

otherwise than at the good pleasure of his Heavenly Father, and that in using what you speak of as an "arbitrary charm" and "gawdling with religious spells," he can and does give his heart to God entirely, unreservedly, and with simple, child-like confidence.—I am, Sir, &c.,
J. M. V.

[Our purpose was very far indeed from ridiculing. But quite apart from the question of the reality of those multiplied miracles, when sprinkling with holy waters is recommended as enabling students to pass competitive examinations well, is there not the greatest danger that the Catholics will be led to make light of God's great natural laws, in his faith in the personal intercession of some long-departed human being who could not be reasonably expected to have entered into the purpose and meaning and value of those natural laws?—Ed. Spectator.]

MAHOMMEDAN WOMEN.

(TO THE EDITOR OF THE "SPECTATOR.")

Sir,—Permit me to correct an error into which you have fallen in the last issue of the Spectator, p. 1248. Had it been a mere literary mistake, I should not have troubled you with any notice of it, but as it is a misunderstanding of facts, calculated at the present time to prejudice many persons against the religion of millions of Arabs and Africans, and to give an utterly wrong impression of the teaching of the great Prophet of Arabia, I can have no hesitation in asking for a small space in which to point out what is the truth. Your reviewer says, speaking of the teaching of the Koran with regard to women, that it "refuses to slavery half the human race,—the women, who are certainly not numbered of future existence by the Koran, though Mohammed did not absolutely deny it to them."

I am not an Arabic scholar, and therefore cannot contradict this with authority at first hand, but just as we Christians—such among us as do not know Greek—would be justified and even bound to correct some erroneous statements against Christianity by an appeal to the text of the Authorized Version of the New Testament, so I am justified in appealing to George Sale's well-known translation of the Koran. In the first place, it will be well to quote a passage from the preliminary discourse by the translator, a treatise which has been regarded from the day of its publication as a mine of Eastern learning. On this question he says, in Section A:—

"It may not be improper to observe the falsehood of a vulgar imputation on the Mohammedans, who are by several writers reported to hold that women have no souls, or if they have, that they will perish, like those of brute beasts, and will not be rewarded in the next life. But whatever may be the opinion of some ignorant people among them, it is certain that Mohammed had too great a respect for the fair sex to teach such a doctrine, and there are several passages in the Koran which affirm that women, in the next life, will not only be punished for their evil actions, but will also receive the rewards of their good deeds, as well as the men, and that in this case God will make no distinction of sexes." [p. 181.]

The passages in the Koran which prove this are too many to quote. I will, however, give two, merely as specimens:—

"I will not suffer the work of him among you who worketh to be lost, whether he be male or female; the one of you is from the other. They, therefore, who have left their country, and have been turned out of their houses and lands suffered by their akes. . . . I will surely bring them into gardens restored by rivers." (Chap. XL, p. 83.)

"Whoso doth good works, whether he be male or female, and is a true believer, they shall be admitted into Paradise, and shall not be therein but as they justly shall wish." (Chap. LV, p. 107.)

Nothing can possibly be more to the point than the above passages. Suppose some Jewish priest (and such things have been) should argue that there was no proof from Holy Scripture that women were immortal, could anything be quoted therefrom more conclusive than the foregoing?

The fact is, that commonly in the Koran, as in the Bible and modern Acts of Parliament, the word "man" must be understood to include "woman" also, unless there be something in the context which indicates that such an interpretation is inaccurate. The edition of Sale's Koran from which I have quoted is that in two volumes, octavo, 1825.—I am, Sir, &c.,

Bedford House, Brigg, Dec. 15. EDWARD FRASER.

[We are quite aware of the controversy on the question, but our impression remains that Mohammed promised rewards in a future life to exceptionally good women like Radîkah, rather than assured future life to all women. They clearly do not reach the same Paradise as men.—Ed. Spectator.]

THE ALLEGED ANNEXATION OF KHIVA.

(TO THE EDITOR OF THE "SPECTATOR.")

Sir,—Although the letter of "Geographica" in the Spectator of last week seems to me to be related in some respects by itself,

perhaps you may permit a plain statement to be made against the bold parallel he has therein advanced?

Khiva, by the treaty of August, 1873, ceded the right bank of the Amou Darya to Russia; Russia, by a subsequent treaty in September of the same year, handed over the southern portion—perhaps, also, the larger—of her acquisition to Bokhara, but retained the remaining northern portion, which now—a small strip of territory, and stretching more than 300 miles along the banks of the Oxus—constitutes the subdivision of Amou Darya. Russia has acquired the complete command of the navigation of this important river, and the forts, Forts and Petro-Alexandrovsk keep the whole neighbourhood in subjection. The latter fort is within a march of the capital of the Khan, and it is undeniable that the remaining part of Khiva could be occupied without any serious difficulty. The policy of compensating Bokhara for losses in her eastern territory by giving her a share of the spoil is not difficult to understand, for it serves to perpetuate among Central Asia the partition the discussion which has hitherto been their ruin when meeting Russia in the field. An Captain Durnoy, lately puts it, the Khivan now regards the Bokharis much as the Frenchman would the Belgians, if Germany had placed Alsace and Lorraine in the custody of that kingdom. This gallant officer's "Ride to Khiva" and Major Wood's "Stories of Lake Aral" show us what Russia's position is in this quarter, and from these books we may learn whether she really kept the spirit of her bond with us, if by leaving the unfortunate Khan his capital and the left bank of the Oxus she seemed to adhere to its letter.—I am, Sir, &c.,
D. C. BARNARD.

MR. G. H. LEWIS'S EXPOSURE OF MR. HAYDEN.

(TO THE EDITOR OF THE "SPECTATOR.")

Sir,—In your comment on Mr. Lewis's letter you seem to imply that the experiment described may prove impertinent, but that Professor De Morgan's experiment was equally decisive against impertinence. Will you allow me very briefly to point out that the alleged exposure proves nothing without assuming the very fact at issue—that Mrs. Hayden herself caused the signs following the indications given by the person who pointed to the letters of the alphabet? For let us assume, on the other hand, that the signs were, as alleged, caused by invisible beings, perhaps not superior in intelligence to Mrs. Hayden, and equally liable to be affected by insult or impertinence, and that these beings could read, more or less imperfectly, the questioner's mind. Numerous questions were asked these intelligences, and absurd or contradictory answers were sought to be obtained by dwelling on certain letters. These absurd answers were obtained. This is consistent with the supposition on two theories. Either the intelligences could read only the questioner's active desire for a certain answer while pointing to the letters, and accordingly gave that answer; or, if it were able also to perceive the question (though less vivid in the questioner's mind at the moment), it might well adopt the human principle of answering what would be important questions in the only way they deserved an answer. It is a fact within my own knowledge, and is well known to all spiritualists, that both kinds of answers are obtained in private circles where any imposture is out of the question. Professor De Morgan's experiment on the other hand absolutely precluded imposture on Mrs. Hayden's part, since not only were the letters and pointer carefully concealed from her, but the answer, though correct, was in words which the Professor was not expecting. The one experiment was purely negative and inconclusive, the other positive; and I cannot understand how so logical a mind as that of Mr. G. H. Lewis can put the two results even in the same category, much less allow the negative evidence to prevail.—I am, Sir, &c.,
ALFRED H. WALLACE.

[We confess we regard Mr. Lewis's explanation of what he observed as the one, at all events, which every rational investigator would accept,—if only on the well-known principle of economizing wonder as much as possible, until forced by experience to accept the very surprising explanation of Mr. Wallace.—Ed. Spectator.]

"THE LIFE OF THOMAS EDWARD."

(TO THE EDITOR OF THE "SPECTATOR.")

Sir,—I think your reviewer, in his notice of Mr. Swales's "Life of Thomas Edward," hardly does justice to the extraordinary precocity of that naturalist. Your reviewer, quoting, I presume, Mr. Smith, says of Edward that "at sixty-two years of age he is still under the necessity of labouring at shembling." This statement, I imagine, requires him to have been born in 1814.