population, the percentage of such offspring in asylums is not greater than that in the general population to such an extent as to enable one to say, positively, that the marriage of first cousins has any effect in the production of insanity or idiocy, although it might still be shown, by more accurate

* Answers to this communication, addressed to the care of Editor of the "Meteor," will be promptly delivered to our bewildered friend.

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methods of research, that it is so. With respect to deaf-mutes, the proportion of offspring of first cousin marriages is precisely the same as the proportion of such marriages for the large towns and the country, and therefore there is no evidence whatever of any ill results accruing to the offspring in consequence of the cousinship of their parents.

The results of Mr. Darwin's applications to the Superintendents of Lunatic Asylums were not satisfactory. Although those to whom he applied for information responded in the most obliging manner, yet most of them felt it necessary to caution him against placing reliance upon the statistics which they were able to send him. The difference of opinion regarding the effects of intermarriages showed at any rate that the statistics had not led to any uniform results. Dr. Crichton Browne thinks "that the great danger attending such intermarriages consists in the intensification of the morbid constitutional tendencies which they favour. Hereditary diseases and cachexiæ are much more likely to be shared by cousins than by persons who are in no way related . . . . are transmitted with more than double intensity when they are common to both parents. . . . They seem to be the square or cube of the combined volume . . . even healthy temperaments, when common to both parents, often come out as decided cachexiæ in the children." Dr. Howden, of Montrose, says—"As regards insanity, my own impression is, that unless there exists a hereditary predisposition the marriage of cousins has *no effect* in producing it. . . . Neither in insanity nor in any other abnormal propensity do two plus two produce four; there is always another factor at work neutralising intensification and bringing things back to the normal."

Dr. Howe, in his Report of the Massachusetts Asylum for the Blind, asserts that the intermarriage of near relatives, like all other violations of natural laws, is followed by some punishment. This may, perhaps, hardly be remarked for a long time, but close observation throughout succeeding generations proves the truth of it. "Conversing once with one of our eminent physicians upon the matter of blood relatives, I said "Why, Doctor, your parents were full cousins; they left seven or eight children, and yet where are the peculiarities in them?" "You don't see them, perhaps," said he, quickly, "but I tell you every one of us has a 'hair lick' in the brain."

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