

"The ether," that hypothetical medium which is supposed to fill and pervade space, and to convey light, force, energy, sound, or whatever these phenomena are called, from one body to another, has recently been expounded very aptly by Professor Oliver Lodge. "The ether," he tells us, is a continuous medium, and there are no other known methods for one body to act on another than by *continuous medium* and by *projectile*. The action of one animate body on another animate body not touching, is rather more complex—as in the case, for example, of a man calling the attention of a dog.

"Thus, one plan," says the professor, "is to prod him with a stick, another is to heave a stone at him, a third is to whistle or call, while a fourth is to beckon him by gesture, or, what is essentially the same process, to flash sunlight into his eye with a mirror. In the first two of these methods, the media of communication are perfectly obvious—the stick and the stone; in the third—the whistle—the medium is not so obvious, and this case might easily seem to a savage like action at a distance; but we know, of course, that it is the air, and that if the air between be taken away, all communication by sound is interrupted. But the fourth or optical method is not so interrupted; the dog can see through a vacuum perfectly well, though he cannot hear through it; but what the medium now is which conveys the impression is not so well known. The sun's light is conveyed to the earth by such a medium as this across the emptiness of planetary space." It is this medium to which the name "ether" has been given.

There are still other ways of acting upon a dog; to wit, by electric or magnetic action. "But, leaving these more mysterious and subtle modes of communication on one side, let us," continues the professor, "return to the two most simple ones—viz., the stick and the stone. These two are representative of the only possible fundamental modes of communication between inanimate bodies, for one is compelled to believe that every more occult mode of action will ultimately resolve itself into one or other of these two. The stick represents the method of communication by continuous substance; the stone represents the communication by actual transfer of matter, or the projectile method." The projectile method, however, when we begin to apply it, in one direction after another, to our world and the worlds around us, presents many difficulties, and we are compelled to abandon mere impact as a complete explanation of action in general. In a word, we are driven to the other hypothesis. "We must begin to imagine a continuous connecting medium between particles—a substance in which they are imbedded, and which extends into all their interstices, and extends without break to the remotest limits of space. Once grant this, and difficulties begin rapidly to disappear. There is now continuous contact between the particles of bodies, and, if one is pushed, the others naturally receive the motion." Given this hypothetical "ether," and the communication of light, heat, energy, &c., from one body to another, is to be explained without difficulty.

A curious question of art copyright is just now occupying some attention. The late Dante G. Rosetti, some time before his death, permitted the English Picture Publishing Company, of Manchester, to photograph his picture "Our Lady of Pity," the intention being to reproduce it in autotype. Shortly after he sold the picture to Mr. H. Virtue Tebbs without any reservation, and Mr. Tebbs naturally was surprised to find that copies of his picture in autotype were being offered for sale. On making the discovery he wrote to Mr. F. Shields, one of the partners in the Picture Publishing Company, pointing out the infringement of copyright, and received from Mr. Shields a reply acknowledging his "indisputable claims." In making this admission, however, Mr. Shields appears to have reckoned without his "financial partners," who, taking a different view of the matter, declined to recognise Mr. Tebbs' position. They base their rights on a letter of Mr. Rosetti, wherein he says:—"Do whatever you like as regards the issue of one or more autotypes. I only hope they may be worth your while, and on that account only would suggest your trying one at first; but you are best judge. Proofs not yet to hand. When they reach me I will see about the title. There is a sonnet of Dante's illustrating the subject, but my own impression is that a short extract from the prose narrative would do best." To this Mr. Tebbs answers that he is informed that Rosetti never authorised the publication of the autotype in question during his life, that at the time he wrote the letter he had not seen the autotype, and that when he did so he declined distinctly to permit its issue.

The matter, therefore, narrows itself into two questions. Is the letter written by Rosetti an authorisation of publication of the autotypes, and if so did he give formal notice to the English Publishing Company of the withdrawal of his consent? It is quite evident that to substantiate their rights, the Company must establish the first point, or they may be beaten on the broader principle, that when an artist sells a picture without any reservation, the new owner acquires the copyright, and may refuse to recognise a simple permission to copy given by the artist while the picture was in his possession. The quarrel is a very pretty one as it stands, and in the meantime the Company appear inclined to adhere to their ground, as the autotype is still offered for sale.

Since Mr. Tebbs has published his complaint, Mr. C. Rowley, one of the partners in the Company, has written to the *Athenæum* stating that he was in possession of the "personal and the autograph sanction to publish the work from the late D. G. Rosetti himself, and the assent of the executor," and that "on the supposition that the executor had power to restrain or permit, a royalty on every copy sold would have been remitted to him." On the face of this statement, Mr. Rowley would appear to have "protested" too much. If he acknowledges the executor had power to restrain or permit, surely this power must be possessed by the real owner of the picture!