



DEVOTED TO RATIONAL SPIRITUALISM AND PRACTICAL REFORM.

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EXTRACTS FROM AN ENGLISH WORK.

The volume entitled "Spirit Drawings," by W. M. Wilkinson, Esq., recently published in London is a well-written and instructive work. Having been furnished with a copy through the kindness of Dr. Gardner, we make a few extracts such as will interest our readers.

A CHILD MEDIUM.

In August last, a heavy and sudden affliction came upon us, in the removal of a dear boy—our second son—into the spiritual world. He had passed about eleven years in this world of ours, and was taken from us in the midst of the rudest health, to commence his spirit-life under the loving care of his Heavenly Father.

Some weeks afterwards his brother, then about twelve years old, went on a short visit to reading, and whilst there, amused himself, as boys of his age are used to do. One morning he had a piece of paper before him, and a pencil in his hand, with which he was about to draw some child's picture; when gradually he found his hand filling with some feeling before unknown to him, and then it began to move involuntarily on the paper, and to form letters, words and sentences. The feeling he described as a pleasing kind, entirely new to him, and as if some power was within him, apart from his own mind, and making use of his hand. The handwriting was different from his own, and the subject-matter was unknown to him till he read it with curiosity as it was being written.

On frequent occasions whilst on this visit, his hand was similarly moved in writing; and afterwards he went to stay with some other friends in Buckinghamshire, with whom he did not make a trial of this new power; but on his return home, after some weeks' absence, we for about two months watched with deep emotion the movement of his hand in writing and drawing; for sometimes, when he wished to write, his hand moved in drawing small flowers, such as exist not here; and sometimes when he expected to draw a flower, the hand moved in writing. The movement was in general most rapid, and unlike his own mode of writing or drawing; and he had no idea of what was being produced, until it was in process of being done. Often, in the middle of drawing a sentence, a flower or diagram would be drawn, and then suddenly the hand would go off in writing again.

I have not mentioned the nature or subject-matter of the words thus written; nor is it in this place necessary to do so, further than this, that they purported to be chiefly communications from his brother, our departed child, and were all of a religious character, speaking of his own happy state, and of the means by which similar happiness is alone to be attained, by those who remained here to fight out the longer battle of life.

The effect of these writings upon us was a deep thankfulness, and a happy calm as to the state of our dear boy; and whatever may be their origin, we have derived the greatest comfort from them, and the assistance not so much of faith, as of the certainty of knowledge of his happiness in the great spirit-world.

SLUMBERINGS UPON THE BED.

Dreams rank amongst the highest phenomena of spiritual life, and sometimes they contain revelations of import to us—perhaps in ancient days more often so than now, but not than they may again do, when man surrenders his intellect willingly to his Maker and accepts his breathings as his most cherished life. Then, it may not be necessary that the body should always sleep that the soul may "dream;" that our old men may see visions, and our young men may dream dreams—"For God speaketh, once, yea, twice, yet man perceiveth it not; in a dream, in a vision of the night when deep sleep falleth upon men, in slumberings upon the bed, then he openeth the ears of man, and sealeth their instruction, that he may withdraw man from his purpose, and hide pride from man."

Bishop Newton says of dreams. "It is very evident that the soul is in a great measure independent of the body, even while she is within the body—since the deepest sleep which possesseth the one cannot affect the other; whilst the avenues of the body are closed, the soul is still endued with sense and perception. They must necessarily be two distinct and different substances, whose nature and properties are so very different, that while the one shall sink under the burden and fatigue of the day, the other shall still be fresh and active as the flame; while the one shall be dead to the world, the other shall be ranging the universe."

"There the child is on its mother's breast,
That long in the grave hath lain;
For in dreamland all the loved and lost
Are given us again."

Oftimes too is given us in dreams what we have not lost, nor sought for, but what comes of the Lord's great gift to man—that inward light which shines on our path and is a light to our feet. This has recently been beautifully shown to me in the radiant smiles of a dear dying woman, when I sat by her bed, and asked her if she had any sweet dreams as she slept away her few hours of freedom from the agony of her body. I

had scarcely touched the cord, when her face lighted up, and her eyes filled with tears at the full thought. "Oh yes, when I first began to be ill, long months ago, I began to have the sweetest dreams. Angel forms held scrolls before my eyes, on which were sentences which seemed to burn with inner light. I had no need to read them, for I saw the whole at once, and my mind has ever since been repeating to itself these images, and I have known it always since, as I was slumbering here."

So all dreams even, we see are not meagre, but if we do not receive the lower part of them, how shall we attain to or believe in their higher spiritual phenomena? Ought I to have told this poor comforted soul, that what she had seen was all a delusion? Oh no; and if I had would she have believed me?—And what better had I to give her in their place, for they were the shadows of the very things she was soon to see.

For my part I do not know, and therefore I cannot say, what is meagre or poor in any of the laws of God, for in every, even the smallest, is the vital force by the consistence of which and by Divine geometric laws of duplication and addition, the very spheres themselves are made. I am, therefore, content to wait for higher and greater excellencies, and to be ever thankful for these small beginnings—trusting to that never-failing law of love which gives us always what we are able to bear.—If these early developments are low in their degree to what we may hope for, are not we low too? Nay, shall there be found one in ten who will read thus far, for whom they are not more than he can bear?—not on account of their lowness, but because their light shines from a land that he wots not of.—Beginnings always seem low; but they contain the future tree, as the "low" acorn contains the oak. The growth of a thousand years is in that little seed.

SOCRATES.

Let us go back to the time of Socrates, that great good man—the child-like searcher for truth, which he felt to be divine—who, he it remembered, without the light of the word revelation, raved out bright truths, as a sun amongst the Gentiles, and who knew more of the workings of the soul, and of Him who made it, than is now taught in many churches. Speaking of the soul in that wonderful prison-discourse which he left as his last-day's legacy to divine philosophy, he says:—

"There is much ground for hope, that he who shall arrive at that place where I am going, will there, if anywhere, obtain possession of that on account of which we have chiefly studied and laboured during the time of our past life. Therefore, this journey now appointed to me, may be undertaken with hope, by any other man who thinks that his mind is prepared by the needful purification. Purification is the separating to the utmost the soul from the body, and accustoming it on all hands to be collected and condensed within itself, and to abide, as far as possible, both in this present and in the next state of existence, alone and by itself, set free from the body as from bonds."

Again:—"Consider whether temperance, and justice, and fortitude, and wisdom itself, be not a certain purification.—And, therefore, those men who instituted the mysteries for us seem to be by no means of slight authority, but, in fact, of old, to intimate that whoever descends to Hades uninitiated and unpurified shall lie in the mire; but that he who arrives there purified and initiated shall dwell with the gods."

The soul is most like that which is divine and immortal, indissoluble, and ever continuing in the same state, consistently with itself; the body all the contrary. The soul, then, the invisible, that which departs to another place of such kind, excellent and pure, and invisible—to Hades, in truth—to the good and wise Deity, whither, if the Deity wills it, my own soul must presently go. Can that soul, being such, and endowed with such native qualities, be immediately on its departure from the body, dissipated and perish, as many persons assert? Far from it, my dear Cebes and Simmias; nay, it is much rather thus, if it depart in a state of purity, drawing after it nothing of the body—that it departs to that which is like itself, the invisible, the divine, the immortal, the wise, at which arriving it becomes blest, being redeemed from error and folly, and fears, and fierce passions, and all other human ills."

Of the "uninitiated" soul he says:—"But, my friend, we must consider this to be gross, and heavy, and earthly, and visible, weighed down and drawn back into the visible region, through a dread of the invisible, and of Hades, wandering, as it is said, around monuments and sepulchres, around which have been seen certain darksome apparitions of souls, which still retain a portion of the visible nature, and on account of which they are seen."

NO TENANT FOR THE GRAVE.

"How shall we bury you?" said Crito to Socrates. "Just as you please," said Socrates, "if you can catch me." Socrates knew better than that he should die—he saw through death. The man cannot be buried. The man is only where his conscious being is, and as that cannot be put in the grave the man is not there. We should teach our children from the earliest that there are no men and women really in the grave, and truly they better receive and understand this great truth than many of their elders. How impossible to make a child believe

that its mother, or father, or brother, is in the grave! And how foolish the efforts sometimes made to force it to believe the degrading falsehood! Leave it to its heaven-born thoughts—to its ministering angels, and let its Angel behold the face of its Father which is in heaven. The embryo passes without fear into a larger world, which is meant to be kinder to it than the mother's womb. And so the man is to be born again, with as little pain of sense and thought, into the next expansion of the spirit.

A FAMILY GUIDE.

Of the present Emperor of the French it was lately said in the *Times*, "He has a deep and mysterious impression of his family genius and guide; availing himself of the impulse it gives him, but checking its impetus and extravagance." Have we not too "floating notions which course through the brain;" "an idea flashes into the mind;" "a light comes into the mind;" "poets are born not made;" and all the great works which are attributed as the gifts of "genius"?

These are all but the involuntary homage paid by the mind to the great fact of spirit-intercourse, and the only variety in the above instances is that some of them refer immediately to God as the giver, and others to angels and spirits as the media of the intercourse, but still as from Him, the only Giver. They are but the ministers, to give us just so much as we can receive, so that those "who have little may not lack, and those who have much, have none over."

EVIL SPIRITS.

Evil spirits, too, are not unknown to us. There is frequent mention in the New Testament of their being "cast out" in a miraculous manner; but Luke gives us remarkable words, which show how unwillingly they leave a mind by which they have been once attracted and allowed to enter in, and the battles and temptations to be resisted, but too often unsuccessfully, to prevent their re-entry.

"When the nuclear spirit is gone out of a man, he walketh through dry places seeking rest: and finding none, he saith, 'I will return to my house whence I came out,' and when he cometh, he findeth it swept and garnished. Then goeth he and taketh to him seven other spirits, more wicked than himself, and they enter in and dwell there."

Our law, in framing indictments for felonies, speaks of the culprit as "not having the fear of God before his eyes, but being moved by the instigation of the devil." In conversation we say a person is "seduced" into evil ways; and there is even the human creation of a personal devil, who is the seducer or tempter, as if the collective evil of men and depraved spirits were not sufficiently a devil of itself. I remember many years ago being sent to see an educated person, who had two or three days before attempted suicide by cutting his throat, and in which he had very nearly succeeded. On my asking him what could have induced him to do it, he told me that he was impelled by a voice which he heard saying, "cut your throat," and that he could not resist; that after cutting it with a pen-knife, and fainting with loss of blood, he came a little to himself, and again he heard the voice, saying, "Cut it again;" that he obeyed, and knew nothing more till he found himself attended by the officers of the prison. The man was to all appearance perfectly sane, and never afterwards showed any signs of insanity.

THE CHOICE OF HERCULES.

In monumental sculpture, which is meant to embody our holiest, truest feelings, how often do we not see the form of the departed, with uplifted arms, rising to meet the angels, descending in their love to welcome a new inhabitant and companion of the spirit-land! Painting, both old and new, is also beautifully full of the same great truth, and with pictured seraphic forms it consoles us for the absence of the departed one, absent from the body, present with the Lord, and received by blessed angels to be conducted home. One of Thackeray's works was monthly illustrated on the cover by a drawing of a man between two spirit female forms, one alluring him by blandishments on one side, and to whom he is too fondly leaning, whilst the other, observing the attraction, is standing somewhat mournfully, endeavouring to win him to her better love.

This is a reproduction of the same idea known to the ancients as the "choice of Hercules"—the strong man subjected to temptation in the form of a woman, and supported under it by the messenger from above.

PROVIDENCE.

Cannot every one of us, in looking back through the vista of the past, see how each has been guided and overruled in every action of our lives, so that everything has come to form part of the circle which we recognize as our life? Even the bad in us has been permitted to our evil loves, and made to form a part of it for our warning, or for that of others; and in tracing back our lives, the finger of God is clearly seen in our goings out and comings in. Like the fulfilment of prophecy, this is not recognized at the time of its being acted, or man would lose his freedom of will, and his choice which is preserved to him, and so, from the history of individuals to that of nations, all is divinely watched over and guided according to the best possible of the state of men. There is no blunder in the past, neither

will there be any in the future; but man is ever made the best of, that may be, for the progression of the race and the progress of the spirit-life.

ANECDOTES OF NAPIER.

In the recently-published "Life of Sir Charles Napier" is an anecdote, told in his own strong words, which illustrates, this in a remarkable way. Every man's life would supply him with thousands of instances—indeed it is made up of such; but here is one of the "great captain." Napier has successfully conquered and taken prisoners the robber chiefs in Scinde, and he thus records his feelings:—"In my heart I swore, when in Greece, to put down banditti there, if God permitted, and in Scinde I repeated the oath. The spirit of good refused permission in Greece, here he has permitted it; and, as if some outward power moved events, all my minutest projects have come to pass, errors, neglect, and sound calculations, all have turned out right in the end. Can I feel proud of my ability? No; it is a power unseen, though to me evident, that has guided me. When I have condemned myself for going to the left instead of to the right, it has suddenly answered me that the left was the way to go. Have I not a right, then, to say the unseen power is evident? I have been guided either by the good spirit or the bad. Yet why say the bad? No, no; a forecast of events comes over me—a thousand thoughts collect, and bring conviction in an unaccountable manner. Lo! an example. Some days ago a conviction came to me that the robbers would go to Trukkee [this was the place in which he ultimately captured them.] It was not reason; there were as many reasons against as for; but a sort of spirit told me so.—On the 28th of February my mind was engrossed with my intended movement northwards, which was ordered for the 1st March. While ruminating, a man came hastily to say my conveyance was attacked. My thoughts were then intent on how to force the enemy to my purpose in the north, whether by skill or by riding upon them, but suddenly a voice seemed to repeat, 'Trukkee, Trukkee!' It had done so before. They cannot be so mad as to go there, I internally repeated. 'They are,' replied the spirit. What else but a spirit could it be? I walked about irresolutely. 'Beware! Beware!' said the warning voice, and suddenly, ere my thoughts could settle, I called out almost involuntarily, 'Bring my horse;' and in ten minutes we were centering towards the scene of combat. My staff attacked the retiring enemy; 'Trukkee,' said my guide. 'The game is mine,' re-echoed the internal voice. My heart was with McMurdo for pursuing the robbers like a recruit; I thought he had done me mischief, yet still the voice whispered 'The game is yours.' It was not my mind that spoke: I am a child in the hands of God."

SOCRATES ENTRANCED.

At the siege of Potidea, in which he took a part, Socrates had a trance or state of abstraction, an account of which is given by Alcibiades in the "Banquet," as follows:—"While he was thinking of some question he stood from the dawn investigating it. Mid-day came, and some persons perceived him, and, wondering, said that Socrates had been standing from the morning, thinking upon something. At length some Ionian soldiers, when it was evening, brought out their ground litter, and partly slept in the cold and partly kept watch whether he would stand there all night; and he did stand until the dawn appeared and the sun rose, after which he departed, having first offered a prayer to the sun. Another time Socrates says:—"These things, be assured, I hear, as the votaries of Cybele seem to hear the flutes, and the sound of these words booms in my ear, and makes me incapable of hearing anything else." He alludes also to a mesmeric power he had, in conversation with one of his disciples, who tells him that when in the same room with him, and with his eyes fixed on him, he advanced most rapidly in knowledge, but "most especially if I sat near you and touched you"—a case of true spirit-power.

VIEWS FROM WITHIN AND WITHOUT.

When a soul draws a body in the great lottery of life, where every one is sure of a prize, such as it is, the said soul inspects the said body with the same curious interest with which one who has ventured into a "gift enterprise" examines the "massive silver pencil-case" with the coppery smell and impressive tube, or the "splendid gold ring" with the questionable specific gravity, which it has been his fortune to obtain in addition to his purchase. The soul, having studied the article of which it finds itself proprietor, thinks, after a time, it knows it pretty well. But there is this difference between its view and that of a person looking at it:—we look from within, and see nothing but the mould formed by the elements in which we are incased; other observers look from without, and see us as living statues. To be sure, by the aid of mirrors, we get a few glimpses of our outside aspect; but this occasional impression is always modified by that look of the soul from within outward which none but ourselves can take. A portrait is apt, therefore, to be a surprise to us. The artist looks only from without. He sees us, too, with a hundred aspects on our faces we are never likely to see. No genuine expression can be studied by the subject of it in the looking-glass.

More than this; he sees us in a way in which many of our friends or acquaintances never see us. Without wearing any mask we are conscious of, we have a special face for each friend. For, in the first place, each puts a special reflection of himself upon us, on the principle of assimilation referred to in my last record, if you have happened to have read that document. And secondly, each of our friends is capable of seeing just so far, and no farther, into our face, and each sees in it the particular thing that he looks for. Now the artist, if he is truly an artist, does not take any one of these special views. Suppose he should copy you as you appear to the man who wants your name to a subscription list, you could hardly expect a friend who entertains you to recognize the likeness to the smiling face which sheds its radiance at his board. Even within your own family, I am afraid there is a face which the rich uncle knows, that is not so familiar to the poor relation.

I am satisfied that as we grow older, we learn to look upon our bodies more and more as a temporary possession, and less and less as identified with ourselves. In early years, while the child "feels its life in every limb," it lives in the body and for the body to a very great extent. It ought to be so. There have been many very interesting children who have shown a wonderful indifference to the things of earth and an extraordinary development of the spiritual nature. There is a perfect literature of their biographies, all alike in their essentials; the same "disinclination to the usual amusements of childhood"; the same remarkable sensibility; the same docility; the same conscientiousness: in short, an almost uniform character, marked by beautiful traits, which we look at with a painful admiration. It will be found that most of these children are the subjects of constitutional unfitness for living, the most frequent of which I need not mention. They are like the beautiful, blushing, half-grown fruit that falls before its time because its core is gnawed out. They have their meaning,—they do not live in vain,—but they are windfalls. I am convinced that many healthy children are injured morally by being forced to read too much about these little meek sufferers and their spiritual exercises. Here is a boy that loves to run, swim, kick football, turn somersets, make faces, whistle, fish, tear his clothes, coast, skate, fire crackers, blow squash "tooters," cut his name on fences, read about Robinson Crusoe and Sinbad the Sailor, eat the widest angled slices of pie and untold cakes and candies, crack nuts with his back teeth and bite out the better part of another boy's apple with his front ones, turn up coppers, "stick" knives, call names, throw stones, knock off hats, set mousetraps, chalk doorsteps, "cut behind" anything on wheels or runners, whistle through his teeth, "holler" Fire! on slight evidence, run after soldiers, patronize an engine company, or, in his own words, "blow for tub No. 11," or whatever it may be;—in't that a pretty nice sort of a boy, though he has not got anything the matter with him that takes the taste of this world out? Now, when you put into such a hot-blooded, hard-fisted, round-cheeked little rogue's hand a sad-looking volume or pamphlet, with the portrait of a thin, white-faced child, whose life is really as much a training for death as the last month of a condemned criminal's existence, what does he find in common between his own overflowing and exulting sense of vitality and the experience of the doomed offspring of invalid parents? I have no doubt that disgust is implanted in the minds of many healthy children by early surfeits of pathological piety. I do verily believe that He who took children in his arms and blessed them loved the healthiest and most playful of them just as well as those who were richest in the tabernacles of virtues. I know what I am talking about, and there are more parents in this country who will be willing to listen to what I say than there are fools to pick a quarrel with me. In the sensibility and sanctity which often accompany premature decay I see one of the most beautiful instances of the principles of compensation which marks the Divine benevolence.—But to get the spiritual hygiene of robust natures out of the exceptional regimen of invalids is just simply what we Professors call "bad practice"; and I know by experience that there are worthy people who not only try it on their own children, but actually force it on those of their neighbors.—*Atlantic*.

PATIENCE UNDER MISFORTUNE.—An innocent sufferer, who bears calamity without impatience or complaint, appears an object almost sublime, and gains our sympathy and interest to an extraordinary degree. The calm and philosophic dignity of patience under misfortune moves our admiration, our love and our pity at the same moment, and we share in the calamity as if it were in part our own. It even creates a desire in us to emulate such heroic virtue and courage, and, terrible as their state may be, they still seem to be our superiors.

THE TRUE PREACHER.—No man is a preacher, because he has something like, or about a gospel in his head. He really preaches only when his person is the living embodiment, the inspired organ of the gospel; in that manner no human power, but the demonstration of a Christly and divine power. It is in this manner that preaching has had, in former times, effects so remarkable. At the present, we are almost all under the power, more or less, of the age in which we live.—*Bushnell*.

