

THE Harbinger of Light.

A MONTHLY JOURNAL

DEVOTED TO

ZOISTIC SCIENCE, FREE THOUGHT, SPIRITUALISM,
AND THE HARMONIAL PHILOSOPHY.

"Dawn approaches, Error is passing away, Men arising shall hail the day."

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Of the various criticisms on the the Report of the London Dialectical Society on Spiritualism, that have come under our notice, not one has comprehended the whole of the report, but simply argued upon those sections of the evidence which appeared to the Critic most vulnerable. All have without exception, ignored the manifestation of intelligence, and confined themselves to the physical phenomena. *Theories ad libitum* may be found to account for the most striking of these, but for the manifestation of intelligence, and that intelligence totally apart from, and indeed opposed to, the ideas in the minds of the circle (as appears in the report of sub-committee No. 2. a portion of which we publish in another column) no reasonable *theory* even can be suggested except the spiritualist one. Of course the opponents of spiritualism will say as they usually do when all reasonable arguments fail, we don't believe it! That is, that they would rather believe that a number of respectable persons would conspire together to concoct an untruthful report with the sole object and desire of deceiving not only the learned association to which they belonged but the whole British public. Judging of it in the light of probability alone, is not this latter conclusion the most improbable of the two? is it to be believed that nine persons holding respectable positions in society, having reputations for Honesty and truthfulness, could or would without the slightest prospect of benefit of any kind accruing from it, mutually agree to palm off a baseless fiction upon their fellows as a report of actual facts coming under their observation. The credulity of those who could believe this outdoes

that of the most credulous spiritualist. It will be seen by those who read the report carefully, that the language of it is clear, concise, and impartial in tone, being simply a comprehensive statement of facts which came under their observation in the course of their experiments as an investigating committee, and bears the impress of Truth upon the face of it. A great card in the hands of the opponents of spiritualism is, that Dr Edmunds the chairman of the general committee dissents from the report, but they fail to inform their readers that Dr. Edmunds only attended five *séances* and did not sit out all of them. In the report of sub-committee No. 1. we find the following:—"Of the members of your Sub-committee about *four-fifths* entered upon the investigation wholly sceptical as to the reality of the alleged phenomena, firmly believing them to be the result either of *imposture* or of *delusion* or of *involuntary muscular action*. It was only by irresistible evidence, under conditions that precluded the possibility of either of these solutions, and after trial and test many times repeated, that the most sceptical of your sub-committee were slowly and reluctantly convinced that the phenomena exhibited in the course of their protracted inquiry were veritable facts." From which we may infer that had this committee left off at the same stage as Dr. Edmunds they too would have been unconvinced. The fact is, it takes a vast amount of evidence to convince scientific men in these materialistic times, of anything that is opposed to their pre-conceived prejudices or ideas, and the committee were by their own statement *reluctantly forced into a conviction* of the facts we have been familiar with for years. The high price of the present edition of the report is a bar to its extensive circulation but we trust that sufficient inducement will offer to ensure the publication of a second edition at a more popular price. Meantime we would advise all those who have copies of the report, to circulate them as widely as possible, and call particular attention to the many important facts, demonstrated by the various sub-committees.

COMMUNICATION.

All life is God, God is the totality of life which fills the Universe. Thus every living being, animal or plant, partakes of the divine essence. When God forms or fashions, he does not construct organisms out of material as man constructs a machine; but, dwelling as a vital force in matter, he impels matter to organise itself into structures, as a seed is impelled by the life within to grow into a plant. Universal matter, alive with universal life is the seedling of universal creation; and forms and fashions of matter arise out of this self-existence by necessities, not by plan or design. Universal matter, endowed with universal life, is God, soul and body; and this eternal spirit being essentially active, must create, and at the same time being essentially good and perfect, must act in the best manner; therefore, whatever *is*, *is* of necessity; and whatever *is*, *is* right. Knowing God, is the highest of all knowledge; and nature instructs all who freely and without prejudice seek for that knowledge. Physical science and moral philosophy cannot be separated; and grave errors have been the result of trying to separate what is inseparable; our physical structure is the basis of our whole nature, moral and spiritual; and the study of the physical nature is the basis of morality; for the conduct cannot be right if in contradiction to physical or natural laws. Religious morality is so demonstrably contrary to physical and physiological necessities, that it must err, and must be corrected by a knowledge of the more natural studies; everything in God's nature must harmonise and consist together, and the present metaphysical theologies must succumb under the light of progressive physical science.

Social conditions have to be totally altered into accordance with the natural necessities; and a revolution is threatening, which shall breed troubles in proportion to the errors which have to be rectified. If therefore our philosophy tends to create social disturbance, the blame lies with the evils it has to remedy and not with the philosophy itself; for the day is fast approaching when they can no longer be tolerated: and, *away with them; down with them shall be our cry—Good night.*

H. F.

April 5th 1872.

Poetry.

THE LEGEND BEAUTIFUL.

BY HENRY W. LONGFELLOW.

"Hadst thou stayed, I must have fled!"
That is what the vision said.

In his chamber all alone,
Kneeling on the floor of stone,
Prayed the Monk in deep contrition
For his sins of indecision,
Prayed for greater self-denial,
In temptation and in trial;
It was noonday by the dial,
And the Monk was all alone.

Suddenly, as if it enlightened,
An unwonted splendor brightened
All within him and without him
In that narrow cell of stone!
And he saw the Blessed Vision,
Jesus Christ with light Elysian
Like a vesture wrapped about him,
Like a garment round him thrown.

In an attitude imploring,
Hands upon his bosom crossed,
Wondering, worshipping, adoring,
Knelt the Monk in rapture lost.

Then amid his exultation
Loud the convent bell appalling,
From its belfry calling, calling,
Rang through court and corridor,
With persistent iteration
He had never heard before.

It was now the appointed hour
When alike in shine and shower,

Winter's cold or Summer's heat,
To the convent portals came,
All the blind and halt and lame,
All the beggars of the street,
For their daily dole of food
Dealt them by the brotherhood;
And their almoner was he,
Who upon his bended knee,
Rapped in silent ecstasy,
Of divinest self-surrender,
Saw the Vision and the Splendor.

Deep distress and hesitation
Mingled with his adoration;
Should he go, or should he stay?
Should he leave the poor to wait
Hungry at the convent gate,
Till the Vision passed away;
Should he slight his heavenly guest,
Slight this visitant celestial,
For a crowd of ragged, bestial,
Beggars at the convent gate?
Would the Vision there remain?
Would the Vision come again?

Then a voice within his breast
Whispered, audibly and clear,
As if to the outward ear,
"Do thy duty; that is best!
Leave unto thy Lord the rest!"

Straightly to his feet he started,
And with longing look intent
On the blessed Vision bent,
Slowly from his cell departed,
Slowly on his errand went.

At the gate the poor were waiting,
Looking through the iron grating,
With that terror in the eye
That is only seen to those
Who amid their want and woes
Hear the sound of doors that close,
And of feet that pass them by;
Grown familiar with disfavour,
Grown familiar with the savor
Of the bread by which men die!
But to-day, they know not why,
Like the gate of paradise
Seemed the convent gate to rise;
Like a sacrament divine
Seemed to them the bread and wine.
In his heart the Monk was praying,
Thinking of the homeless poor,
What they suffer and endure;
What we see not, what we see;
And the inward voice was saying:
"Whatsoever thing thou doest
To the least of mine and lowest,
That thou doest unto me!"

Unto me! but had the Vision
Come to him in beggars' clothing
Come a mendicant imploring,
Would he then have knelt adoring,
Or have listened with derision,
Or have turned away with loathing?
Thus his conscience put the question,
Full of troublesome suggestion,
As at length, with hurried pace,
Towards his cell he turned his face,
And beheld the convent bright
With a supernatural light,
Like a luminous cloud expanding
Over floor and over ceiling.
But he paused with awe struck feeling
At the threshold of his door,
For the Vision still was standing
As he left it there before,
When the convent bell appalling,
From its belfry calling, calling,
Summoned him to feed the poor.
Through the long hour intervening
It had waited his return,
And he felt his bosom burn
Comprehending all the meaning,
When the blessed Vision said,
"Hadst thou stayed, I must have fled."

SPIRITUALIST SOIREE.

It has been decided by the committee of the Victorian Association of Progressive Spiritualists, to give a Soiree in connection with the Half-yearly meeting, about the 20th of this month. The cordial support of all friends of the movement is solicited to secure a successful and pleasant social gathering.

To Correspondents.

Communications for insertion in this Journal should be plainly written, and as concise as possible.

SOME OF MY EXPERIENCES BEFORE I BECAME A BELIEVER IN SPIRITUALISM AND REALIZED THE FACT OF INTERCOURSE BETWEEN THIS WORLD AND THE NEXT.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE HARBINGER OF LIGHT.

Mr Editor,—I shall premise that I was brought up in Scotland; I lived for eight years with a Scotch minister of a country parish—a hard-shell presbyterian—who was considered an able man, and who preached very solid sermons, and quite irrefragable when judged on the principles of the “Kirk.” He was a man of good physique; hard, economical, and austere. He prayed daily for “a competency of the good things of life,” though his income from stipend, glebe, and boarders, was very considerable. His wife produced a child every year I was with them, and thus he had an annual sign that he was “blessed of the Lord,” and could with confidence ask him for a continuation of abundant food to fill the mouths he had made. He did not seem to believe in emotion or sentiment, at least in youngsters; he believed in the efficacy of the “rod,” and did not encourage jollity among his pupils. He sometimes jested, but his jests were often coarse, and always vulgar; he meant well, but we did not love him, and we were not happy. As a specimen of his economy, he encouraged us to take two large soup-plates full of sour “kail,” and delighted much in the boy or boys who managed to achieve this feat, for there was less fear of their asking for two “helpings” of beef or mutton. When I left him at the age of fourteen years, I was thoroughly imbued with the following convictions: that God, was a “God of vengeance,” a “consuming fire,” “His hot anger against the wicked,” (and his saints are but few) “burned continually,” and much else of the same disagreeable character. That this terrible God hated me above most boys, because of my being the “wickedest” boy known to the minister; and having been taught that “wickedness” meant, *whistling* on a Sunday, doing anything that could be called *play* on that day, also all kinds of *work*, except (that hardest of work to all boys) trying to remember by heart, bible passages not understood, incomprehensible hymns and sermons, and to listen patiently and without sleeping, to “dry-as-dust” prayers. I was fully persuaded that I was a real “bad laddie”—“ane o’ the De’il’s ain”—because, though the fear of the rod restrained me from the outbreak of any of these above named heinous acts on Sunday, and from many other outer manifestations and tokens of inward corruption, I felt conscious that I was ever wishing to do those things which I had been taught constituted “badness,” and which excited to a greater heat “the fierce anger of the Lord” against me. In other respects also, I was—as I believed—irreligious; for instance, I was never good at answering those highly moral questions, considered so essential in the religious training of “Young Scotland” in those days, such as, “who was Pontius Pilate?”, “who was the strongest man?”, “who the chastest?”, “who was Mahar-shalal-hash-baz?”. Again, I could never remember the last bit of the minister’s sermons—and the being able to do this, was a well-established measure of our love to God, and our piety—however much I tried to do so, and however often I was beaten for failure. As a part of our religious education, we had to sing every morning to a “kirk” tune, chalked on a black board in front of us, “O Mother dear Jerusalem,” (a favorite with the minister) or some such “holy” song, for the purpose of teaching us “sacred music,” as only such was pleasing to the Lord, and as a preparation, I suppose, for the endless hallelujahs in which the good shall be occupied—the good being, the “psalm-singers,” the “bible-question-mongers,” such as did *not* whistle, did *not* play, nor do any “profane” work on Sunday.

“Profane” music was of the Devil, and, of course, was a vile thing in the ears of God on any day; but on the sabbath was an utter abomination to Him. I could never manage to show an efficient appreciation of his “sacred music” as the good boys did; nor could I ever understand why *some* sounds, arranged in a particular manner, should be held “sacred,” and the *same* sounds arranged in another manner should be held as “profane.” The ability to sing “O Mother dear &c.” being another established test of virtue, I was always found “nowhere,” as a *saint*.—Then, that great puzzle the Devil, the grand enemy of God, continually “unweariedly” tempting to evil every human being on earth—the *good* to be bad, the *bad* to be worse—sorely vexed my soul; I felt that it was he who tempted me to be ever asking myself the sinful, but still unanswered question, of Robinson Crusoe’s man “Friday,” “What for God no kill debil?”—another corroboration this of my incurable wickedness. But what distressed me above all, as the surest indication of my hopeless depravity, was the ever-recurring consciousness that, in my inmost soul, I could distinguish no difference in *species*, between the God taught now and the Devil, but only in *degree*; whatever was *terrible* in the latter, was out-topped and eclipsed by his *chief*. The minister’s God, I believed *was* God; but it also appeared to me, in defiance of my wishes to the contrary, that the Devil was the “Prime-Minister” of God; his wisely selected agent to carry out with vigour and skill, the behests of His “vengeance and hot wrath” against the children of men whom he hated; and so, believing all the above implicitly, it may well be imagined that my young life was full of gloom and misery; for I was without hope, and could not enjoy anything thoroughly, not even a holiday in the sunshine, nor pocket-money. I was just in a fit state to be played the Devil with; and if there had been a devil I have no doubt that I would long ere this time have been a “gone coon” for ever.

Some five years after my departure from that Scotch school, on my way out to this country, I met, on the voyage from Hobart Town to Sydney, a Naval Surgeon. I had never before known personally so pious a man; his whole waking life seemed absorbed in religious thoughts, words, and duties. He displayed before my gaze a new phase of Christianity; “*faith*” was presented to me as *everything*, and “*works*” without *faith*; as worse than nothing. I observed he did not lay so much stress upon Sunday observances as I had been taught was proper, and I attributed this laxity to his English education; for I still believed as I had been taught, that the English, who were Episcopalians, were no better than Roman Catholics, and that these last were undoubtedly given over to the Devil. This faultiness at first rather pained me in so religious a man; for I could not then reconcile it with the general holiness of his speech, and prayerfulness of behaviour, and I felt quite relieved one day on seeing him refuse to eat some roast pork—of which, being a rather gross feeder, he was very fond—because he heard just as he was about to take a mouthful, that it had been killed on Sunday. He was learned, sincere, ardent, he used much the phraseology of Scripture, and his constant words to me were, “*Now* is the accepted time, *Now* is the day of Salvation.” I could not see the relation between the act of going to God at *once* and begging for acceptance, and the blessed effect of being cleansed and sanctified by *faith*; but I determined with all the *faith* I could summon, to try it. To encourage my *faith* and silence my reason, I thought of the story of Naaman the Syrian, whose perplexity, as to the relation between the water of Jordan and his leprosy, was akin to mine, yet he came out healed; why should *not* I come away justified? I did try, but the “*flesh*” of my soul did *not* become “like that of a little child.” This good man, however, taught me, as I then thought, “the way of God more perfectly;” he taught me that there was a way of escape for the worst sinner under heaven, not only from the punishment due for his own sins, but also from the doom to which all the human race are born since Adam; viz. by a full belief that the wrath and vengeance of God the Father has been propitiated by the death on the cross of His “only begotten Son”—

that this son died for *all*, that *all* might be forgiven for past and present sin at *once*, and be saved also from the "wrath to come."—but that this sacrifice was efficacious only to those who firmly believed in this combined suicide and murder—deliberate suicide on the part of the Son, and sectarian murder on the part of the Jews—as ordained by God for the express purpose of obliterating his own wrath.

That such was the virtue of a mere belief in this bloody drama, that the greatest sinner could by it be transformed at once into a saint, and be accepted as an "elect" favorite of heaven.

That this blood "so precious" shed by the fanatical Jews, caused God to smell so sweet a savour, as to make him forget his "hatred," and, like a charm, to imbue his whole God-head with immeasurable love in its stead.

This friendly surgeon did me much good however, for he excited hope that had long lain dormant and crushed, and I was glad to have something, however unsatisfactory to my sense of justice and my reason, to rear hope upon. He stimulated to action the religious element in my nature. At his instigation I became a great reader of the Bible, never omitting a day if I could help it in which I did not read largely, and this for some twenty-five years. The only books I read during this time, outside of the Bible, were almost all emanations or supposed emanations therefrom. Like all the best literature of the churches, those books may well be classed among the "Apologia" of Christianity. I need not name them, but it is certain that the more I read these books and the Bible the more I became convinced that the latter was a fallible production, and utterly unworthy of its reputed author; that Popular Christianity had no sufficient basis, and would have gone down to its proper level long ago, but for these "apologia" written and preached by the choicest scholars of the day; and I found besides, that the claim to infallibility is no where asserted in its pages.

From the time I left that Scotch manse, thirty years passed away before I got completely emancipated from the soul-crushing bondage of that hard-shell presbyterianism, and the enervating trammels of the more "evangelical plans of salvation," and in discarding the christianity of the churches—which of course I had supposed must necessarily be the best religion extant, being accepted as it is amongst the most enlightened nations of the earth, and promulgated and upheld by the most learned of these nations—I was logically compelled to discard with it, all creeds all sects, all established religions, with all their accredited dogmas. "Salvation by faith," as I had it presented to me had been an inexplicable puzzle; and, from the Christian stand-point, life as a whole had always appeared to me a gloomy muddle notwithstanding the teaching of the "catechism" as to the "chief end of man." And it remained a muddle, though a less gloomy one, even now that I had attained comparative freedom; had advanced to see the dwarfing and stultifying errors of the popular christianity. If now I had little or no hope of a future life, I at least felt that I was my own master, free to think my own thoughts, and to breathe freely in the face of the terrorism imposed by the churches. I had ceased to fear anything except disobedience to natural law; and, believing that "knowledge was power" to avoid disobedience, as well as power to obey—I feared ignorance, and the coming in contact with the operation of laws incidentally inimical to my mental and physical well being.

What I now required—to explain life and its uses as well as to act as an incentive to effort in the direction of self-development and of my higher aspirations—was positive proof of the existence of man beyond the grave. I had no such *proof*. I had read, and with pleasure, the "Phædo" of Plato, and had been unable to detect any fallacy in its reasonings on the subject; but still I was not satisfied, and when asked by my children—not knowing anything better—I used the argument of Plato and referred them to his works. I had come to know, that directing them to the bible to "bring life and immortality to light" to them, was an egregious farce.

Twelve times at the least, it is *distinctly denied* in the Old Testament, and never *once taught* as a truth. In the New T. it is only understood, or implied at the most; never distinctly *taught* as a doctrine necessary to salvation. I did not much trouble myself however about this question; at the best I indulged in a placid assurance that the powers of Nature would ever act squarely, and were moreover quite adequate to order and bring about all things in such manner as to ensure that all shall unfold and mature justly and well; for I had faith in nature, and believed that her aim and end was Harmony, and that no power in the universe would

"Turn the course of Time's great river in its grand majestic flow;
Grapple with those mighty causes, whose results we may not know."

This uncertainty with respect to a future life did not therefore prevent me from recovering in a great measure the natural buoyancy and cheerfulness of my nature, such as I had never felt in early youth, nor ever fully until the period of my entire deliverance from that religion of terrorism—that "Nemesis of faith" mis-called christianity, and never taught by that loving Jew of Nazareth, but by that other "Jew of Tarsus" called Paul. Christianity is therefore a misnomer for the religion introduced by Paul and subsequently developed by the "Fathers" and the Priesthood; and it would be well that the gulf between it and the religion of Jesus should be clearly displayed before the eyes of its wretched victims.

Many a time since, have I deeply regretted that the advent of light and of free thought had not occurred earlier in my life; chiefly, because I would then have been enabled to save, among others, one of the best of women—certainly the most faultless that I had ever known—from years of grinding misery, resulting in an early grave, induced entirely by the very sincerity and fervency of her faith in the God and doctrines of "Paulo-Sacerdotalism" in which she had been nurtured; and, but for Spiritualism—which comparatively has bathed my own life in sunshine—I should still regret her unhappy fate, and sorrow without hope; would still be disturbed by the sad remembrance which, like

"A Raven—a ghostly Raven—on my heart would perch and prey."

For fourteen years—without a ray of peace from the "God appointed" "Soul-savers" of her church to sweeten her blameless life—was this good woman—a true sister of the Jew of Nazareth; for "she did them good and not evil all the days of her life"—a dying martyr to the degrading dogmas of "the wrath of God, and propitiation by human sacrifice"—"without the shedding of blood there is no remission"—"He that believeth not, shall be damned"—"no righteousness of of any avail except that one righteousness of a noble minded Jew who lived 1872 years ago." "The manliest life of the best of men, is but as "filthy rags" as a ground of hope to himself or of acceptance with God—Hell and everlasting damnation to all, however blameless, and however beloved for their good deeds by their fellow men, who do not or cannot find it possible to believe in the hideous injustice.

This victim of religious mis-direction—called a sound christian training in the "nurture and admonition of the Lord," brought to bear upon her soul before the reason had strength to "choose the good and refuse the evil"—was but one of many thousands, and her fate was the immediate occasion of accelerating my own emancipation; for I quickly decided that, either the pulpit and sunday-school christianity was the greatest blasphemy—the true "sin against the Holy Ghost"—or, that the Almighty Power of the universe was an Almighty monster of injustice. I adopted the first conclusion, and cut myself adrift from the decaying carcase of "Old Theology;" and—sending after it (an act which I did not justify) my heartiest anathemas, after the manner of Paul—I not only felt myself free, but my belief in humanity and its aspirations took the place of the enslavement to "original sin," "human depravity, and the numberless plans of salvation," and "regeneration,"

To go back to the above sad silent history; Spiritualism, among its other benefits, has taught me the true "Faith of God," and what it is; and has thereby fully assured me that there is not one particle of that sad experience but was necessary for her true and proper growth, and development of her individuality; and the time shall come when I shall surely see—as she does now—that

"—She has not suffered, loved, and hoped, and feared in vain;

Every earthly sin and sorrow she can only count as gain; She can chant a grand "Te Deum" o'er the record of her pain."

also that

"All life's sorrows end in blessing as the future yet shall show."

You may perhaps complain at this apparent digression from the subject indicated at the head of this letter; but the digression is only apparent, for that little episode in the life of a mere waif on the stream of time, has had its legitimate influence and left its indelible mark upon the life and surroundings of that other "stray waif," whose experiences I am endeavouring to give—that part of them, I mean, which I suppose had affected his moral and religious position, up to the time when his attention was attracted to Spiritualism by the sudden appearance around his hearth of a variety of strange and unexpected phenomena.

By way of giving you a clearer view of my position at that time, I shall just add, that for forty years I had been a denizen of the "wilds of Australia, about mid-way between Melbourne and Sydney; having had during that time no facts demonstrative of a future life presented to me, and having but the faintest hope only—no conviction nor even opinion—that hypothesis would be found a truth. I was a confirmed Rationalist of the F. W. Newman school—a little too much on the secular side of the mark to suit this man. My status was Rationalism in its strictly liberal sense, (not in the sense used by the traditionalists) and quite compatible with the materialism and utilitarianism of that other great man and "worker for mankind," J. S. Mill, of whose philosophy I was an adherent as far as I understood it. I was a *Naturalist* in the sense of being a disciple, and worshiper of Nature as the source of knowledge, the treasury of all truth, the only undeniable and authoritative revelation to minor intelligences of the will and character of the Highest—the "Alpha."

Spiritualism has not caused me to swerve one iota from any conclusions arrived at before its advent; it has only added the crowning conviction of all—the existence of a future life. I am a Rationalist, Materialist and Naturalist still, and the mellow light, and genial heat of Spiritualism have rendered my former convictions stronger and more definite, my position more advanced. I am enabled to view all things from a higher plane; Life is no longer the "muddle" that it was, and Humanity no longer appears to me "a gigantic failure." Spiritualism, to me would be an impossibility, had it not for its basis, Rationalism and Materialism, which together form Naturalism; but reared as it is upon this basis, to me it essentially and potentially pervades, surrounds, underlies, and comprehends all things, all knowledge, all true "isms," with its energizing influence, and with the Golden Light of *Immortality Demonstrated*.

SCHAMLYNN.

THE LECTURERS' FUND.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE HARBINGER OF LIGHT.

SIR,—I see that the Committee of the Victorian Association of Progressive Spiritualists have determined upon trying to establish what they term a "Lecturers' Fund." I am sure the attempt is worthy of every encouragement, and I sincerely hope they may succeed. So far as the writer is concerned he has made an offer to subscribe five pounds per annum if sixty other gentlemen can be found to do the same, thus establishing a fund of three hundred pounds a year for a specific purpose. I do trust however that the Committee will not restrict themselves to such gentlemen only who could speak to us

upon such subjects as tend to illustrate the "facts and philosophy of spiritualism" but that other subjects great and important as many of them are and representing the advanced thought of the age, will be equally accepted.

I am, Sir, yours &c.,

SOUTH SEAS.

WHAT IS THE GOOD OF SPIRITUALISM?

"These strange freaks which are played with material objects, are designed solely to arrest attention, and to convince the sceptical, that unseen agencies are present, capable of holding communication with mortals. The ultimate end of these spiritual manifestations is the advancement towards moral and religious perfection of the living through the counteraction of materialistic tendencies, by the exhibition of cogent proofs of the reality of spiritual existence." * * * * "Indeed as time rolls on, something of this sort seems to be required. Every day we are growing more remote from the era of miracles, and although this fact does not retract from the value of their evidence, viewed philosophically, yet it does from its recognition and effect. I submit then, that the phenomena may be of use in removing the doubts of the honest sceptic, of furnishing growing testimony to the truths of religion and of humbling the pride of the scoffing rationalist." * * * "Good is good, all the world over: the foolishness of the preaching of these manifestations has led me to nobler thoughts, and higher aspirations, to deeper thoughts of, and prayer to God, to a fuller dependence on his providential Government, and to a clearer understanding of the Bible testimony; it has made my prospects brighter, and explained the great enigma, it has made me and many others, wiser and better." *Exposition of Spiritualism being a compilation of correspondence in the London Newspaper "Star and Dial."*

"There is nothing in the theology of Spiritualism repugnant to the rightly interpreted teachings of the Scriptures."

The scriptures and Spiritualism both teach, God is love; a merciful creator, a heavenly Father, who sent his son Jesus into the world to lead us into the way of life eternal. * * * Spiritualism robs death of its terrors, and opens a scene to our hopes, of inconceivable beauty and happiness. Above all, if it be true, it settles the question on philosophical grounds, of man's immortality. A question the importance of which alone, swallows up all others, and reduces all earthly sorrows and disasters in the comparison to mere trivial annoyances unworthy of our attention. What a prize to virtue! What discouragement to vice." "Theology of Spiritualism."

Deer. No. of the "Harbinger of Light."

TO THE EDITOR OF THE HARBINGER OF LIGHT.

SIR,—By the tone of voice in which this question is so constantly asked, we may judge the intention is rather to convey an impression, than to ask a question. The object of the interrogator is evidently to express an opinion that there is, "no good in spiritualism," and that the truth of it, for that reason, is not worth enquiring into.

In a further communication I purpose (God being willing) to enlarge upon this subject. For the present I desire that the answer, shall be nearly as curt as the question. I would remark therefore that common sense should suggest to anyone that the establishment of telegraphic communication with Heaven, is vastly important than the establishment of telegraphic communication between Europe and Australia. The good of the latter is only intellectual and material, but the good of the former, is intellectual and religious, and by consequence of infinitely greater good, the degree of comparison being, just that which exists between time, and eternity. The shortest way therefore to answer this antispiritualistic question will be, to ask another, viz., what is the good of instantaneous communion with Europe? The one communion enables us to realise more fully, and brings us nearer to Europe, European things, and the friendship of relations on this side of the grave, from which we derive enlightened pleasure.

The other communion enables us to realise more fully and brings us nearer to, Heaven, and Heavenly things, and the friendships of relations beyond the grave, from which we derive enlightened pleasure. In both communions probably electricity operates, manipulated by intelligence, and the difference is only in magnitude of object, aim, and effects.

All this must be exactly true, if there is the slightest truth in Spiritualism. The question therefore would have been less stupid, if instead of asking, "what is the good of Spiritualism," it had enquired, "what are the evidences of the truth of spiritualism," this truth of evidence granted, a man must be wholly natural, and the

spiritual part of his nature, dead in him, if the good he asks to have pointed out to him, does not flash upon his whole perceptions, and penetrate the innermost recesses of his whole heart and soul. I do not discuss the evidences of its truth, but merely state that the incontrovertibly attested, supernatural phenomena and manifestation of spiritualism, that is to say, its countless miracles in every part of the world constitute the whole of the external evidences of its truth. Its internal evidences are just those which evince the truth of christianity, or other God-given religions viz., the love of God in the heart of man. Is it not just probable that it is the Divine Providence, that progress shall be made, as on earth, so in Heaven, and, as in Heaven, so on earth?

Is it not just possible, there is a more intimate relationship than we are aware of, between progressive discovery on earth, and in the spirit world!

"That while laborious, and quick-thoughted man,
Snuffs up the praise of what he seems to plan,
Blind to the work of that secret power,
Which balances the wings of every hour,
Man first conceives, than perfects his design,
As a mere instrument in hands Divine."

"Thy will be done on earth, as it is in Heaven." Is it not just possible, that overlooking spirit power suggested to men how to manipulate electricity, and that all his operations, (for which he took so much credit to himself,) were watched, talked of, dictated, and directed from above, as part of a scheme of progress and enlightenment coming more distinctly into view, as knowledge of, and belief in, spiritual revelations established itself, and reveals that close relationship between Heaven and earth, and their probable progressive changes and discoveries, shared in simultaneously and mutually.

If after history shall record how stubborn men were in rejecting and fighting against this scheme of enlightenment, vouchsafed by the will of Heaven, it will only prove the sameness of human nature, and therefore the sameness of history, in all ages of the world.

What a loving Father sends for the good of His children, those children fight against and receive only by degrees. God puts it into the hearts of a few chosen servants, to

"Declare His wondrous works abroad"
and then allows growth, as in all nature, to proceed by antagonism. So it has been, so it will be, and so it must be.

I am sir, your obdt. servant,

W.

ANOTHER TRANCE MEDIUM.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE HARBINGER OF LIGHT.

SIR,—I am happy to inform you that Mrs Jas. McLean after several years of Calvinistic opposition to spiritualism has, unknown to herself, developed into a Trance speaking and writing medium, and a few nights ago she conducted the most advanced circle in Stawell for two hours and a half whilst in Trance, and in the dark, when the spirits of G. Combe, Dr. J. Elliotson, and others wrote through her several affectionate messages, coupled with a detailed diagnosis of the mediumistic qualifications of each member of the circle, prefacing their remarks as follows:—"Pray to God to give you new hearts and right spirits that you may love your neighbor as yourselves, Help the poor, Raise the fallen, Forgive your enemies, and bless them that curse you." The diagnosis of one of the eleven members that composed the circle, may be interesting to your many readers:—Mr. M. will be able to search through the innermost parts of the earth, and prove its true value even to a drachm of gold, giving a just value of its qualities mineral or otherwise." There are several circles in and around Stawell receiving genuine proof of the soul's immortality, notwithstanding the childish twaddle within the Dean of Melbourne's recently issued pamphlet against spiritualism, the reading of which forcibly impresses me with the accuracy of the following lines:—

There are popular lies, and political lies,
And lies that stick fast between buying and selling,

And lies of politeness—Conventional lies—
(Which scarcely are reckoned as such in the telling)
There are lies of sheer malice, and slanderous lies,
From those who delight to pick filth like a pigeon;
But the *oldest* and far most *respectable* lies,
Are those that are told in the name of religion.

The workmen are busily employed in laying the foundation of our Lyceum and we hope to celebrate the opening within two months from date, by a grand gathering of all the leading spiritualists in Victoria within its spacious walls:—As a proof anent the growing popularity of spiritualism in Stawell, an hotel within the last few days has changed its former title to that of Lyceum. Our Sunday evening services still continue with increasing interest and in the whole we have much cause to rejoice with the advance of our glorious cause of Rationalistic Reform.

Yours &c.
ONWARD.

DR. J. R. NEWTON, THE HEALER.

The following is taken from the "Banner of Light," of December 23rd, 1871:—

DR. J. R. NEWTON—DEAR SIR—It is with gratitude that we ever think of you, and a pleasure to remember the day we first saw you—now more than two years ago; since which time we feel and *know* that we owe more to you for our health and happiness than to any other living person—a blessing too great to prize justly. This prompts me to write you a few lines, that you may not think us among the number who receive a blessing, and straightway forget the giver. You, doubtless remember my bringing Mrs. Weber to you to be cured. I brought her in my arms into your office, and in ten minutes she walked out with me. I cannot tell you how it thrills me now to think of that hour's joy—it seemed so like raising the dead. For nearly three years previous she had been unable to walk a step.

Since we saw you Mrs. W. has enjoyed the *best of health*. It is only a little part of the gratitude we feel, that I can express in this letter to you, our dearest earthly friend. Please accept it from your most grateful children.

MRS. & MR. J. B. WEBER.

Springfield, Erie Co. N. Y., Oct. 25, 1871.

In connection with this letter we give a list of several cures (some of them seemingly miraculous in the "theological" sense) which Dr. Newton has recently performed.

Willie Marshall Pike, 409 Charles-street, Boston, Mass., was cured of total blindness, Friday, Oct., 20th, by twenty minutes' treatment. At the expiration of that time he could see well, and went to work next day.

Mrs. Benjamin Burton, Union, Me., afflicted with leprosy in her hands, her fingers appearing entirely dead, with the nails black, visited Dr. Newton and was cured with one treatment. The nails came off in a few days, and the hands became as perfect and natural as ever.

Capt. H. I. Turner, 287 Hanover-street, Boston, severely injured in spine and hips by a heavy piece of timber, was cured perfectly with three treatments.

Simon Martin, Portsmouth, N. H., was cured of jaundice and gall stones.

Mrs. Nancy Snow, No. 11 Way-street, Boston, a case of chronic rheumatism, was permanently cured.

Asa T. Walker, Portsmouth, N. H., who suffered from asthma for twenty years, was perfectly cured with one treatment.

Alfred McKenzie Peabody, Mass., who was troubled with gravel and kidney complaints for thirty-five years, was cured with one treatment. Has no objection being referred to.

Aldin Burrill, Lynn, Mass., was cured with one treatment of tumor in bowels, and lame knee.

Mrs. M. G. Guild, 42 Austin-street, Charlestown, was recently cured of a very large ovarian tumor.

Helin L. Bucklin, 134 6th-street, South Boston, was perfectly cured, in a brief time, of hip disease.

Mrs. John Ransom, Plymouth, Mass., who, by reason of spinal and female weaknesses, for three years had been unable to walk, was cured with one treatment, so that she could walk well.

Mr. Lambert's child, Gardner, Me., had lost her powers of speech, but was cured by the Doctor, instantly, so as to talk as freely as any one.

Mrs. Lynd S. Waterman, 5 Tremont place, Boston, was on application cured of a cancer.

Mrs. William Wallace, Water-street, Pittston, Me., was cured of consumption, after being given over by many old school physicians.

Miss Ella Teel, Lynn, Mass., was perfectly cured of dropsy and constipation.

David E. Martin, Rochester, who suffered with weak lungs and consumption for many years, was perfectly cured in a brief time.

Mr. S. J. Jewett, Westminster, Mass., who had been troubled with a lame knee for six years, was cured of her difficulty; also of dyspepsia and jaundice.

Alanson Bartlett, Croydon, N. H., who had been very lame for seven months, and unable to walk, was cured with one treatment.

Mrs. Towns, Amherst, N. H., was cured of epilepsy eight months ago, and has not exhibited any symptoms of the disease since.

S. B. Hollis, 365 Silver-street, South Boston, Mass., who had been afflicted with scrofula in one of his limbs for four years, was perfectly cured.

George Rood, Woodstock, Vt., was cured of epilepsy.

Moses Yeaton, Portsmouth, N. H., who was so much troubled by a disease of the kidneys and bladder for fifteen years that all the doctors consulted said he could never recover, but must die, was perfectly cured with one treatment of twenty minutes.

Here are the facts which speak uncontrovertibly for themselves. We would advise alike all those who doubt, and those who desire to know more of the matter, to visit Dr. Newton personally, and witness his operations for themselves.

SPIRITUALISTS' PIC-NIC.

Pic-Nics and Grove meetings are quite an institution among the Spiritualists of America, but have hitherto been unknown here. Some of the Brethren and sisterhood at Castlemaine numbering about thirty have taken the initiative and improvised a pic-nic to Harcourt on Easter Monday. The affair was rapidly got up or a much larger party would have been formed, nevertheless it was a decided success; the party spending a very pleasant day amid the beautiful scenery of Mount Alexander, and returning bent upon repeating the experiment on a larger scale on the first favorable occasion. The present season is far advanced for outdoor gatherings, but we trust that in the ensuing one, the Melbourne Spiritualists will take the hint, and organize social gatherings of this sort, as tending to beget a warmer feeling of friendship and Brotherly regard amongst them.

PHYSICAL MANIFESTATIONS AT SANDHURST.

The following is from a gentleman well known on Sandhurst. A man of clear intellect, and shrewd business habits. The object of this circle (of which he is chairman) is as will be seen from his letter, a practical and unbiassed investigation of the alleged facts of Spiritualism.

We shall look with interest for further reports from him, as the class of phenomena being developed, are somewhat rare here as yet.

At a private circle of Ladies and gentlemen formed for the purpose of investigating the physical phenomena of "spiritualism," and which met for the first time on the 6th December last, very gratifying progress has been made. The circle is composed of highly respectable residents, who are all actuated by one motive, namely, the elucidation of the truth. Should the facts brought under the notice of the circle be of a character to warrant the conclusion that the extraordinary phenomena occurring at many of the other circles in England and in the United States, are caused by the spirits of the departed, the circle at Sandhurst will at once cheerfully avow it, but if, on the other hand, the evidence will not bear out that conclusion, then the circle will as honestly say so. The circle, however, means to persevere for any length of time necessary to give the matter a candid, full and fair investigation. All the members think for

themselves, and mean to quietly proceed with the duty they have undertaken in their own way. The circle has a chairman, secretary and treasurer, and numbers about 15 or 16 members. There are two gentlemen mediums developed since it sat one who writes in the trance (a remarkable thing in itself) and the other through whom the physical phenomena occur. There is a lady medium whose presence also brings this class of phenomena. The business always begins by the chairman reading a portion of a book on Spiritualism, where accounts are given of wonderful things done at circles in other lands. Then the verse of a hymn is sung and the "Lord's Prayer" repeated. The mediums sit with their backs to the north. All hands are then placed with their palms on the table, which almost instantly tilts and raps. The chairman then addresses the intelligence in the same respectful way he would address any member of the circle, and asks it to express by raps what is to be done for the evening. This is done in the usual way by the chairman repeating the alphabet, and the table rapping three times at each letter of the word it means to convey. The instructions are carried out to the letter in every case, and are always of an intelligent character and frequently altogether foreign to what any of the circle are thinking of. This has indeed occurred so often that the circle have had no difficulty in arriving at the conclusion that there is an intelligent power present outside or independent of themselves. This decision was unanimously given. The circle have lately excluded all strangers from their meetings with a view to more rapidly developing the mediums; but should they in due course be successful in their efforts, they will then take the necessary steps to allow of their attendance again. The manifestations so far have been of a most interesting character. The circle meets once a week. At the first sitting or two nothing occurred, but at the third the table tilted and the usual conversation with supposed departed friends took place, which, though of no importance, served to interest newly formed circles. At subsequent sittings the manifestations were more convincing, serving to whet the appetite for more. After violent oscillations the table became so rapid in its movements that it was impossible to hold the hands on it, turning on its face on the floor; then standing on one leg perpendicular fashion, and being suddenly as if seized by the middle by some powerful agent, replaced in its proper position; then as suddenly levitated about a foot above the ground, and a Lady's scarf thrown upon it by the unseen intelligence. At another sitting a dark cloudy looking figure was dimly seen by three of the circle, and the chairman was touched and had his hair pulled by the invisibles. At one sitting, violent table manifestations with low tappings on different parts of the table, a loud crashing sound—and, at the same time, the form upon which the two mediums and three other gentlemen were sitting rising and rapping and answering to questions the same as the table. At this sitting crashing sounds were heard as if everything in the room were being smashed, but at the close found nothing injured. At a sitting the intelligence promised to bring a lady member a flower in a month from the evening named. The circle met in another place and were waiting for the usual instructions, when the following words were rapidly spelled out, "I cannot bring the flower to-night." As this came quite unexpectedly to all, it was regarded as highly as though the flower had been brought. The chairman expressed his thanks, and stated, in reply, that the circle had faith and would wait until their friends could bring it in their own time. The same evening, the medium was driven from his seat on to the table and borne along like a spear or dart, carrying with him three other sitters, who, on striking a light, were found huddled together in a corner of the room like a bundle of clothes. Two chairs were found with the arms and legs all taken carefully out of their sockets, but not otherwise injured. The two latest sittings were still more remarkable. At the first one, the medium was deeply entranced and was repeatedly raised horizontally on to the table. The chairman felt a hand soft and small like a female hand and warm, cover his, and he was touched on the shoulder and his hair pulled. The circle at one time (it being in

the dark) heard and saw what they supposed was the body of the medium fall on the table, but on the chairman stating that he felt his limbs there, another of the circle said "no, sir, the medium is standing beside me," which was really found to be the case. The circle naturally concluded that it must have been his double or an apparition. The chairman was again touched by a hand soft and warm as the other, but with the fingers malformed, like as if pieces of putty were on the points of them. The medium was afterwards found standing on his head upon the table, was made to turn a summersault, and then bounded over the heads of the far side of the circle, lighting on the ground without noise. At the sitting on last Friday, the medium was, in the presence of all the circle, distinctly levitated on the table in a standing posture, and walked on the table and across the tops of the seats of the far side of the circle right to the opposite side of the room. His coat was taken off by the controlling power when he was entranced, and found by the circle under the table. He appeared to those sitting nearest to him a man of tall stature, though he is in his normal state a short man. Of course these wonderful manifestations will be set down to "cerebral excitement" or "diseased imaginations" by mere theoretical believers in the immortality of the soul; persons who are credulous enough to believe in donkeys speaking and other equally silly fables; but, those who, like the Sandhurst circle, have and intend to think for themselves and to accept the evidences of their senses in preference to the wild and untutored ravings of prejudiced opponents who can lecture upon this subject without having properly investigated it, other and very different conclusions will be drawn from them.

We have received by last mail, a letter from Mrs Emma Hardinge Britten, in reference to a new magazine, projected by herself and other prominent spiritualists in America. We publish the prospectus, from which it will be seen that the magazine will be of a most original and interesting character, whilst Mrs. E. H. Britten's connexion with it, will be a guarantee to subscribers, that they will receive a *Quid pro quo* for their outlay.

A NEW PROGRESSIVE ERA IN SPIRITUALISM.

Under the direction and advice of the Spiritual Intelligences most influential in inaugurating the movement known as "Modern Spiritualism," a NEW MONTHLY MAGAZINE, of the highest possible literary tone and interest has been projected, to be entitled

"THE WESTERN STAR."

The principal features aimed at in this undertaking will be:—First: To present the matter contained in each number in such form and size that any or all the articles can be preserved and bound in ordinary Library volumes.

Secondly: To establish a record of the deeply momentous events connected with modern Spiritualism in the most unexceptionable literary shape, and to gather up and preserve such material as cannot be included in the columns of ordinary weekly journals devoted to spiritualism.

Thirdly: To open up opportunities for a more free and fraternal interchange of facts and opinions with the Spiritualists of foreign countries, than at present exists in American Spiritual literature.

Fourthly: To treat all topics of current interest, from a purely Spiritualistic stand-point.

SECOND AND THIRD VOLUMES OF "MODERN AMERICAN SPIRITUALISM." The proprietors of this magazine call especial attention to their design of securing from MRS. EMMA HARDINGE BRITTEN, the exclusive right to publish in successive numbers, all the voluminous and deeply interesting material she has prepared for the compilation of two additional volumes of her great work "MODERN AMERICAN SPIRITUALISM."

In this wonderful assemblage of facts, records of special phenomena and biographical sketches, Mrs. Hardinge Britten, is possessed of MSS. and other unpublished matter, as well as literature now out of print and unattainable to anybody but herself, which renders the treasures she has been collecting during many past years, almost priceless and more than equivalent to the worth of the yearly subscription, without the reading matter designed for the magazine.

Attention is solicited to the following synopsis of subjects sketched out by the immortal projectors of the work and the order in which the several articles will stand.

1st. Leading article to be written by a competent and acceptable writer, on the Spiritual philosophy.

2nd. Biographical sketches of the leading mediums, speakers and writers connected with modern Spiritualism.

3d. Sketches of Sybils, Prophets and Ecstasies of the Ancient and Middle Ages, and a comparison instituted with their modern prototypes.

4th. Examples of varied and marvellous PHENOMENAL FACTS and the philosophy of their production.

5th. Foreign Spiritualism, Trans-Atlantic correspondence, &c.

6th. Communications from Spirits.

7th. Summary of passing events.

8th. A short essay on Politics, Religion, Popular Reforms, or other leading topics of the day, by the WESTERN STAR CIRCLE of SPIRITS.

9th. Reviews and answers to correspondents.

The projectors of the WESTERN STAR propose to conduct their work in the broadest and most fearless spirit of truth, yet pledge themselves to uphold the moral, religious and scientific aspects of Spiritualism, free from all petty side issues or narrow fanaticisms.

As the human co-operators selected to carry out their great work, are rich only in the particular qualities which fit them for its conduct, they are compelled to inaugurate the first principle of justice in its establishment, by requiring that it shall be self sustaining—Hence, the first number of the magazine (though entirely ready in a literary point of view) will not be issued until a sufficient number of subscriptions are guaranteed to ensure its expenses for one twelvemonth.

Wealthy Spiritualists sympathising with this movement are hereby earnestly solicited to contribute donations of such sums as will represent a large number of subscribers and thereby hasten the first issue of the work. Every donor of sums which exceed the price of a single subscription, will be furnished with copies to the amount of their contributions.

NO NAMES will be published in connection with any article. Literary contributions will be gratefully received and respectfully considered; but the company cannot pledge themselves to publish any article which does not accord with their best judgement.

P.S. The Melbourne subscription will be about 20s. per annum and Mr W. H. Terry 96 Russell St. will receive orders.

EXTRAORDINARY DISCOVERY.

(From the Banffshire Reporter, Feb. 2nd. 1872.)

On the forenoon of Thursday, last week, a human skeleton was found upon the farm of Upper Dalloch, near Whitehills, under very extraordinary circumstances. The finding of a skeleton is in itself quite a common occurrence, and this case would not have materially differed from many hundreds of which we have heard, but for the strange and unaccountable way which the discovery came to be made.

The farm of Upper Dalloch is rented by Mr Wilson, Milton of Noth, Rhynie, who does not reside upon the farm, but has a man in charge of it. The person presently overseer is a man named William Moir, belonging to Rhynie, married, and 35 years of age. Until he took the charge of Upper Dalloch, he had never been in the quarter on any occasion during his life, and must have been almost an entire stranger to its local history. About the term of Whitsundays 1871, he dreamed of having seen a human skeleton, with blood upon the face at a point on the farm, called Stackness, by the side of the sea, and some few yards removed from high-water mark. There was nothing peculiarly expressive in the dream itself, either, for who does not now and again have even more horrid dreams than this; but the persistency with which the incidents of it recurred to the man's mind, and the frequency and vividness with which it continually returned, impressed him so deeply that he began to have serious doubts about his own sanity. During the summer, a lunatic who had escaped from the Ladysbridge Asylum was found drowned among the rocks near this same spot—fraught with so many painful ideas to the unfortunate dreamer; and he and one of his fellow-servants, fishing in a boat which they kept for that purpose, were the first to come upon the body of the missing lunatic. In carrying the body of the man to Whitehills, at which Moir assisted, and when very near the exact spot on which he had dreamed he saw the bloody-featured skeleton, the man assisting missed his footing and let fall the end of the board upon which the corpse was being carried, turning up the face, which was slightly marked with blood. The whole train of ideas here returned to Moir, and he felt satisfied his own mind that here was its fulfilment—the incidents bearing such a faithful comparison to those of the vision. But that idea, however comforting, was soon to be dispelled, and the subject of his dream again became the all-absorbing thought, to which his mind ever and anon recurred when not occupied by any of the matters upon which he must of necessity bestow a certain amount of mental attention. It became as inseparable

from his unoccupied moments as the shadow of his body in the sunshine—ever increasing in intensity and horror. In reality, it began to effect his connection with his fellow men very considerably, in so much that he gradually became absent-minded and listless.

On Thursday morning the effect of the present and previous excitement was so great upon him that he determined to be at the bottom of it; and so, without making his intention known to any one, he took a spade, went to the spot indicated, and proceeded to dig. Of the correctness of the impression left on his mind by the dream he did not entertain a doubt, and it is astonishing to note the precision with which it was fulfilled—even to the exact spot in which it was to be found, and the direction in which it was lying; for, after having removed the green turf, the second spadeful brought up the skull of a human being. Then followed the lower jaw, and, in succession, the various portions of the frame. When he found, after reaching the thigh, that the whole skeleton was in all probability there, he stopped and went to a field close by, where one of the men under his charge was engaged pulling turnips; and bringing the man to the place, he continued his explorations, being successful in unearthing the remaining portion. Laying out the fragments in their order upon the grass, they found them exactly to represent the various portions of a complete human skeleton. So firmly convinced had he become of the actual existence of the skeleton, and that, too, in the very spot he went to examine, that the finding of it rather seemed to satisfy than astonish him. His first thought was to bury it, and say nothing of the matter; but on second consideration, and by advice of his fellow-servant, he went to Whitehills, for the purpose of consulting with a friend there. While in the shop of Mr Taylor, fishcurer, Detective Macgregor, from Banff, happened to call, to whom the strange circumstances were related, and who went immediately to the spot in company with Mr Moir. Mr Macgregor having satisfied himself of the existence of the skeleton, returned to Banff and gave information to the Procurator Fiscal; and next morning he returned and took charge of the bones.

The spot where the remains were thus so strangely found, as we have already said, is nearly a mile to the west of Whitehills. The ground is inclined to be mossy, and at a spot where the skeleton was interred, has a mossy loam from 18 to 20 inches deep, beneath which there is a hard shingly bottom. Besides, the place would appear to have been at one time used in the manufacture of kelp—the stones which were turned up bearing the marks of having been charred by fire. Medical men who have seen the bones are said to be under the impression that they are those of a full-grown man; and they likewise infer from the stage of decomposition in which they exist that they may have lain upwards of forty years.

But what about the very extraordinary train of events which led to the discovery? How did this man, probably unborn at the time the body was placed in the ground; with only a short residence in the quarter, with which he was previously totally unacquainted with no knowledge of the local history of the place, beyond what little information he may have received from residents—how, we ask, was the impression so vividly conveyed to this man's mind through the channel of a dream—a dream fulfilled in its minutest details? This is a question for the philosopher—a question for those who pretend to look scornfully upon the portentousness of dreams. It has undoubtedly many parallels or cases nearly parallel in history; but occurring in this enlightened country, and in this intelligent age—an age that pretends to be able to account for every phenomena in nature—we would naturally expect that some one will be found who can, or thinks he can, explain the cause of what is an undoubted effect.

[The cause to us and to spiritualists generally, is simple enough, the spirit of the murdered man, or perhaps the remorseful murderer hovering round the scene of the crime, discovered in Mr. Moir a susceptibility of impression, and being desirous that the occurrence should be brought to light, has persistently impressed him for that purpose, there is very little doubt but that, if the spirit who impressed him was allowed the opportunity the whole facts of the case would be revealed. ED. H. L.]

MR. TYERMAN'S LECTURES.

Mr Tyerman's lectures at the Turn Verein Hall, under the auspices of the Victorian Association of progressive Spiritualists, (which were interrupted by that gentleman's illness) were resumed on the 7th of April, and have continued to attract good audiences. In the last two Lectures Mr Tyerman analysed and answered the leading objections to spiritualism in a masterly and telling manner, want of space prevents our reporting them in full. We have much pleasure in informing our readers that Mr Tyerman has accepted a six months engagement to lecture for the association.

Review.

THE SPIRITUAL PILGRIM.*

Such is the title of one of the most interesting Biographies we have ever read. The busy eventful life of the subject of it (Mr. Jas. M. Peebles) affords ample scope for the author to build upon, and he appears to have made good use of the material at his command, and linked together the various life pictures and events of his hero's career so harmoniously as to bring the reader into close rapport with the Pilgrim, who is certainly one of the most remarkable men of the time. Ordained at the age of twenty years a minister of the Universalist Church, his life since has been one continual course of active labour for humanity. First, as the pastor of Liberal universalist congregations, then for some six years, pastor of a Free Church, composed of Unitarians, Quakers, Spiritualists, and Universalists, at Battle Creek—when powerful spiritual impressions induced him to sever his connection with the church and take the field as a Lecturer on Spiritualism and kindred subjects. He has lectured in all but three states of the American union, and wherever he has done so he has been invited to return. He has also lectured in Canada and various parts of England, and travelled in France, Germany, Italy, and the East, gathering and diffusing knowledge on his path, has mixed with all ranks of society from the cottager to the Prince, and seems equally at home with them all. The charm of the work is in the naturalness of the character and actions of the subject of it, a character so simple and yet so rare. In view of Mr Peebles, intended visit to these shores, it is a book that should be read by all who take an interest in the subject which it is the object of his visit to bring more prominently before the public.

LONDON DIALECTICAL SOCIETY.

REPORT OF SUB-COMMITTEE No. 2 ON SPIRITUAL MANIFESTATIONS.

Gentlemen,—We, one of the Sub-committees appointed by you for the purpose of practically acquainting ourselves, if possible, with the above-named phenomena, beg leave to report as follows:—

- 1.—That we have held numerous meetings at the houses of Messrs. A—and B—, members of your sub-committee and of the Dialectical Society.
- 2.—That the said Messrs. A—and B—were entire strangers to the manifestations in question and sceptical of the Phenomena generally, and that no meetings in connection with the subject had been previously held in either of their houses.
- 3.—That, in addition to the Members of your Sub-committee, the wives of Messrs. A—and B—took part at such meetings, as did also Mr C—a brother of one of your Sub-committee.
- 4.—That our meetings were held without the aid or presence of any professed mediums (so-called) and under circumstances that precluded the possibility of trick or deception.
- 5.—That, for the purpose of a *séance*, we always assembled in the evening and seated ourselves around

* The spiritual Pilgrim, a Biography of James M. Peebles by J. O. Barrett, Boston, Wm. White & Co. 1871.

a dining-table upon which we lightly placed our hands, engaging in conversation.

- 6.—That the rooms in which we were so assembled were lighted by gas, and we usually commenced with a full supply of light, which, if afterwards occasionally reduced, was always sufficient to enable us to read or write without difficulty.
- 7.—That the phenomena termed "rapping," "table-rapping" and "table-moving" occurred at our first, and at many subsequent meetings.
- 8.—That the table-moving referred to was in the nature of heaving, oscillation, or tipping; the table often moving in any direction suggested.
- 9.—That, during such movements our hands were sometimes removed from the table altogether without abating the phenomena, and that at all times we were careful not to induce any movements by either muscular action or pressure.
- 10.—That "table-moving" ceased, or nearly ceased, after our first few meetings, apparently in favour of a rapping phenomena.
- 11.—That the rappings in question did not always proceed from the table, but sometimes from the floor, the walls, and the ceiling; frequently from parts of the room suggested by those present—but not always.
- 12.—That the raps had a sound distinctive and distinguishable, appearing to be *in* rather than *on* the substance from whence they proceeded; sometimes, however, they sounded like detonations in the air.
- 13.—That when we occasionally, by way of experiment, made series of raps in rhythmical order upon the table, and asked that the rhythms should be imitated, our requests were complied with by responsive raps exactly imitating the rhythms prescribed.
- 14.—That our experience in regard to the phenomena we witnessed appears generally to be corroborative of the statements of many of the witnesses examined by you upon the subject, to the extent that such phenomena have, or appear to have a basis of intelligence.
- 15.—That this intelligence was principally manifested (a) by replies more or less pertinent, and sometimes most unexpected in their character, to our spoken and audible questions, (b) by original communications made to us as hereinafter mentioned.
- 16.—That such replies and communications were made by means of raps given when the alphabet was pointed to, letter by letter, or spoken by one of the party—it having been previously understood that three raps should signify "yes," two "doubtful," and one "no." This arrangement, however, sometimes was altered by way of test, but without disturbing the accuracy of the replies.
- 17.—That through the process detailed in the foregoing clause we presumably established occasional communication with a number of spirits, or intelligences, announced to be such by themselves, many of whom stated they were connected in various degrees of relationship to certain members of our party for whom they possessed a friendly regard.
- 18.—That such presumed spirits displayed distinct individualities, each having a manner peculiar to itself, and rapping delicately, emphatically, or deliberately, as the case might be, expressing as it were character, mood and temper.
- 19.—That when we attempted to shorten the process of communication detailed in clause No. 16, by anticipating words or phrases which we thought were intended, we frequently found our anticipations emphatically negated in favour of more appropriate expressions or of words of a different signification altogether. For illustrations upon this point we refer you to the *séances* reported in clause No. 39.
- 20.—That intelligence was further manifested by the occasional dictation to us of special conditions for our then observance, such, for instance, as requesting us to sit in a different order at the table; requiring one or more to sit away from it; asking for an increase or diminution of light, or for the appointment of some particular persons to ask questions; directing us to link or unlink our hands; to be more quiet in our conversation; to avoid disputation, &c.
- 21.—That on our compliance with such directions the manifestations were invariably intensified.
- 22.—That we are convinced of the objective character of the phenomena from finding that persons sceptical as to the existence thereof invariably confirmed our own experiences even when suddenly introduced during the progress of a *séance*. As a case in point, we instance that when one of our sittings were far advanced and the phenomena of table-moving and rapping were in full operation, we sent for a neighbour to witness them. He came immediately, the manifestations continuing without break or interruption, and presenting to him the same aspect that they did to ourselves, notwithstanding that he at any rate must have been free from any antecedent influence, mesmeric or otherwise.
- 23.—That as a further evidence of the objectivity of the phenomena, we report that manifestations have occurred to us spontaneously upon occasions when we had not assembled for the purpose of a *séance*, and were not seated around any table. We instance (1st) that one evening when some of the members of your sub-committee were assembled at the house of Mr A—, not, however, with any intention of then investigating the phenomena, the conversation turned upon a *séance* lately held by some of the members of your general committee, at which Mrs Marshall had been present, and when raps had proceeded from the pianoforte. While we were discussing the genuineness of these raps, the strings of Mr A—'s pianoforte suddenly and simultaneously vibrated, although no person was near the instrument. As these sounds were twice or thrice repeated, followed by raps, and were too sonorous to be accounted for by any vibration of the house or room, we immediately examined the instrument internally and externally with great care, but without discovering any cause for the sounds produced; and even after such examination, raps proceeded from the instrument at intervals during the rest of the evening. This was the only occasion when phenomena other than "rapping or "table-moving" occurred to your sub-committee, and we think it right to add that no circumstance of the kind had ever before or has since happened in Mr A—'s house. (2nd.) That upon another occasion some time after we had concluded a *séance*, and while we were taking refreshments, the rappings returned with great vigour, proceeding simultaneously from various parts of the room. On asking the presumed intelligencies their names, they informed us in reply that they were the spirits who had been in communication with us during the evening, and that they were in a happy and merry mood, and did not care to leave us. One of our party jocularly drank to their health, and asked them to respond, which they did by volleys of raps, indicative as they informed us of laughter and fellowship. Each ultimately bade us good night by a succession of raps, so as to speak, in perspective, being at the commencement loud and rapid, but gradually diminishing in force and increasing in interval until out of hearing. These raps, we should state, were more like detonations in the air than the result of percussion on any hard substance.
- 24.—That we instance as further evidences of the spontaneity of the phenomena, that frequently emphatic raps occurred by way of assent to, or dissent from, remarks made by your Sub-committee to each other. Thus, at a sitting during which the raps had been unusually sonorous and fluent, one of the party asked the presumed spirit then in communication to state when he died, but no answer was returned, notwithstanding the question was somewhat persistently repeated. This apparently abrupt termination to the most successful *séance* we had yet had, cost us much surprise, and we were conversing upon the subject, when it was remarked that as the presumed intelligences claimed to be Spiritual, they probably rejected the application of such a term as death to themselves or their state of existence, it being likely that whatever import death might be to the body, it would, as concerning the spirit, be the continuation of life under a new form. Scarcely had the speaker concluded,

when loud raps again sounded from the table, such being given, as we were informed, by way of assent to the remarks just made. Arising out of this, a conversation of great interest took place between ourselves and the presumed intelligences. Death, we were informed was so far as the body was concerned, of comparatively trivial import, but as regarded the spirit, it was a birth into new experiences of existence; that spirit-life was in every respect human; that friendly intercourse and companionship were as common and as pleasurable in spirit-life as on earth; that although spirits took great interest in earthly affairs, they had no wish to return to their former state of existence; that communication with earthly friends was pleasurable, and desired by spirits, being intended as a proof to the former of the continuance of life, notwithstanding bodily dissolution; that spirits claimed no prophetic power. We were further informed that the two ladies in our party were mediums, and that others of our party were mediumistic, and might in time develop into mediums; that our *séances* would improve by being held periodically and frequently; that they could not state the result of *séances* with reference to health, or give us any information of invariable application as to conditions; that disputation amongst ourselves at a *séance* was a disturbing element, but that they liked joking and fun occasionally; that they knew the Dialectical Society, and were interested in its investigation of Spiritualism, but that they did not know whether such investigation would have any good result.

25.—That the independance or objectivity of the intelligence regulating the phenomena appears to be evidenced by the fact that we have frequently received answers and communications unexpected in their character. For instance, we once inquired by way of test where a lady of our acquaintance then was, she being at that time in Bolton. In reply, the word "in" was rapped out and then the letter "b." This so far was satisfactory, but as the next letter given was "e," we regarded the answer as a failure. Going on, however, with the alphabet, "d" was our next letter, and this we were told completed the sentence. It being then past twelve o'clock at night, the oppositeness of the reply "in bed" elicited some merriment, which was responded to by a series of raps. We then gave the names of certain towns, and asked in which one of them the lady was staying. As each town was named, we got a single negative rap, until we gave Bolton, when we immediately received three raps indicative of "Yes." It also happened at this *séance* that while we were sitting at a heavy dining-table with our hands linked (in compliance with a request made to us by one of the presumed spirits), one of us asked another spirit, then in communication whether it had sufficient power to move the table. The alphabet was asked for, and the words spelt out were "unlink hands." We had scarcely obeyed the instruction when the table lurched round suddenly, violently forcing some of the party out of their chairs. This spirit claimed to be that of an acquaintance who had lately lost his life by a railway accident in America, and who, when living, was of a sportive disposition, and fond of feats of strength. He first announced his presences at our *séances* by a somewhat unparliamentary term of badinage that he and his companions had been in the habit of using towards each other, and when asked to which of two friends he applied the term, answered "both." He objected to making original communications, but being urged for, at last replied by giving the message, "Tell my brother J—I have visited you," it being somewhat singular that the brother in question a few days previously had much ridiculed the phenomena.

26.—That we, your Sub-committee, did not succeed in ascertaining any specific conditions that would command the production of the phenomena—those that appeared to be necessary on one occasion seeming to be superfluous on another, while at many consecutive meetings the due observance by us of all the presumed conditions within our experience failed entirely. Upon this subject, however, we submit the following clauses by way of analysis.

27.—The phenomena were principally manifested under the conditions or circumstances specified in clauses Nos. 5, 6, and 20 of this Report, we having under such conditions obtained manifestations in various rooms of the houses in which we met and at several tables, three of the latter being dining-room tables of full size; the attendance upon such occasions varying from five to seven members. The manifestations appeared generally to be aided on our part—

- (a.) By orderliness in the conduct of the *séances*.
- (b.) By a quiet, but not particularly passive demeanour and conversation.
- (c.) By quietude in the house in which we assembled, we failing sometimes to obtain phenomena early in the evening, but obtaining them later, when the servants had retired and domestic noises had ceased.
- (d.) By a somewhat moderate supply of light.

On the other hand, we have occasionally had powerful manifestations—when seated away from the table—when observing no order or ceremony—when engaged in animated conversation—when indulging in laughter and merriment—when ordinary household business was in progress—and, with a full supply of light.

28.—That sometimes, without any perceivable change of conditions the manifestations became faint and rapidly died away, apparently beyond recall, thus closing our *séance*; while upon other occasions, without any particular regard by us to conditions, the manifestations continued strong and vigorous, we ourselves being obliged to break up the sittings, which usually lasted from one hour to two hours and a-half.

29.—That, as relating to the subject of conditions, we have noted the following facts:—

- (a.) That we invariably failed to obtain the phenomena in the dark.
- (b.) That at our few trials by daylight we invariably failed to obtain manifestations.
- (c.) That we invariably failed to obtain manifestations without the presence of the two ladies in our party.
- (d.) That our compliance with conditions dictated to us by the presumed spirits invariably intensified the manifestations at the time. (See clauses Nos. 20 and 21.)

30.—That we have not discovered any conditions identical with those ordinarily deemed necessary to the production of the so-called electro-biologic or mesmeric phenomena—but often the reverse. Thus we may state:—

- (a.) That intentness or desire for the manifestations (as preparatory processes) far more frequently prefaced failure than success, we commonly finding that those *séances* were the most successful at which the phenomena occurred immediately, or almost immediately we seated ourselves at the table.
- (b.) That, as detailed in clause No. 23, the phenomena sometimes occurred to us spontaneously and unsought.
- (c.) That no influences existed at our *séances* that impaired our powers of observation or discrimination, inasmuch as the remembrance of each person present thereat as to what had taken place invariably accorded with the experience of all the others, and was further corroborated by the notes taken at the time, as well as by independent testimony. (See clause No. 22.)

31.—That whatever might be the force or power employed in the manifestations, or whatever the conditions under which these manifestations took place, we frequently noted that there appeared to be a desire to conserve or economise such force or power; for example.—

- (a.) We rarely obtained second replies to questions already answered, even when we inverted such questions for the purpose.

(To be continued.)

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