THE ACADEMY.

[Jan. 30, 1875.

THE ACADEMY.

Tidhar's Ground, and an interview with "Mr. Mosey," the leading character in Mr. Dickens's story. The latter gave a very graphic sketch of what he had seen, and closed with these sentences: "Charles Dickens offended him terriorty. He pretended he was a Highlander, and Mr. Mosey at first began to question him about the country, and then spoke to him in Gaelic, which he could not reply to. Mr. Mosey said to him, 'You're not a Scotchman; you're not a gentleman.'"

Mr. Dickens declares to be "a sheer invention of the wildest kind" (letter of March 27, 1872), and he proceeds to state the names of those who were present when he had the "Hermit" the new famous interview.

FRANK FINLAY.

The Editor will be glad if the Secretaries of Institutions, and other persons concerned, will lend their aid in making this Calendar as complete as possible.

APPOINTMENTS FOR NEXT WEEK.


SCIENCE.

PHILOSOPHY OF HEREDITY.

Heredity is a Psychological Study of its Phenomena, Laws, and Consequences.


It may be affirmed with much truth that if we wish to learn what pursuas rank highest in public opinion, we shall find it in the career of these men who to whom are assigned

that "a collier in Scotland prolonged his hard and dreary existence over one hundred and thirty-three years." Then we have, as an example of exceedingly acute sense, a story extracted from Prosper Lucas, who was much too credulous of wonderful stories, of "Hirsch Daenemarck, a Polish Jew, who had travelled over Europe, showing by decisive experiments that he could read in a closed book any page or line that might be desired;" and of his son, aged ten, who "possessed this same faculty in perhaps a more remarkable degree." Co.

The latter went on to point out how much he happened to be a "sheer invention of the wildest kind" (letter of March 27, 1872), and he proceeds to state the names of those who were present when he had the "Hermit" the new famous interview.

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be quoted, apparently with perfect approval, the opinion that "there is an invariable condition between the heredity of physical resemblance and the heredity of moral resemblance." I can only say that I have been struck by the number of cases in which the child who had the features of either parent had not the character, that I should hardly be surprised if they proved to be more numerous; but I have never as yet gone statistically into this question. Then he indulges in some absurd views about likeness descending through opposite sexes, and quotes approvingly a belief that the son is more like his mother, and, through her, to his grandfather, than he is to his father.

The inaccuracy and feebleness of his deductions is, in the possibility of very striking Here is one which is perfectly inexcusable in a writer on heredity; he is speaking of the transmission of acquired habits, and uses an offer of genius and anecdote to prove his case. He says:—

"Habit is defined to be an acquired disposition. We ask if any purely individual habits are transmitted? Instances of this are numerous. Every great inventor, artist, man of science, artificer, feels within him an inspiration, an involuntary invasion, as it were, coming to the mind in the depth of his heart, which is, as has been said, impersonal. All that comes under consciousness is results and not process. The difference between talent and genius is the difference between the conscious and unconscious. Artists, prophets, martyrs, mystics, all those who in any degree have felt the force possess, have ever acknowledged their subjection to a higher power than their own ego, and this power is the unconscious overlapping the subconscious consciousness."

The word "talent" in the above is open to objection, because it is usually understood to mean an "instinctive gift," and instinctive, we see, is not of late "consciences." The phrase ought to run "between steady brain-work and genius." I may add, that a woman's intelligence appears to have a larger proportion of the unconscious element in it than the man's, for it is notorious that she frequently arrives at just conclusions, though the only reason she is able to assign may be impenetrably immobile.

Much is said in the book about free will but nothing worthy of note is advanced. There is also an eloquent passage about the decay of the Greek genius, which is ascribed to the effects of "naturals," but unhappily the author does not even profess to understand the meaning of that phrase. He says:—

"Clearly heredity has nothing to do with this decay; but then if it is transmitted to the next generation, and if, further, the same cause goes on acting in the same direction, it is equally clear that heredity in turn becomes a cause of decay."

These "in" and the uncertain conclusion, and the general haze that overspreads the passage, are characteristic of the author's style of reasoning without a word of acknowledgment. They are clipped and condensed, and a telling number of cases are varied, but that is all, and M. Ribot thinks fit to give this plagiarized version of the families of the principal poets, painters, musicians, men of science and of literature, statesmen, and commanders, ex-