

THE RABBI HERSCH DANEMARK.

[FROM OUR PARIS CORRESPONDENT, "STELLA."]

One of the most learned men of the day, Professor Perry, of the Bernese University, has just published a book, equally wonderful for its research, learning, and boldness, called "The Mystic Phenomena of Human Nature." The same diligent gatherer had previously published a book, entitled "The Reality of Magical Powers and Operations defended against All Opponents;" "Facts and Observations on the Soul-Life of Animals," and other strange, weighty, startling productions, crammed and running over with modern science and with ancient lore.

One of the most curious and interesting personages to whom this strange book introduces us is the Rabbi Hersch Danemark, of Siebenbürgen. When this wonderful Rabbi has put on a certain gold-laced cap, he counts, at a single glance, the longest rows of lines in any book or manuscript you bring to him. "He counted," says the Professor, "in an instant, the forty-four lines of a page in a printed book." If the book be in Hebrew, he will read it, just as easily, shut or open. Let anyone present point with a finger, a needle, a knife, between the pages of a closed Hebrew book, and he will read it off without hesitation; but only if the book or manuscript be in Hebrew. His memory is amazing; he can recite the Talmud, and thousands of Hebrew books, from beginning to end, and has given numerous exhibitions of this kind in Germany, Switzerland, and France.

On the 26th September, 1842, before the professors of the University and clergymen of Basle, he not only counted and read as just stated, but he allowed those present to name any page of the Talmud, and the particular line of the page in a copy of the Talmud on the table, and he immediately read the words in that line. He put his finger on a certain spot in the Talmud with his face turned away, and not only read the words there, but stated what were the words on leaves further on, and what was above and below on those leaves. He read with his back to the book long passages in it, and noted where every fresh page began to a syllable. Still more wonderful is another faculty of this extraordinary man, which has much engaged the attention of the learned in Germany. He allows any one present to take down any Hebrew book, to lay his finger or a needle on some place in the book, or to turn down the corner of a leaf, and he indicates the words above and below the point so touched; or he allows you to run a needle through several leaves, and names the number of the punctures, and the page where they cease. This he did with a M.S. of the University Library, with a pocket edition of the Psalms, and with Ewald's Hebrew Grammar. Of trick or sleight-of-hand there could be no question, as the Rabbi was watched by too many critical eyes.

In Vienna he was invited to give proof of his powers by Prince de Metternich, in presence of the Grand-duke Franz, and a number of learned physicians and linguists. At his departure the Prince presented him with a gold snuff-box, in which was a bank note of 100 florins. In Basle he received the following testimonial:—"The performances of the Chief Rabbi, Hersch-Danemark, in the presence of a number of learned men and clergymen, have exceeded all expectation. Not only has he shown a power of memory perfectly inconceivable, but, as respects words in Hebrew books that he has not before seen, and had never opened, he displays a gift of real divination which appears the more astonishing the more it is reflected upon." This was signed by Professors Gerlach, Fischer, De Witte, and Deacon Preiswerk. Dr. Friedenberg, of the *Voss Gazette*, thus

testifies:—"We have witnessed a test of his achievements, which has convinced us that these belong rather to some undiscovered field of human faculty than to art. They border on the incredible. Herr Hersch-Danemark reads anything in a closed book at pleasure; but only if the book be in Hebrew. Every one present had brought such a book. I myself had 'A Journey in Africa,' by Samuel Romanoli, translated into rabbinical Hebrew, and which the Rabbi had certainly never seen. With his finger laid on the book, and his entranced eye directed into space, he read off the words or phrases that we had privately marked. Still more, he asked us which line he should read in a certain page; we said, 'The sixteenth.' He replied, 'I cannot do that, for there is a vacant place in the book; but I will read you the twelfth page,' which he did. On opening the book, the page was found exactly as he had stated.

A physician present doubted whether the Rabbi could read a book without touching it with his finger; but he read just as well in books covered with a silken or woollen cloth. Most striking to all present was the sort of trance in which he seemed to be while reading or divining a page of a closed book." This was in 1847.

In an article in the Appendix to the *Allgemeine Zeitung* of March 9, 1851, a doubter of the reality of the Rabbi's power was allowed to put his finger on a Hebrew word in a German book, where it was impossible for him to see it, and he gave the word correctly. He himself asserts that he has no knowledge whence his wonderful power arises.