

THE Spiritual Magazine.

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A HAPPY New Year for Spiritualism, and for all other truths, both great and small. They alone, amongst all the changes and the changing things, are perennial, and do not fail.

A notable advance has been made during the year that is past, in the acceptance by the public and the press of the great truths of Spiritualism, and there is all the more reason to believe, that during this year its progress will be still more rapid, and more widely spread. Let us look back to the beginning of the last year, and at the then state of this subject, which was in so bad odour that it could not even get abused in public. It was in such a hopeless slough, that the press would not touch it, and it was at rare intervals only, that an unpleasant paragraph found its way into the papers, to shew the public that it had not been quite killed out of existence. It was not to be wondered at, that under such circumstances, there were few who would involve their names in the discussion and promulgation of the facts, and their bearings; and we could have reckoned up the known adherents of any mark as not much exceeding half a dozen. We commenced this "idiotic and ricketty little periodical," as one of our polite brother editors calls it, with less than twenty subscribers, and being ourselves quite unused to journalism, we were modest in our promises of what we would do. It was well to be so, for had it been left to us to write up the subject, it had not fared as it deserved. We soon, however, found ourselves in the hands of friends willing and very able to assist, and by their help, much has been done. It was not long before the press came on, in the old wild way, and was even surprised to find itself wounded in its turn. It examined its old sword to find if it had lost its temper, or what was the cause of its defeat. It got a better blade, and furbished up some other arguments, but still with the same result. As each new Quixote has appeared, he has been met by some doughty knight, by whom he has been speedily unhorsed with aching bones. Some bystanders, cautiously watching, have thought

they discerned a better mode of attack which would ensure a victory; but, alas! one by one they have found themselves on their backs, gaping at the bright sun above them, bewildered and abusive.

It is only natural, and very right therefore, that such should be the result when Dons will attack windmills. One admires their valour, more than their discretion, and hopes only that their experience may be instructive to others of the craft. It is too late now for the *Blackwoods* and *Bentleys*, the *All the Year Rounds* and *Once a Weeks*, the *Examiner*, the *Lancet*, the *Literary Gazette*, and the *Athenæum*, and, though last yet least, poor *Punch*, to recant. They have irretrievably sold themselves for a labour like that of Sisyphus—rolling up a fact to get it out of sight, and when they think they have succeeded, down comes the old fact back upon them like the stone of Sisyphus and crushes them.

A respectable portion of the Press has even deigned to enquire into the facts, and has honestly stated its convictions; and the *Morning Star* has opened its columns to the subject. There is a very wise and knowing part of the Press remaining, who have fortunately for themselves not pronounced at all, and are cautiously waiting to see which will be the winning side. We strongly recommend their coming over at once and helping us, at a time when their help may be of some service. Very soon we shall be able to do without them. One paper, the *Times*, has managed to pursue an extraordinary course. Two or three years ago it abused the subject, and a few days ago pronounced its partial adhesion, on the occasion of witnessing some alleged phenomena of the impostor Dr. Bly, which are now proved to have been utterly fraudulent.

We trust that at the end of 1861, we may be able to report good progress. We enter on the year in the fullest trust that it will be so. If anything more than another will serve us, it will be that contributors of facts and correspondents should authorise the publication of their names. Already the giving of names is quite a feature of the Magazine, and we can refer with pride to the names now publicly associated with it.

NUTS TO CRACK.

A SHORT time ago the secretary of a literary institute in connection with the Society of Arts thought Spiritualism a fitting subject for discussion by the Institute. In the course of his address proposing this, he quoted Mr. Howitt's assertion in the *Critic*, that Fenelon, Pascal and Luther were, in their day, Spiritualists. The secretary found this assertion point-blank denied by the members, and he wrote to Mr. Howitt for his proofs of the fact. Mr. Howitt wrote him in reply the following letter, the observations of which apply to so many others besides the members of the Institute in question, that we have requested permission to print it, and particularly recommend it to the *Blackwoods*, *Once a Week*, and that class of journals which are in such precipitation to decide and condemn before they have used the common-sense plan of looking into a matter.

Dear Sir,—I am not accountable for the fact of your opponents not being properly read; but certainly had they taken the trouble which I have done, they would not have exposed their ignorance by denying such easily ascertained things. Fenelon, besides in his writings giving many proofs of his belief in direct and palpable spiritual agency, was the close and staunch friend of Madame Guyon, one of the most confirmed Spiritualists which any age has seen. Madame Guyon asserts her continual contact with spiritual agency: she wrote directly from it, and I know those who do so now. She was brought into great trouble by Bossuet on these accounts, and Fenelon was her great defender through it all. As for Pascal, did your opponents ever take the trouble to read his *Pensées*, or *Provincial Letters*? Did they ever read Montgéron's history of the miracles performed at the touch of the Abbé Paris in the churchyard of St. Medard in Paris: or *Racine's Abregé de l'Historie du Port Royal*? If so, they cannot be ignorant that Pascal defended the truth of those miracles against the Jesuits. Now these asserted facts—facts attested by numerous eye-witnesses—facts exhibited before the whole public—were far more astounding than any spiritual phenomena of the present day. Montgéron declares that, having seen a man under this influence lying on his back and pounded with a piece of iron of eighteen pounds' weight for half an hour on his stomach without hurting him, he took the iron and in a very short time smashed a hole through a brick wall with it. Yet Pascal defends the validity of all this, as he does of the miraculous cure of the young girl Perrier. Now this Pascal had

a logical force which cut down all the arguments of the cleverest Jesuits of his time, as easily as a barber with his razor would have sheared off their noses.

And Martin Luther. What! are your friends so ill read that they do not know that he professed to have as many actual personal contests with the devil as ever St. Dunstan had? Let them read his *Table-Talk*, which abounds with these relations. Why, Luther says there, "You need not call very loud for the devil; the devil is never very far off." Let them read his *Letters* and his book on private mass, *De Missa Privata*. In the latter of these he says he had a long conference with the devil on the subject. Carlyle says: "It was a faith of Luther's that there were devils, spiritual denizens of the pit, continually besetting men. Many times in his writings this turns up, and a most small sneer has been grounded on it by some." Carlyle, like myself, has seen the mark on the wall in the Castle of Wartburg—still carefully preserved—which Luther solemnly said he made by flinging his ink-horn at the devil's head, when he pestered him whilst writing his tracts against the Papal humbug. Luther as gravely tells us that a boy having brought him a bag of nuts out of the Thuringian Forest, which surrounds the Wartburg, the devil used to come at night and crack these nuts to prevent him sleeping, and that he jumped out of bed and bade him begone like a dirty devil as he was, and that he did go.

Sir, my business here is not to inquire how far Luther saw these things, or only imagined them: I have only to say such are the facts, and that Luther—sturdy soul as he was, was as sturdy a Spiritualist. But it is not merely Luther, or Fenelon, or Pascal, who have believed in these spiritual agencies and spiritual phenomena; I find almost all the greatest men from the Apostles to our own time, believing them. I don't know what your opponents have read, but I know that I have read an immense deal in seven or eight different languages in my time, and I have not to seek for evidences of such belief in all ages and in all countries—I am overwhelmed with them. The fathers of the church abound with professions of such belief. Lactantius says, that in his time, the fourth century, no one dared to deny the reality of apparitions, for the very magicians would have immediately confounded them by raising such before their faces. Tertullian, says, "that man is only a pretender to Christianity who cannot perform the miracles which the Apostles could perform;" so common were the powers conferred by Christ on his followers in his time. I find similar claims advanced by eminent religious men and women through every future age. Luther's friend Melancthon tells us, that a spirit-messenger warned his friend Grynæus to escape, as his enemies were coming upon him, and

that by so doing he saved his life. One might go on and give proofs of some of our most celebrated bishops—of some of the greatest dissenters—Baxter, who has written a book on the subject, Dr. Doddridge, Dr. Owen, Dr. Scott, and Dr. Adam Clarke; George Fox and Wesley. Every one knows how the Wesley family was annoyed for a long time by spiritual agency. Southey, in his *Life of Wesley*, shews himself a believer, for he declares “the testimony on which these things rest, too strong to be set aside, because of the strangeness of the relation.” Wordsworth I know was a firm believer, for he related to me a case of haunting at Cambridge, which his brother, the Master of Trinity, tested repeatedly. If you refer to Mr. Dale Owen’s late work, to be had for 7s. 6d. in the Row, you will find in the appendix the circular of the famous Ghost Club of the University of Cambridge, established years ago by some of the most eminent men there, who are now bishops, celebrated preachers, &c. Mr. Westcott, one of the Masters of Harrow, being secretary. This society has, after long and patient investigation, come to the conclusion that the fact of apparitions is established, and they are proceeding into the enquiries of the other facts of Spiritualism. Dr. Maitland, librarian to the late Archbishop of Canterbury, a very keen satirist, who laughs at Faraday, Brewster, and the rest of them, for their childish theories and treatment of Spiritualism, has shewn his belief in his admirable little book on *Superstition and Science*.

Your opponents, if they have read anything, know that Defoe and Dr. Johnson, and Addison, avowed their belief in apparitions. Johnson, in his *Rasselas*, says, “there are no people, rude or learned, amongst whom apparitions of the dead are not related and believed. This opinion,” he says, “which prevails as far as human nature is diffused, could become universal only by its truth.” And Byron, referring to this opinion of Johnson, says:—

And what is strangest upon this strange head,
Is, that whatever bar the reason rears
'Gainst such belief, there's something stranger still
In its behalf, let those deny who will.

The opinion of Addison, equally strong, is known to everybody, or may be by reference to No. 110 of the *Spectator*. I could give you some very strong opinions of Bacon—that masculine mind—from his *Novum Organum*; and from Sir Thomas Browne’s celebrated *Religio Medici*. In fact, till the Atheists of the French Revolution produced an *Eclipse of Faith*, under which this generation has been educated, and under which it is suffering a paralysis of the noblest faculties of the mind, there is

scarcely a really eminent man, writer or not, who is not more or less a believer in what we call Spiritualism.

But what are all the testimonies of so many great and learned men, of all ages and nations, to me? They are the evidence of other eyes and minds. I have evidence to me far more convincing, that of my own senses. I have now for these five years witnessed almost every extraordinary phenomenon which your friends have laughed at; and had no such things ever been heard of from the foundation of the world, I should just the same—having seen them—believe them. I am one of those who do not think it wise to laugh at what I do not take the trouble to examine.

But, say they, these table-risings and people floating in the air, and spirits talking to you through tables and alphabets, are so foolish and ricketty. Well, how can we help that if they are facts? Undoubtedly they are very foolish according to the wisdom of men: they always were so. St. Paul says: "God confounded the wisdom of men by the foolish things of this world." So that this very foolishness is the stamp and seal and credential of its truth. Abraham would be thought a great fool now-a-days if at the suggestion of a spiritual agent, he were to attempt to cut his son's throat. The prophets, with the things they did, would, in this country, have been all walked off to Dr. Conolly. Had St. Paul come and told the hard-headed fellows on Change, that he had seen Christ in a vision of splendour on the road over Shooter's Hill, he would have been deemed a poor demented soul. And I would ask your clever fellows of the Institute, how many of them would have believed Christ, had they been living in Jerusalem, and had been told that the Son of God, by whom and through whom the worlds were made, was just then a joiner's 'prentice in Bethlechem?

Perhaps some of your opponents may think this allusion rather irreverent: but the irreverence comes from the other side. I have the profoundest reverence for the character of our Great Redeemer. I only put the matter from their own point of view. What would they think of such an announcement? And yet the fact is, that Christ till the age of 30 was thus employed, "being obedient to his reputed father in all things." The opponents always take this view of spiritual phenomena. They never speak of Spiritualists but as SPIRIT-RAPPERS; forgetting that the unbelieving Jews might just as well have called the Christians WATER-DIPPERS, from the practice of baptism. The very fact of God always employing very humble means for great ends ought to make them humble in their judgments. Jesus Christ descended from the very highest to the very lowest sphere of existence to mark the utter worthlessness of human distinctions; and still more, to defeat the deadly assumptions of royalty and

aristocracy. For had Christ come as a king, surrounded by nobles, we should have been trodden under foot for ever by the disdainful golden hoofs of right divine. The Jews, deceived by the coming of a *carpenter*, instead of a king, and a few illiterate fishermen instead of a set of dainty courtiers, made the same blunder as the *soi-disant* wise are making now. The demonstrations sent to destroy materialism have not come to the Royal Society, nor the Society of Arts, amid circumstances of scientific splendour, or announced by scientific magnates; and the nominal Christians of to-day are repeating the blunders of the Jews.

Things are wise or foolish, according as they are adapted or not to a just and beneficent end. Materialism has cast a deadly blight on the world—all arguments fail to convince men of the reality of spirit-life; of its presence; of the fact announced by Milton, that—

Millions of spiritual beings walk the air
Unseen, both when we wake and when we sleep.

But tables rise into the air, speak by the alphabet, musical instruments play; spirit-hands appear and write, as plenty of us know from repeated observations; people draw and paint wonderful and beautiful things, who never learned; spirits appear,—and there are certain persons who see spirits as commonly as they see bodies, and give the most undeniable proofs of it: well these do convince, and have convinced many Atheists and Materialists, and, therefore, whether they be wise or foolish, let common sense decide.

“But,” cry some, “You will never convince me!” I reply, “My friend, I have not the smallest wish to convince you. What benefit would your belief be to me? Convinced myself by the exercise of common sense, I am quite satisfied with possessing that which you have not. If you were to tell me that a bag of Australian gold-dust was only an illusion, I should be perfectly satisfied that you should think so, and that I—should have it.” Sir, be under no impatience at the incredulity of people who are ignorant of the subject, yet rush to a decision in their ignorance. There were thousands of men who did not, and *could not* believe the most glorious miracles of our Saviour. Why should you expect more faith than the God-Man, who made the human mind, found? Every truth must battle its way, and by battling, it will become strong, and in the end—triumphant. Till then, possess your soul in patience.

Yours faithfully,

To B. L——, Esq.

WILLIAM HOWITT.

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## THE CREDULITY OF UNBELIEF.

DIALOGUE BETWEEN DR. SCEPTICUS, X.Y.Z., Q.E.D., &c., &c.,  
AND MR. CREDULOUS.

DR. S. My good friend, all you tell me is wonderful; but forgive me for saying this, I see in it only a melancholy proof of the aberration of a powerful intellect, when philosophy is lost sight of. (SCEPTICUS *looks benignant and compassionate*)

MR. C. Philosophy! That which seems to me worthy of the name, teaches us to observe patiently, till a sufficient number of facts and conditions are collected to draw a conclusion from: then to observe anew under fresh conditions, till the first conclusion is proved or falsified, and so to go on, constantly extending observations, till facts can be gathered, and a system framed.

DR. S. Hear Mr. Faraday, the profoundest philosopher of the age. He says, "*Before we proceed to consider any questions involving physical principles, we should set out with clear ideas of the naturally possible and impossible.*"\*

MR. C. He is a profound philosopher indeed, if he can shew us how to answer a question before it is asked. Does he know the limits of possibility?

DR. S. He knows the laws of nature, deduced from established facts. If anything is asserted apparently contradicting these, he tells us to say, as I do now, "*I won't believe it, because it is impossible.*"

MRS. C. I thought that was called begging the question. But, Dr. Scepticus, though it is not philosophical to say it is possible, we may say it is true that tables rise, and that raps come.

DR. S. (*looking sagacious and condescending*) Ah! well, I have not seen nor heard those things.

MR. C. You may, if you like. Sit down with us at this little table, and see what happens.

(*The three sit down, round a little table. Presently DR. SCEPTICUS observes*)

DR. S. There is a *tinnulus*, a tingling of the fingers, arising from the stoppage of the circulation by pressure. It is that which gives the idea of vibration.

MR. C. But, why do you press so hard? See how lightly my wife's fingers and mine lie on the table.

(*DR. SCEPTICUS relaxes his pressure; the table tilts down towards him, and up from MRS. CREDULOUS*)

DR. S. There, Mrs. Credulous, you did that!

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\* Faraday's Lecture on Mental Training.

Mrs. C. How could I, as my fingers are placed? I have never moved them.

*(the table, after moving about, gently rises from the floor to the height of a few inches)*

DR. S. *(with a scrutinizing frown)* My good friend, some one has been hoaxing you. This table certainly appeared to rise, contrary to gravitation; but clockwork——

MR. C. Look for the springs and wheels when we have done. Let us see whether the clockwork will spell. You repeat the alphabet slowly.

*(DR. SCEPTICUS does as directed; the table tilts at the letters forming this sentence:—FREEDOM FROM PREJUDICE IS NEEDFUL FOR THE DISCOVERY OF TRUTH, YOUR GRANDFATHER, THOMAS SCEPTICUS.)*

DR. S. No one can be freer from prejudice than I am. But I cannot believe what is contrary to experience.

MR. C. How then can you blame the Jews for refusing to believe that a man born blind could have his eyes opened?

DR. S. I offer no opinion on such subjects.

*[Conversation resumed next day.]*

DR. S. My dear Credulous, I have been thinking over our little experiment yesterday. The circular and tilting movements of the table require no explanation. Faraday's indicator settled for ever the question of muscular action.\* For the *intelligence*, as you call it, in the sentence, *mesmerism* and *thought-reading*.

MR. C. Of both which, four years ago, you spoke to me as absurd and wicked delusions.

DR. S. At that time they had not been established even as exceptional cases, the result of morbid action or hysteria. Even now they are of much less frequent occurrence than is believed. Mrs. Credulous, you knew my grandfather's name?

Mrs. C. No, I thought it had been Richard, like your father's.

MR. C. So did I.

DR. S. Nevertheless, I can account for all. I felt a thrill in my fingers, caused, for the most part, by pressure. There *might* be something of electricity in it. We are aware of the analogy between the power which causes muscular contraction, and some of the imponderables. Volta, Galvani, Marshall Hall, and in later times, Matteucci, and a host of others, have exhausted the subject. Pardon me, Mrs. Credulous, if I verge upon science.

Mrs. C. Don't apologise.

MR. C. You did not look for the clockwork.

DR. S. No; my explanation is sufficient for anything I have yet seen. In other cases, especially where the mediums are paid,

*Vide "Faraday's Lecture on Mental Training."—Athenæum, &c., &c.*

dexterous pushing or concealed machinery are employed. The sentence spelled out was *Freedom from Prejudice, &c.* This was an unconscious development of the DOMINANT IDEA. Dr. Carpenter has illustrated this very finely in the *Quarterly*. I recommend all who can appreciate it to ponder over this masterly production. The notion, latent in your and Mrs. Credulous's mind, was unconsciously brought out by the muscular movement of your hands. The same occurs in sleepwaking and delirium.

MRS. C. But we did not know your grandfather's name. Whose mind did that come from?

DR. S. Possibly my own; given out by "unconscious cerebration," and received by mesmeric thought-reading into yours.

MR. C. Then while our muscles were acting in accordance with our own latent dominant idea, our minds were receiving yours. And all this unconsciously. But, what made the table rise?

DR. S. I am prepared with another explanation for all. In all scientific enquiries, we must be prepared to admit a variety of causes. A fellow came lately to — lecturing on what he called Electro-biology, a barbarous term, worthy of the ignorant manner in which he treated his subject. I had not patience to hear the whole. It was enough for me to see that with a quantity of *hey presto* and *abracadabra*, he so worked on the fancies of nervous boys and girls, that he made them believe anything—everything—that they were swimming, or drowning, or flying, and that the moon was made of green cheese.

MR. C. Did my wife and I use *hey presto* and *abracadabra* and do you, an X.Y.Z. and learned doctor, call yourself a nervous boy?

DR. S. Not precisely. But similar conditions may be established. I am inclined to think that the fancy about raps arises from some such state of the brain.

MR. C. Do you consider your brain at present in a state to be so acted on?

DR. S. Certainly not.

MR. C. Then you shall hear raps. Our old servant (she has lived with us ten years), finds they come in her presence. But if you feel a doubt of her good faith, do not express it in her hearing.

(SERVANT is summoned—all sit down, and sounds are soon heard, apparently coming from the centre of the table—the names of an infant brother and sisters of SCEPTICUS are spelt, with the sentence, "We wish you were here." SERVANT, after being coldly thanked by SCEPTICUS departs)

MRS. C. Can you explain that, Dr. Scepticus, without attributing imposture?

DR. S. No; you believe the woman honest, as to money matters. But vanity and the desire of creating surprise are often stronger motives than avarice.

MR. C. And how do you suppose she did it?

DR. S. Nothing easier. I can make just such sounds.

(SCEPTICUS taps with his finger nails on the table)

MR. C. A very simple way of creating surprise in a philosopher's mind. And while you were watching her hands!

DR. S. When I looked, she probably did it with her feet, like this.

(DR. SCEPTICUS, leaning a little back in his chair, knocks the soles of his boots together at the edges, thereby producing a little creaking sound.)

MRS. C. She does not wear thick boots.

DR. S. There are other ways. An eminent anatomist says, that the sounds are produced by a contraction of the peroneus longus muscle across the sheath of—I mean that it is done in the leg and heel. In some cases, the patella, or knee-cap is employed; or it may be done by the toes. Study anatomy, my good friend, and all these things will be A B C to you.

MRS. C. There was a variety of sounds at one time. Could muscles have made all these in different keys at once? Then remember, no one knew your brother and sister's names but yourself.

DR. S. Unconscious cerebration again, combined with mesmeric thought-reading.

MRS. C. You frighten me, Dr. Scepticus. According to one philosopher, we move great tables unconsciously, while another wise man says we can speak in rational sentences without knowing it. How do I know but that I may some day pick my neighbour's pocket unconsciously, while I am at church singing hymns? And all the robberies and murders in the world may be owing to unconscious cerebration, and involuntary muscular action.

DR. S. It would take me too long now to answer that question.

MR. C. I promised you, Scepticus, an opportunity of forming an unbiassed judgment. Come with me this evening to meet Mr. Home, at ——'s. We will go early, that you may examine the table and the preparations.

[Next day.]

MRS. C. What do you think now?

DR. S. Just what I did before. I saw a sheer trickster, hardly a conjuror, for Houdin, Frikell, or Döbler would have beaten him at his own trade. I saw no shining hands; some people said they did. Nothing easier than to turn a bull's-eye

lantern on a picture or a wax model of a hand. A flimsy contrivance, indeed.

MR. C. Any kind of lantern would have thrown a stream of light across the room.

DR. S. The hands might be pasteboard, covered with phosphorus.

MR. C. In either case, what prevented your seeing them? To me, and to many others, they were not only visible, but tangible.

DR. S. Imagination! Electro-biology!

MRS. C. Did you *feel* anything? Were you touched?

DR. S. I felt *something*, truly, under the table.

MRS. C. What was it?

DR. S. Lazy tongs, my dear madam, lazy tongs! One can do anything with that instrument. It is a most powerful weapon in the hands of a conjuror, a housebreaker, or a pickpocket. It will go like lightning into any crevice, and produce any kind of pressure, push, pinch, or poke. I would stake my scientific reputation that that fellow has stores of cases of lazy tongs of every length and size, graduated and numbered.

MRS. C. Was Home raised up in the air?

DR. S. Dear Mrs. Credulous, how it pains me to hear such a question from you who have always exhibited intelligence and power of ratiocination unusual in your sex. I answer, No! The impostor sat in his chair in the darkened room, and by means of our old friend, the lantern, produced the appearance of something dark crossing the window. I can see better phantasmagoria at any of the minor theatres!

MR. C. I raised my hand as high as I could, and held Home's foot as he passed me in the air. So did — and — and —

MRS. C. We have forgotten to say that spirits are often seen during the *séance*, and recognized by friends from the descriptions given by the seers.

DR. S. Ghosts, hey! Truly, if witches are revived, there is no reason why ghosts should be laid. Not but that a very remarkable circumstance once occurred to my great grandfather which at the time excited great interest, from his knowledge, courage and truthfulness. I have often heard it from my father who had, however, the contempt for superstition inseparable, as Faraday has shewn from mental training. *He* could not, in those days, account for it. My great grandfather, when a boy, was crossing a field one summer evening, when he fancied that the figure of a woman, dressed in white, passed before him, and disappeared behind a cottage. He watched this form, and before he lost sight of it, heard the words, "*Be a good boy.*" He said that he recognized her as the owner of the cottage, who had no

long been dead. Now all this is very intelligible, without attributing falsehood to my grandfather. He was, in all probability, thinking of his old acquaintance, who had most likely given him gingerbread and brandy balls. We know how boys' imaginations dwell on gingerbread and brandy balls, and her image being thus brought up during a reverie by recollection, was by the association of ideas formed subjectively into an image on the sensorium—a form of unconscious cerebration in fact. His terrors on beholding what he supposed to be a ghost, of course, suggested the idea of his own death, and the consciousness of his own shortcomings made the words "*Be a good boy*" the only ones which his own brain could receive. This is the only tenable solution. But, besides this, there was most probably a white cow in the field—there generally is near a cottage with a calf; and the calf, seeing a boy, would rear itself up on its hind legs, and, if it was getting dusk, would look like a woman. Then the cow, its mother, would moo, and my great grandfather's terror would easily interpret the sound into "*Be a good boy.*"

MR. C. (*smiling*) Scepticus, you and I should change names.

DR. S. But now, after all, supposing that raps spelt names, and tables rocked about, and shining hands appeared like haddock in the dark, and men went up to the ceiling; *cui bono!* How will the cause of science be helped by such puerile and absurd exhibitions? Let us, in our researches, study such phenomena as will establish sound systems, and confirm accepted hypotheses. Leave these fruitless enquiries—these childish marvels.

MR. C. Was that what Newton did, when he saw the apple fall? Or Galileo, when he watched the satellites of Jupiter? Or Harvey, when the first facts he observed opposed instead of confirming old-established theories? Or even Jenner, when he saw the country girl milking?

DR. S. It is painful to hear those illustrious names in connexion with the pursuits of table-turning and spirit-rapping. Your so-called facts are all utterly vague, and unconnected; assignable to no laws, and reducible to no system. If there is any coherent explanation, all I can say is, I should like to hear it.

MR. C. Listen then, and you shall have an explanation. Of its coherence you can judge for yourself. I do not give it as one generally received, or supposed to be confirmed, by those who believe that these phenomena are caused by departed spirits. If there is any truth in what I say, farther enquiry and experience will clear what is still obscure; if I am wrong, no one but myself is accountable for the error. You have referred to the phenomena of mesmerism in a way that justifies my introducing them. You have also spoken of the experiments which, even since the time of Volta, have been made by different physiologists to shew the

close analogy between electricity, galvanism, magnetism, and that power or influence (I refrain from using the word *fluid*) which, circulating from the brain through the nerves, contracts the muscles of our body. Much, as you say, has been discovered but *far* more remains unknown and unsuspected. When we have arrived at true conclusions on this subject and its relations we shall have opened a larger page of Nature's book, written by the finger of God, than our material philosophers as yet anticipate and one line of it will be found in these despised raps and movements. When our state is changed at death, this *nerve-influence* or a portion of it, which is the most refined and delicate element of our organization—in fact our *life*—leaves the coarser portions of the body, and gathering up forms what St. Paul calls the spiritual body. (DR. SCEPTICUS *looks a note of interrogation*) Yes; Paul, and One far higher than he, give confirmation to my belief. Nature, rightly interpreted, will never contradict revelation fully understood. If what I have said is true, this element is what we in this world have in common with those who have entered into another state. In natural mesmerism, the influence is thrown by the will of the mesmeriser from the brain to the nerves of the mesmerised. A polarity, not yet understood, but indicated, is established. Under some conditions the current of the nerves of sensation is, as it were, polarized; then the mesmerised tastes, feels, and smells, according to the sensations of his mesmeriser; the same effect may be produced in the internal brain, and thought-reading is the result. Or if the nerves of motion are magnetized, the actions of the magnetizer are imitated. Now, it follows from my belief, that those at least who have recently left this world, have, to a certain extent, the same means of acting on the nervous system that they had in the body. The influence is by them directed through the nervous systems of the mediums under conditions not yet fully understood, and causes the strong electric spark which gives the sound, causes also the power which, like the electric telegraph, can move inanimate matter, and all the other modifications and varieties of sensation, sound, and movements. Thus, the mesmerism of the eye produces vision; that of the ear, hearing; of the brain itself, impression. In every case, the thought or feeling of the spirit is reflected through the mesmerised mortal; but it will assume *the form* with which the medium's senses are familiar. So, when the idea is communicated by raps, or by writing, the spelling and phraseology will be that of the mortal; and when a vision is given, its images will be those which his individual organization is fitted to receive. I have spoken of everything but the luminous hands, and their touches and actions. When the persons assembled are in a proper degree of *rapport* or sympathy, the spirit attracts to its own hand

minous particles of the nerve atmosphere, and thus it becomes more or less visible to the *external* eye. Or it gains electric power to ring a bell, or play on an instrument. I have spoken in outline phrase on a subject on which each line ought to be a link. Time and farther enquiry will shew whether your theory of mine is most consistent with our nature and our history.

DR. S. If I thought you *could* be right—why, I must burn books.

MR. C. Not burn—only read them with an eye which looks inward to the Giver and ever-flowing Fountain of Life, as well as to the most external of his works on earth. Study matter in its living manifestation, as well as in the dead form, and you will not forget the Spirit, which is the breath of life.

(DR. SCEPTICUS *hems and haws* ; talks about experience, laws of gravitation, &c. ; goes home and relapses into his normal state. That same evening he writes a full, true, and particular account of spiritual manifestations, with instructions how to exhibit them. He then directs a clever artist to draw a large number of beautiful little diagrams, representing ladies and gentlemen in various attitudes, kicking furniture, &c. ; several hands and feet occupied in knocking or tapping ; some magic lanterns, and two highly interesting and curious representations of that infernal machine, the lazy tongs. These diagrams, with the written description and explanation aforesaid, are inserted in a popular periodical, where they gain great applause, and, after being used to illustrate Mr. Novra's lectures, they give a strong impetus to the progress of philosophy in the nineteenth century.)

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### MR. J. R. M. SQUIRE AT PARIS.

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We hear that Mr. Squire is having very great success in the work which his wonderful mediumistic powers enable him to perform. His physical and mental manifestations are of the most striking kind, and as his only payment is the pleasure he derives from convincing inquirers, he is now quite in his element. His success in Paris is as complete as it was in England. Nearly every night he is invited to the houses of the best society in Paris. A few evenings ago he had at his house M. Delamarre, proprietor of *La Patrie*, and M. Fournier, the principal editor, who both gave in their adhesion. Mr. Squire is now engaged for his bust to Eugène Lequesne, the sculptor, who has just completed a bust of the Empress, and is now engaged on the bust of the Emperor.

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### MANIFESTATIONS IN FRANCE.

UNDER the heading of "Manifestations in France," in the November number, the narrator presents an inadequate account of the interposition by which my life was saved. Allow me then to relate the circumstances in detail.

I had just returned from Naples, whither I had been to visit a friend,—but who had passed from earth before I had arrived,—and I found my health affected by fatigue of travelling and mental depression. Being recommended to take much out-door exercise, during my stay at the Château de Cerçay, I used to take with me my gun,—more that it might be said I was out shooting than for any great attraction the sport has for me. The Château de Cerçay, distant half-an-hour by railway from Paris, stands in a beautiful old park. Some of the trees are of very great height; one of the largest, a northern poplar, stands a quarter of a mile from the château at an angle of the park where it is separated from the outer grounds by a hedge. To this spot, when there is much shooting going on in the neighbourhood, the game used to come for shelter; and I, who am but an indifferent marksman, could get easy shots by planting myself by the hedge.

On the day mentioned by M. Pièrart, I had been walking with my friend, Mons. T——, and on his leaving me, bent my steps to this favourite corner, wishing to take home a partridge. As I neared the hedge, I stooped and advanced cautiously when close up to it, I was raising my head to look for my game when on my right I heard some one call out, "Here, here!" My only feeling was surprise at being thus suddenly addressed in English; desire to have a good look out for my game overruled my curiosity as to whom the exclamation had come from. I was continuing to raise my head to the level of the hedge when suddenly I was seized by the collar of my coat and vest and lifted off the ground; at the same instant I heard a crashing sound, and then all was quiet. I felt neither fear nor wonder. My first thought was that by some accident my gun had exploded and that I was in the spirit-land; but, looking about, I saw that I was still in the material world,—there was the gun still in my hands. My attention was then drawn to what appeared to be a tree immediately before me, where no tree had been. On examination, this proved to be the fallen limb of the high tree under which I was standing. I then saw that I had been drawn aside from this fallen limb a distance of six or seven feet. I ran in my excitement, as fast as I could to the château. My friends seeing me running, hastened to the window to learn the cause of

my disturbance. As soon as I recovered my power of speech, I told them how God, by his good angels, had saved my life, and they returned with me to the scene of what I must call my marvellous escape.

I will not attempt to portray the feelings of those present, but if ever heartfelt prayer of thankfulness ascended to God's holy throne, it was then and there, even to the servants, who broke off twigs to keep as mementos of the mercy shown me.

The limb which had thus fallen measured sixteen yards and a half in length, and where it had broken from the trunk, it was one yard in circumference. It fell from a height of forty-five feet. The part of the limb, which struck the very spot where I had been standing, measured twenty-four inches in circumference, and penetrated the earth at least a foot. The next day a friend made a sketch of the tree and branch. We now speculated as to how it could have happened. The tree is not a dead one, nor was the branch, and there was scarcely wind enough to stir the leaves. The branch was so cleanly rift from the trunk that one might at first think it had been sawn off, and the bark was not in the least torn about it. I have been informed since that such accidents are not uncommon with trees of this species of poplar, and that there are trees of a similar quality in Australia, under which settlers will not remain for fear of such accidents.

A day or two after, Dr. Höfer, one of the most learned men in France, and for whom I have the highest esteem and regard, as a sincere truth-seeker, and a friend deserving every confidence, came at about noon and requested a *séance*. We had one, and a very good one it was. Answers were given to questions of the utmost importance. All at once, to our surprise, it was spelled out, "Go, see the branch." Dr. H., impressed as it were, withdrew from the table, saying, "Perhaps they are going there." I went to the drawing-room, and asked the ladies if they would join us, but the day being damp and the walking bad, they declined.

I ought to have said, that the thick end of the branch rested, at a height of eight feet from the ground, firmly against the trunk of the tree, so much so that the possibility of its coming down had never for an instant occurred to us, but rather that the strength of several horses would be required to move it. Our surprise, then, may be imagined when we now found that it had been moved three or four inches laterally from its original point of support. Dr. H. said, "I firmly believe that the branch will be pushed down before us." I replied, "That seems almost an impossibility." At the same time, I took in my hand one of the smaller twigs and mentally said, "Dear spirits, will you push his branch down?" I then distinctly felt as if some one gently

touched the twig which I held; this was repeated, and at the third touch, as it felt to me, the branch fell to the ground.

Four persons witnessed this, and are ready to testify to what I here relate; and should any one who feels an interest in these things be going to France, communicate with me, I will facilitate his reception at the château, where the tree and branch may be seen.

134, Sloane Street, S.W.

D. D. HOME.

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### "SPIRIT RAPPING" NO NOVELTY.

By the Author of *Confessions of a Truth Seeker*.

It is generally supposed that "Spirit Rapping" and kindred phenomena are peculiar to the movement which, originating in the little village of Hydesville, in the State of New York, has, in the last fifteen years, so rapidly and steadily advanced in public opinion in both hemispheres. This, however, is not exactly the case; scarcely any of the varied phases of modern Spiritualism, (enumerated in No. 2 of the *Spiritual Magazine*), but we shall find, if we take the trouble to search for them, have, to some extent, had their counterpart in bygone times. True, these phenomena are now more broadly known, and are beginning to be better understood than heretofore, and are being stripped of the factitious mystery that once environed them; but only to a very limited extent, if any, is it true that their beginning dates back no farther than our own time. I am not, indeed, aware that sounds and the movement of objects have ever before on a broad scale been used as a code of signals by which dwellers on the other side of the veil could communicate freely with those on this side. Many instances, however, may be cited, in which, especially during the last three centuries, sounds and movements characterised by intelligence, and not traceable to mundane agency have been heard and seen—and efforts, foiled only it would seem by mortal obtuseness, thus apparently been made by the invisible operators, to carry on an intercourse with men by their agency. It may be interesting and instructive briefly to advert to some of these unevoked phenomena, which thus link the spiritual manifestations of the past with those of the present time.

A writer in the *Encyclopædia Metropolitana*, referring to these phenomena, remarks that, "It is, to say the least, a remarkable fact, that such occurrences are to be found in the histories of all ages, and, if inquiries are but sincerely made, in the traditions of nearly all living families. The writer can testify to several monuments of this kind portending death, and the authentic records of such things would make a volume." And among

other instances, he tells us, that "we read in Melancthon that Luther was visited by a spirit, who announced his coming by a rapping at his door;" and that "in 1620, a burgesse of Oppenheim having died, they began to hear certain noises in the house where he had lived with his first wife, and the then occupants requested, if he was the person they suspected, that he would strike three times only, which he did distinctly. The rappings in this case, mingled with shrill cries, whistlings, and groans, continued for a year, when the restless spirit was quieted by a compliance with his demands."

A writer, in *Notes and Queries*, vol. viii. p. 512, gives the following example of an early instance of this kind in England:

Rushton Hall, near Kettering, in Northamptonshire, was long the residence of the ancient and distinguished family of Treshams. In the reign of Queen Elizabeth, the mansion was occupied by Sir Thomas Tresham, who was a pedant and a fanatic; but who was an important character in his time by reason of his great wealth and powerful connexions. There is a lodge at Rushton, situate about half a mile from the old hall, now in ruins, but covered all over, within and without, with emblems of the Trinity. This lodge is known to have been built by Sir Thomas Tresham; but his precise motive for selecting this mode of illustrating his favourite doctrine was unknown until it appeared from a letter written by himself about the year 1584, and discovered in a bundle of books and papers, inclosed since 1605 in a wall of the old mansion, and brought to light about twenty years ago. The following relation of a "rapping" or "knocking," is extracted from this letter:—

"If it be demanded why I labour so much in the Trinity and Passion of Christ to depaint in this chamber, this is the principal instance thereof; that at my last being hither committed (referring to his commitments for recusancy, which had been frequent), and I usually having my servants here allowed me to read nightly an hour to me after supper, it fortuned that Fulcis, my then servant, reading in the *Christian Resolution* in the treatise of *Proof that there is a God*, &c, there was upon a wainscot table at that instant *three loud knocks* (as if it had been with an iron hammer) given, to the great amazing of me and my two servants, Fulcis and Nilkton."

In 1661, the house of a Mr. Mompesson, a magistrate, residing at Tedworth, Wilts, was the scene of extraordinary disturbances; the circumstances of which are fully detailed by the King's chaplain, the Rev. Joseph Glanvil, F.R.S., who personally and thoroughly investigated the case, and who drew up his narrative "partly from his (Mr. Mompesson's) own mouth, related before divers, who had been witnesses of all, and confirmed his relation, and partly from his own letters, from which the order and series of things is taken." As an account of this case has been frequently published, we give only its leading incidents. It seems that a vagrant drummer had been beating his drum up and down the country, and extorting money under the pretended authority of a warrant, which, with his pass was found to be counterfeit. Mr. M., on making this discovery, caused the drummer to be arrested, and the drum taken from him. On returning from a short visit to London a few weeks after, Mr. Mompesson was informed by his wife, "that they had

been much frightened in the night by thieves, and that the house had been like to have been broken into." And he had not been at home above three nights, when the same noise was heard that had disturbed his family in his absence. "It was a very great knocking at his doors, and the outside of his house: hereupon he got up, and went about the house with a brace of pistols in his hand; he opened the door where the great knocking was, and then he heard the noise at another door; he opened that also, and went out round the house, but could discover nothing, only he still heard a strange and hollow sound. When he was got back to bed, the noise was a thumping and drumming on the top of his house, which continued some time, and by degrees subsided."

This was the commencement of the disturbance, which after this "was very frequent, usually five nights together, and then it would intermit three." "After a month's disturbance without, it came into the room where the drum lay, four or five nights, in seven, within half an hour after they were in bed, continuing almost two hours. The sign of it just before it came was, they still heard a hurling in the air over the house, and, at its going off, the beating of a drum, like that of a breaking up of a guard. It continued in this room for the space of two months, which time Mr. Mompesson himself lay there to observe it."

While Mrs. Mompesson was in child-bed, there was a cessation of the knocking, but afterwards it "returned in a ruder manner than before, and followed and vexed the youngest children, beating their bedsteads with such violence, that all present expected they would fall in pieces. In laying hands on them, one could feel no blows, but might perceive them to shake exceedingly: for an hour together it would beat the tat-too, and several other points of war, as well as any drummer."

It was observed that it would *exactly answer in drumming anything that was beaten or called for*, and that, "when the noise was loudest, and came with the most sudden and surprising violence, no dog about the house would move, though the knocking was often so boisterous and rude, that it had been heard at a considerable distance in the fields, and awakened the neighbours in the village, none of whom lived very near the house." "During the time of the knocking, when many were present, a gentleman of the company said, 'Satan, if the drummer set thee to work, give three knocks and no more,' *which it did very distinctly and stopped*. Then the gentleman knocked to see if it would answer him as it was wont, but it did not: for farther trial, he bid it for confirmation, if it were the drummer, to give five knocks, and no more that night, which it did, and left the house quiet all the night after. This was done in the presence of

Sir Thomas Chamberlain, of Oxfordshire, and divers others." Glanvil says, "I had been told it would imitate noises, and I made trial by scratching several times upon the sheet, as five, seven, and ten, *which it followed still stopping at my number.* I searched under and behind the bed, turned up the clothes to the bed-cords, grasped the bolsters, sounded the wall behind, and made all the search that I possibly could, to find if there were any trick, contrivance, or common cause of it; the like did my friend, but we could discover nothing."

Besides these strange sounds, there were other mysterious phenomena, produced without visible agency, and which could not be traced to any natural cause; such as these:—"On the 5th of November, 1661, it kept a mighty noise, and a servant observing two boards in the children's room seeming to move, he bid it give him one of them; upon which, the board come (nothing moving it, that he saw) within a yard of him: the man added, 'Nay, let me have it in my hand;' upon which it was shoved quite home to him again, and so up and down, to and fro, at least twenty times together, till Mr. Mompesson forbade his servant such familiarities." On the same night, as soon as prayers were done, "in sight of the company the chairs walked about the room of themselves, the children's shoes were hurled over their heads, and every loose thing moved about the chamber. At the same time, a bed-staff was thrown at the minister, which hit him on the leg, but so favourably that a lock of wool could not fall more softly, and it was observed that it stopped just where it lighted, without rolling or moving from the place." Strange lights were also seen in the house. "One of them came into Mr. Mompesson's chamber, which seemed blue and glimmering, and caused great stiffness in the eyes of those that saw it. After the light, something was heard coming up the stairs, as if it had been one without shoes. The light was seen also four or five times in the children's chamber; and the maids confidently affirm, that the doors were at least ten times opened and shut in their sight, and when they were open, they heard a noise as if half a dozen had entered together, after which, some were heard to walk about the room, and one ruffled as if it had been silk; Mr. Mompesson himself once heard these noises." The hair and bed-clothes of the servants and children would be plucked at, and, "the servants sometimes were lifted up in their beds, and let gently down again without hurt, at other times, it (the invisible something) would lie like a great weight upon their feet." On trial of the drummer, it was sworn to, that he had boasted that he had thus plagued Mr. M., for taking away his drum. And we are told, he "used to talk much of gallant books he had of an old fellow, who was accounted a wizard."

Glanvil concludes his narrative with remarking that "these things were not done long ago, or at far distance, in an ignorant age, or among a barbarous people, they were not seen by two or three only of the melancholic and superstitious, and reported by those that made them serve the advantage and interest of a party. They were not the passages of a day or night, nor the vanishing glances of an apparition; but these transactions were *near and late, public, frequent, and of divers years' continuance, witnessed by multitudes of competent and unbiassed attestors*, and acted in a searching incredulous age. Arguments enough, one would think, to satisfy any modest and capable reason."

We will only add to this, that in a letter to Glanvil, dated November 8, 1672, Mr. Mompesson writes:—"I have been very often of late asked the question, whether I have not confessed to his Majesty, or any other, a cheat discovered about that affair. To which I gave, and shall to my dying day give the same answer, that I must belie myself, and perjure myself also, to acknowledge a cheat in a thing where I am sure there was none, nor could be any, as I, the minister of the place, and two other honest gentlemen deposed at the Assizes, upon my impleading the drummer." And when the same rumour some years after was revived, John Wesley, in the *Arminian Magazine*, replied, "Not so; my eldest brother, then at Christ Church, Oxon, enquired of Mr. Mompesson, jun., his fellow-collegian, whether his father had acknowledged this, or not? He answered, 'The resort of gentlemen to my father's house was so great he could not bear the expense. He therefore took no pains to confute the report that he had found out the cheat, although he and I, and all the family knew the account which was published was strictly true.'"

Dr. Henry More gives a "true and faithful narrative of the disturbances which was in the house of Sir William York, in the parish of Lessingham, in Lincolnshire," from May to October, 1769. Noises were heard of a violent knocking at the door, under the stairs, on the ceiling and top of the room, "not above half a score strokes at a time, yet sometimes fewer and sometimes more." The invisible knocker also imitated the various noises made by the workmen and servants, and made a "very great drumming at a pair of wainscot doors between the hall and the great parlour, imitating drummers in their several ways of beating, and varying it as they usually do; but it was as if it was done with hands against the wainscot." Sometimes the noises were such, that "it was impossible for all the art and strength of man to make such a noise without battering the doors in pieces; and yet, examining them, they found the doors firm and whole, not the least battered or strained." These knockings were "heard alike by twenty several persons then in the family,

who, looking out of the windows over the door, heard the noise, but saw nothing." They were heard "sometimes every other night, sometimes every night. Sometimes knocking at the doors of out-houses, at the wash-house, brew-house and stable doors; and as they followed it from place to place, it still immediately and in one instant removed." Every scrutiny was made: the house was searched everywhere. All the family and servants were taken into one room; while Sir William, who "used all possible care and diligence to discover the imposture, if there had been any, locked all the out doors of the house, and kept the keys—which, indeed, was every night done—and went himself first to one, then the other side of the door whence the noises were heard, repeating the experiment several times successively in one night, but could discover nothing. When persons went out to the door, or went out in the time of such disturbances, they could see nobody, nor perceive any motion in anything on which the invisible agent did seem to operate," although, as one of the witnesses declared, "touching this thumping at the door, he could not compare it to anything better, as to the force thereof, than to the Roman ram which the Romans battered down walls with." Not only the family and servants, but most of Sir William's tenants watched the house in turn; so that "there were at least forty persons that were eye-witnesses, or rather ear-witnesses—the disturbance being here noises, not apparitions properly so called. Most of the servants are still in Sir William's family, that were there in the time of the disturbance; so that if any one have the curiosity to enquire of the truth of the business, he may easily get full satisfaction in the parish of Lessingham." It is to be noted, that there was the same visible movement of chairs and other articles by invisible agency in this, as in the former case.

The same writer gives a "transcription from Dr. Plott's history of certain strange knockings" that used to be heard at intervals from 1661 to 1674, at the house of Captain Basil Wood, of Brompton, and at the house of his son, Mr. Basil Wood, of Exeter, "a little before the death of those of the family," and which "were given very audibly to all that were then in the house." Dr. More also gives "a remarkable story touching the stirs made by a demon in the family of one Gilbert Campbel, by profession a weaver, in the old parish of Glenluce, in Galloway, in Scotland," in November, 1654. Among other phenomena in this case, we read that "presently there appeared a naked hand and arm from the elbow down, beating upon the floor till the house did shake again." Dr. More says that he was told by Dr. Gilbert Burnet (author of the *History of the Reformation, &c.*), that "all the passages in this case would make a volume, and that there was a

full relation thereof under the hands of eye-witnesses;" and "that he living in Glasgow some years, found all people there and in the county about, fully persuaded of the truth of the matter of fact." A solemn Humiliation by order of the Synod of Presbyters was kept through all the bounds of the Synod to request God in behalf of the afflicted family.

Aubrey, in his *Miscellanies* (published 1696) tells us that, "Three or four days before my father died, as I was in my bed about nine o'clock in the morning perfectly awake, I did hear three distinct knocks on the bed's head, as if it had been with a ruler or ferula." And he mentions that, "Major John Morgan, of Wells, did aver, that as he lay in bed with Mr. — Barlow (son of the Dean of Wells) they heard three distinct knocks on the bed: Mr. Barlow shortly after fell sick and died." And "Mr. Hierome Banks, as he lay on his death-bed, in Bell Yard, said, three days before he died, that Mr. Jennings of the Inner Temple (his great acquaintance, dead a year or two before) gave three knocks, looked in and said, 'Come away.' He was as far from believing such things as any man."

The Rev. Richard Baxter gives the following relation, which is also referred to by De Foe, as one "that not even the most devout and precise Presbyterian will offer to call in question:"—

There is now (1691) in London an understanding, sober, pious man, oft one of my hearers, who hath an elder brother, a gentleman of considerable rank, who having formerly seemed pious, of late years doth oft fall into the sin of drunkenness. He oft lodgeth long together here, in this his brother's house. And whenever he is drunken, and hath slept himself sober, something knocks at his bed's head, as if one knocked on a wainscot; when they remove his bed it followeth him. Besides loud noises on other parts where he is, that all the house heareth. They have oft watched, and kept his hands, lest he should do it himself. His brother hath oft told it me, and brought his wife (a discreet woman) to attest it; who averreth moreover, that as she watched him, she hath seen his shoes under the bed taken up, and nothing visible touch them. They brought to me the man himself, and when we ask him how he dare so sin again, after such a warning, he hath no excuse. But being persons of quality, for some special reason of worldly interest, I must not name him. . . .

It poseth me to think what kind of spirit this is, that hath such a care of this man's soul (which maketh me hope he will recover). Do good spirits dwell so near us? or are they sent on such messages? or is it his guardian angel? or is it the soul of some dead friend that suffereth, and yet, retaining love to him, as Dives to his brethren, would have him saved? God yet keepeth such things from us in the dark."

Calmet, in his *Phantom World*, refers to some remarkable occurrences which happened in 1706, at St. Maur, near Paris, to M. de S——, a young man about twenty-five years of age, who, with his friends and domestics, repeatedly heard loud knocks on the door, on the wall above his head, and against the window, the latter so violently that those who heard it thought all the panes were broken. In this case there was also the frequent removal from their places of heavy articles of furniture; the

opening and closing of doors—the bolts being shot into their places, and the simultaneous opening of all the bed-curtains in the house, by invisible agency. These things occurred again and again to the astonishment and alarm of the witnesses. One evening about six o'clock, M. de S--- heard a distinct voice at his left ear, which ordered him, *theeing* and *thouing* him, to do no particular thing within a specified time, and to keep it secret. We are left to infer that he complied, for all that occurred subsequently happened at the expiration of the time named, as to prove that the consequences threatened in the event of his refusal could have been performed.

In 1716, Epworth Rectory was the scene of those mysterious rappings and other noises which we have already considered in our article on "Spiritual Manifestations in the Wesley Family," No. 6 of this Magazine.

Mr. Spicer, in his *Sights and Sounds*, tells us, that "about 1722, a house at Dumfries, on the Nith, was the scene of various extraordinary manifestations. The place was inhabited by a highly respectable gentleman, a magistrate of Dumfries, whose family were perpetually annoyed by knockings and drummings all parts of the house, as though some powerful hand had been exercising a heavy mallet on the partitions and floors. Although these noises were so loud as to be distinctly heard by the labourers in the neighbouring fields, no clue to their origin was ever discovered. Tenant after tenant occupied the house, but the invisible rapper continued among the 'fixtures,' and for many years the spot was popularly known as 'Knock-a-big's Close,' the name bestowed upon the supposed spirit."

The same writer informs us that the *New York Packet*, a well-known commercial paper, published in its issue of March 10th, 1789, the following curious communication:—

Fish Hill, March 3rd, 1789.

Sir,—Were I to relate the many extraordinary, though not less true accounts we have heard concerning that unfortunate girl, at New Hackensack, your belief might perhaps be staggered, and patience tired. I shall therefore only inform you of what I have been an eye-witness to. Last Sunday afternoon my wife and myself went to Dr. Thorn's, and after sitting for some time we heard a knock under the feet of a young woman that lives in the family. I asked the doctor what occasioned the noise—he could not tell, but replied, that he, together with several others, had examined the house, but were unable to discover the cause. I then took a candle, and went with the girl to the cellar; there the knocking also continued: but as we were ascending the stairs to return, I heard prodigious rapping on each side, which alarmed me very much. I stood still some time, looking around with amazement, when I beheld some lumber which lay at the head of the stairs shake considerably. About eight or ten days after I visited the girl again; the knocking still continued, but was much louder. My curiosity induced us to pay the third visit, when the phenomena were still more alarming. I then saw the chairs move; a large dining-table was thrown against me, and a small stand, on which stood a candle, was tossed up and thrown into my wife's lap; after which we left the house much surprised at what we had seen.

In the *Life of Frederica Hauffe, the Seeress of Prevorst*, by Dr. Justinus Kerner, chief physician at Weinsberg, almost every phase of spiritual phenomena is related as pertaining to her experience. Many spirits appeared to her; among others, "as she was kneeling one morning about nine o'clock (in prayer), there appeared before her a short figure, with a dark cowl and an old-looking wrinkled face; the head hung forwards, and it looked for some minutes steadfastly on her, as she did on it." The spirit "appeared again before her as she was praying another day," and "for a whole year from that time," this spirit appeared to her daily, and begged her to pray with him. "His appearance was always preceded by knockings on the walls, noises in the air, and other sounds, which were heard by many different people, as can be testified by more than twenty credible witnesses. There was a tramping up and down stairs by day and night to be heard, but no one to be seen, as well as knockings on the walls and in the cellars; but, however suddenly a person flew to the place to try and detect whence the noise proceeded, they could see nothing. If they went outside, the knocking was immediately heard inside, and *vice versa*. However securely they closed the kitchen door—nay, if they tied it with cords—it was found open in the morning; and though they frequently rushed to the spot on hearing it open or shut, they never could find anybody. . . . . The noises in the house became at length so remarkable, that her father declared he could stay in it no longer; and they were not only audible to everybody in it, but to the passengers in the street, who stopped to listen to them as they passed. Mrs. H—— said in her sleep, that the evil spirits wished to impede the one with whom she prayed, that he might not sever himself from them."

The same book contains an account of similar occurrences which took place in 1806, at Slawensick Castle, Silesia. Councillor Hahn, in the service of Prince Hohenlohe, had gone to Slawensick, and with an old friend, a military officer named Kern, had taken up his abode in the castle. "Hahn, during his collegiate life, had been much given to philosophy—had listened to Fichte, and earnestly studied the writings of Kant. The result of his reflections, at this time, was a pure materialism." He had been reading aloud to his friends the works of Schiller, when the reading was interrupted by a small shower of lime which fell around them; this was followed by larger pieces, but they searched in vain to discover any part of the walls or ceiling from which it could have fallen. The next evening, instead of the lime falling, as before, it was thrown, and several pieces struck Hahn; at the same time they heard many blows, sometimes below, and sometimes over their heads, like the sound of distant

guns. On the following evening a noise was added which resembled the faint and distant beating of a drum. On going to bed with a light burning they heard what seemed like a person walking about the room with slippers on, and a stick with which he struck the floor as he moved step by step. The friends continued to laugh and jest at the oddness of these circumstances till they fell asleep. Neither being in the least inclined to attribute them to any supernatural cause. "But on the following evening the affair became more inexplicable: various articles in the room were thrown about—knives, forks, brushes, caps, slippers, padlocks, funnel, snuffers, soap—everything in short that was moveable; whilst lights darted from corner to corner, and everything was in confusion; at the same time the lime fell and the blows continued. Upon this the two friends called up the servant, Knittel, the castle watch, and whoever else was at hand, to be witnesses of these mysterious operations. Frequently before their eyes the knives and snuffers rose from the table and fell, after some minutes, to the ground." So constant and varied were the annoyances, that they resolved on removing to the rooms above. But this did not mend the matter; "the thumping continued as before; and not only so, but articles flew about the room which they were quite sure they had left below." Kern saw a figure in the mirror interposing apparently between the glass and himself, the eyes of the figure moving and looking into his.

It is unnecessary to recount the means employed to trace out these mysteries. Hahn and Kern, assisted by two Bavarian officers, Captain Cornet, and Lieutenant Magerle, and all the aid they could assemble, were wholly unsuccessful in obtaining the slightest clue. And Hahn, from whose narrative this account is taken, declares: "I have described these events exactly as I saw them; from beginning to end I observed them with the most entire self-possession. I had no fear, nor the slightest tendency to it; yet the whole thing remains to me perfectly inexplicable."

We will add only another instance, and this will bring us very near the date usually assigned as that of the commencement of "spirit-rapping."

In 1835, a suit (which lasted two years) was brought before the Sheriff of Edinburgh, in which Captain Molesworth was defendant, and the landlord of the house he inhabited (which was at Trinity, about a couple of miles from Edinburgh) was plaintiff. Mrs. Crowe, to whom we are indebted for the narrative, says: "I have been favoured with the particulars of the case by Mr. M. L——, the advocate employed by the plaintiff, who spent many hours in examining the numerous witnesses, several of whom were

officers of the army, and gentlemen of undoubted honour and capacity for observation."

Captain Molesworth took the house of a Mr. Webster, who resided in the adjoining one, in May or June, 1835; and when he had been in it about two months, he began to complain of sundry extraordinary noises, which, finding it impossible to account for, he took it into his head, strangely enough, were made by Mr. Webster. The latter naturally represented that it was not probable he should desire to damage the reputation of his own house, or drive his tenant out of it, and retorted the accusation. Still, as these noises and knockings continued, Captain M., not only lifted the boards in the room most infected, but actually made holes in the wall which divided his residence from Mr. W.'s, for the purpose of detecting the delinquent—of course without success. Do what they would, the thing went on just the same: footsteps of invisible feet, knockings, scratches, and rustlings, first on one side, and then on the other, were heard daily and nightly. Sometimes this unseen agent seemed to be knocking to a certain tune, and if a question were addressed to it which could be answered numerically, as, "How many people are there in this room?" for example, it would answer by so many knocks. The beds, too, were occasionally heaved up, as if somebody were underneath, and were the knockings were, the wall trembled visibly, but, search as they would, no one could be found. Captain Molesworth had two daughters, one of whom, named Matilda, had lately died; the other, a girl between twelve and thirteen, called Jane, was sickly, and generally kept in her bed; and, as it was observed that wherever she was, these noises most frequently prevailed, Mr. Webster, who did not like the *mala fama* that was attaching itself to his house, declared that she made them, whilst the people in the neighbourhood believed that it was the ghost of Matilda warning her sisters that she was to follow. Sheriffs' officers, masons, justices of peace, and the officers of the regiment quartered at Leith, who were friends of Captain M., came to his aid, in hopes of detecting or frightening away his tormentor, but in vain. Sometimes it was said to be a trick of somebody outside the house, and then they formed a cordon round it; and next, as the poor sick girl was suspected, they tied her up in a bag, but it was all to no purpose.

At length, ill and wearied out by the annoyances and anxieties attending the affair, Captain M. quitted the house, and Mr. W. brought an action against him for the damages committed by lifting the boards, breaking the walls, and firing at the wainscot, as well as for the injury done to the house by saying it was haunted, which prevented other tenants taking it.

The poor young lady died, hastened out of the world, it is said, by the severe measures used whilst she was under suspicion; and the persons that have since inhabited the house have experienced no repetition of the annoyance.

In most of the foregoing instances the rappings and various sounds occurred in a way, and in connection with other phenomena, indicating their production by intelligent, though invisible agency—by beings who could respond to questions, count numbers, and imitate tunes—the beating of a drum, and other sounds, sometimes made purposely to test the intelligence of the unseen operators, and, in all probability, had proper means been employed, in every case, intelligence would have been thus manifested, and in a higher degree; and the various methods of continuous spiritual intercourse now in vogue might thus have been anticipated at a much earlier period.

The "other phenomena" to which we have referred, it will be seen are, as well as the rappings, in character identical with the physical manifestations of spiritual power with which we are now familiar. We might have brought these out more prominently.

inently, but our object has been rather to bring into bolder relief that phase of the subject which is commonly thought the peculiar characteristic of recent Spiritualism.

We have purposely overlooked a noted instance of "spirit-rapping" at the close of the last century, but we shall give a full, true, and particular account of the *Cock Lane Ghost* in another article.

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### JUDGE BLACKSTONE ON WITCHCRAFT.

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In the 4th book, article 60, of *Blackstone's Commentaries*, we read as follows :

"A sixth species of offense against God and Religion, of which our ancient books are full, is a crime of which one knows not what account to give. I mean the offense of *witchcraft, conjuration, enchantment, or sorcery*. To deny the possibility, nay, actual existence of witchcraft and sorcery, is at once flatly to contradict the revealed Word of God in various passages of both the Old and New Testament, and the thing is itself a truth to which every nation in the world hath borne testimony, either by examples seemingly well attested, or by prohibitory laws which, at least, suppose the possibility of commerce with evil spirits. The civil law punishes with death, not only the sorcerers themselves, but also those who consult them, imitating, in the former, the express law of God, "Thou shalt not suffer a witch to live."

We wonder how many of Her Majesty's judges, at this day, believe in the possibility of such offences, and whether they do not really prefer to deny the revealed Word of God, than to believe in these exploded crimes. We, on the contrary, do believe in their possibility, and even in their occurrence at this day, and are quite willing to incur all the epithets which may ensue on such a statement.

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### DOCTOR MARTIN VAN BUREN BLY AND THE "TIMES."

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If the manifestations of Spiritualism are a truth, as we know them from frequent personal observation to be, it becomes a duty to see that they are not *Barnumed* by mediums, or used fraudulently as money-making implements. Where money is taken, the public should be more than ever on its guard to detect imposture, as another element of human nature is introduced by money, which may and does often cause, even in real mediums, the exhibition of manifestations, not of the true die. The desire to please, or to give something for the money, is but too often the origin of phenomena, which a careful observation has detected to have been produced by physical causes, or, in other words, by gross imposture.

The *Times*, after a portentous silence of some years, during

which it has known far more than has appeared in its pages, has at length broken ground, endorsing the "necromancy" of Dr. Bly, and calling him "the Great Magician." His principal manifestations narrated in the *Times*, consisted of his writing of names which the Editor had previously written, as those of his deceased friends, and the Editor sagely says, "the question is how the Doctor got the information of what the Editor had written?"

Now this, even when honestly done, is one of the commonest observed facts of what is called mesmeric clairvoyance. Not being that it has a spiritual basis, like all others of such phenomena and states, but it is at all events common, and has been for years acknowledged even by those who deny the existence of Spiritualism. It is not necessary, therefore, that Dr. Bly should be what is called a medium to exhibit such a power, as he has had the astonishing effect upon the *Times*, of causing it to pronounce in favour of the phenomena. We do not know whether this person be a medium at all or not; but this we know, that in America, from which country he has recently been imported, he was detected in imposture, and so clearly, that he was obliged to admit the charge, and that since then he has been frequently in several very dubious positions. He has for more than twelve months been going about the States of America, endeavouring since his own detection, and we suppose, according to the well-known proverb, to make money, by doing what would really be a good work, if it were carried out honestly by a proper person, namely the exposing of the frauds of some so-called mediums, but he did not find that the American public would countenance him, and he has now been brought over here, where it was thought he would not know, to collect British coin. He has come under the auspices of a gentleman who is the *confrère* of Mr. Barnum, and who occasionally deals in curiosities, such as the Aztecs, for exhibition.

It is a duty, which we willingly take upon ourselves, to make these facts known, because the subject is so open to deception in improper hands, and because the public knows so little of the true mode of investigation. The character of mediums is also important, and it is certainly unfortunate for the *Times* that it should have at last pronounced in favour of a person whose antecedents will not bear inquiry. If we wished to make a little fun of the *Times*, we could not have a better opportunity than the present affords. Only think how cautious the *Times* has been in these years, since it came out with a leader telling the world what fools we all were, and that it would believe at that congenial time when the spirits could tell the Editor the price of consols a month hence, or name the winner of the next Derby

Although this would be wicked sorcery, and such information could only be used for picking pockets and by felonious persons, yet this is what the *Times* said would be most convincing to its mercantile mind. And now, what a sad falling off there is, that, after all his good resolves, the Editor has been deceived by imposture and fraud—has been regularly taken in, or vulgarly sold, by *Doctor Bly*. Whatever will the *Times* say now of Spiritualism? We fear it will not like to have the subject named. The worst however, is, that the detection of Dr. Bly is made by a Spiritualist, by one of these persons who knows nothing of *the scientific mode of investigation* that we hear so much of from sceptics, but see so little of when they are the investigators. What is so satisfactory to the *Times* is proved to be arrant imposture by the Spiritualists, as will be seen by the letter which we subjoin from an eye-witness, who is known to us.

Nevertheless, the *Times* may take heart, for the phenomena of Spiritualism are real, and the inquiry which the facts suggest, is one of high importance. It will be persisted in, whether some mediums are reliable or not, for the whole argument follows, if only one true manifestation has ever been observed. Paid mediumship is one of the greatest misfortunes which the subject has to endure.

The following is our Correspondent's letter:—

Sir.—Dr. M. Van Buren Bly has visited this country, giving the public the general impression that he is a clairvoyant and a medium.

Report gave him a higher position in Spiritualism than even Dr. Redman and others, and even the *Times* has given up a portion of its space to the narration of some of the extraordinary phenomena he has elucidated.

Almost immediately on his arrival in the country, through the kindness of a gentleman, I had the opportunity of being present at a short *séance* given by him. I confess I was rather disappointed, and felt with others that Dr. Bly's performance was not altogether satisfactory. My opinion and those of others who were present, was entirely confirmed a few days afterwards. Our attention on this latter evening was more especially directed to the pellets of paper on which we had written the names of those whom we had formerly known; Dr. Bly showing apparently more striking powers than Dr. Redman, inasmuch as he either retires to another part of the room, or leaves it altogether while the names are being written. On our sitting down, my friend and I took especial interest in all Dr. Bly's movements, he being seated between us. With the exception of some monotonous raps, which never extended beyond the table, our patience was not rewarded by anything remarkable. Indeed, the powers exhibited fell far short of what we had witnessed on the previous sitting. Dr. Bly himself admitted that "the conditions were not favourable"—"the atmosphere was bad,"—and that his powers that evening were feeble. A few incoherent sentences were written down with that spasmodic energy peculiar to spirit-writing, but they were unsatisfactory. Soon, however, some louder raps gave us the impression that a more powerful spirit had arrived. A little interruption took place from the entrance of another visitor, to whom I ceded my place. It was then that one of our party detected in Dr. Bly's hand a pellet which he had cleverly abstracted from the table. This exposure led us to pay more particular attention to the raps, which we found, as Dr. Bly afterwards admitted, proceeded from his boot, at the same time showing us the clever manner in which the imitation was effected.

It was now quite time to come to some clear understanding, and I must do

justice to the coolness and good temper with which Dr. Bly, *after his detection, and upon being closely pressed*, stated that his mission to this country is to try and expose the errors of Spiritualism, by giving a close imitation of all the phenomena by natural means.

But, surely, if Dr. Bly takes money from the public by giving these so-called *séances*, he should frankly state the real object of his visit to this country. He says himself that he allows people to think what they please, and to form their own conclusions respecting him; but it would do him much more credit were he openly to avow his real views and intentions. Being merely invited to a *séance* at which some striking phenomena were to be shown, it was a singular conclusion to the evening to find that our "Medium" was nothing else, by his own confession, than a species of conjuror. Dr. Bly will, doubtless, attempt to continue to elucidate his views, and to receive money whilst doing so; but from what has been seen of his performance, the real truth of Spiritualism can stand out only more clearly by contrast than it did before.

I am, sir, your obedient servant,

14th Dec., 1860.

AN EYE-WITNESS.

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## CHURCH PARTIES AND SPIRITUALISM.

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HAVING heard the benefits of Spiritualism hardly disputed both by the sceptic and the professing Christian (to use the insulting cant of the age), and what has puzzled us most of all by some who have undoubtedly at one time realised its uses, our thoughts have turned to the contrast between the modern spiritual enquiries, and the teachings by which spiritual men of the other schools of thought are formed. These teachings may be easily and succinctly stated to be the popular theology in all its various schools, but most distinctly in the two opposing schemes of Evangelicalism and Puseyism. This theology is really all one and the same in its basis, and may for all practical purposes be described in one line of Pope's

"Laborious, heavy, busy, bold, and blind."

To illustrate the first epithet, we can recal the conversation of a well-known evangelical commentator with an acute and pious preacher in the early part of the century,—for had it passed but yesterday, and with reference to recent works, it would be if possible only more telling. The preacher took exception to the commentary as too ponderous, and was met thus:—"But if you had grown a large crop of wheat, would you not gather it all in?" "Certainly," was the rejoinder, "but I should *thresh* it first." Now where can we find any literature so over-fruitful of illustration and so tardy in its expression, through mere verbosity, as our popular theology? The theology, we mean, of our accepted religious books, and of our pulpits generally. And how surely does this characteristic ensure the quality of heaviness as distinguished from weight. How busy popular theology is we shall not here say, because it

has been idle enough about Spiritualism, or when wakened for an instant from its somnolent indifference, ran about declaring that its facts were all devil-workings. This being the busy-body style has not been often repeated, for as one great object of all clergy is to gain influence, it was found not to tell. It looked too undignified, and so it would not do to repeat *that* even if it were true. And, besides, it gave the people the *blue-devils* to be told by their parsons that they could not exorcise the *black ones*, and sometimes led to the asking them an awkward question or two. But this did not open the eyes of your modern theologians; of whose blindness we must speak fully, because it prevents their seeing their other defects, and as our Lord says, it makes them bad leaders. The leading fact which proves them blind and their systems owl-eyed is, that they cannot see the absurdity of denying the literal truth of Scripture on one side, as their most *advanced* scholars do, and thus making its histories myths, and its miracles nought—or, mere elucidations of some spiritual fact; or, on the other side, insisting only on the letter, and so as completely to prevent its intention taking effect on either the understanding or the heart. These literalists are the majority of popular divines, and they are very desirous that you should read your Bible, but you must understand it in the letter as they do—in other words, you must read it through their glasses. If Moses had worn spectacles as opaque as they put on the noses of their followers, he would never have seen that the bush was on fire, for it would have looked dull green, and nothing more. This was the style of man who a century or two back resolved that nature should be what it seemed, and our earth a zodiacal centre for the sun, though that was pardonable at the time; but your modern literalist will have God's word, or, plainly, God himself, be what He seems to them, *that* and *nothing more*. Practically it makes but little difference whether the miracles of Scripture be untrue in point of fact, or whether being true, they can never recur. Whether they never occurred or never can recur, must be matter of indifference to men so remote from their date as we are. To this it is replied that when they took place they established Christianity. But what if *that* too be a record only, and not a constant fact? If it be a fact to us it is a divine fact, and makes all divine celestial and spiritual things possible; and this is just as certain as that America can never be re-discovered, but it may be revisited as long as the earth lasts, and the productions which proved its existence to Ferdinand and Isabella prove it to us too; only we don't think of that matter because our population lives by them, is clothed with them, and speculates on them as to the progress of the race in general. Were Christianity shorn of

spiritual proofs of its origin, and spiritual powers in its development, it would be but a blind Samson. And such it seems to us now in this world of worldliness, sensualism, ritualism, and Pharisaic puritanism. And why is all this? Because there is nothing experimental in its knowledge, and a man cannot feel any interest in what forms no part of his experience. It is repugnant to the daily life and business of the masses, and the daily and patient inquiry into facts of the men of science and art.

Now, on the contrary, any truth gained by Spiritualism will, strictly speaking, be gained by inductive reasoning and experience, and will carry with it the certainty of scientific knowledge, and the modest reserve of the true and faithful student of God's works and ways. This modesty is alike distant from fanaticism, and from the fear to look into and severely scrutinize every fact brought under notice. And we fearlessly assert that such has been and will be the case, that spiritual phenomena, whether received through mediums, or direct, as in gifts and impressions, at once make men more reverent, and cause them to shrink more and more from all dogmatisms or rash interferences of thought with things spiritual and divine. They teach the proudest man to sit as a learner, and when he has learned anything, to communicate it without vaunting or exaggeration. They make the dogmatic asserter of his opinions modest; he remains calm under provocation, because he knows that he is not contending for a mere opinion, but for a faith based on demonstrable facts; and to the scoffer he simply says, "Come and see." We trust, therefore, that we shall have more facts to record, and we shall not shrink from any criticism—the more adverse the better, if it be only honest—for we admit no authority over us but the laws and the word of God; and in learning this word both from nature and Scripture, we hold, that to exclude Spiritualism from its part in the study, were more absurd than to exclude Greek and Hebrew learning from Biblical criticism, or mathematics from natural philosophy.

Many a criticism may be false or ill-applied, but a record of divinely and humanly blended workings for man's salvation like the Bible, cannot but demand a perpetual refreshing of knowledge from the spirit-world, and mistakes or misleadings can never to a well-balanced mind prove the contrary. Break up your school-benches and desks throughout the land before you tell us, that because you believe this or that medium, or cheat, or this or that record of spiritual manifestations false, the study of such phenomena has nothing to do with religious knowledge. If you mean you would rather believe theology than the Bible, we can understand you; if you tell us you prefer churches and clergy to Christianity, we believe you; but if you say Spiritual-

ism is false and the Bible true, we cannot understand you; if you say you love Christ and his religion above all, and yet do not desire to know of these things which connect the life of those who have passed away with our own, you really do tax our charity very severely. O.

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## A ROMAN CATHOLIC PRIEST IN TROUBLE.

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We sincerely pity the poor Lecturing Gentleman who has brought on himself the following well-merited chastisement from Mr. Howitt. We hear that he has since retired from the lecturing business!

### SPIRITUALISM.

*To the Editor of the Preston Guardian.*

Sir,—I am indebted to some one for a copy of the *Supplement to The Guardian* of December the 8th, containing a lecture by a Reverend Mr. Christie, of course, a Roman Catholic. In one of my letters to the *Morning Star* recently, in reply to a Catholic Priest, I could not help observing how unfair it was that the Catholic priests should take all the ministering angels to themselves, and give us all the devils. Now, allow me to say that, whichever party has the angels, and which the devils, must be decided by our Saviour's own test:—"By their fruits shall ye know them."

Professor Hare, of America, who began as a most determined disbeliever in Christianity, and who was converted solely by Spiritualism to Christianity, has the following striking remarks:—"Besides those antagonists to Spiritualism, who would set aside the evidence of persons living at the present time, and who are known to be truthful, by the evidence of those who lived some thousand years since, Spiritualists are assailed by such as admit their facts, but explain them differently. Thus the Roman Catholic Church has admitted the manifestations to indicate an invisible rational power which cannot be attributed to human agency. But, instead of ascribing them to spirits good or bad, of mortals who have passed the portal of death, they consider them the work of Old Nick. If this personage ever did influence the acts of any sect, manifestly it must have been in those instances in which alleged religious error has been made the ground for persecution from the most ancient times down to the extirpation of the Albigenses, the Auto da Fe, Inquisition, massacre of St. Bartholomew, fires of Smithfield, roasting of Servetus, and the persecution of the Quakers and witches." And he adds, "When the benevolent language of the spirits respecting sinners is contrasted with the cruel doctrine of the Church in question, it can hardly be conceived that this language comes from Satan, and that of this Church from the benevolent Jesus Christ."

Sir, how often have incautious people been reminded that "people who live in leaden houses should not throw stones." Does your Catholic lecturer think that the history is blotted from the public mind? A celebrated French author can tell us that nothing of the kind ever dies: "Mais non, ne le croyez pas. Rien n'est oublié, nul homme, nul chose. Ce qui a été une fois, ne peut s'anéantir. Les murs même n'oublieront pas, le pavé sera complice, transmettera des sons, des bruits: l'air n'oubliera pas." "By their fruits shall ye know them." By what fruits, then, do we know the Catholic Church in history? By what spirits must it have been instigated? By what spirits must it have been stimulated to the destruction, the abuse, the despotism, and the forced darkness of mankind?

"Avenge, O Lord! Thy slaughtered saints, whose bones  
Lie scatter'd on the Alpine mountains cold!"

That cry of Milton's is the agonised cry of sixteen hundred years, during a great portion of which the Catholics, under the instigation of spirits whose character speaks for itself, committed the most dreadful atrocities on the suffering human race which devils could invent, or which horror-stricken historians could record. Whole nations, as the Bohemians, dragonaded to death; the Bible shut up, instead of its light, the fires of human sacrifices kindled in its place. The tortures of the Inquisition, unparalleled by any details of hell; the wretches of the Camisards of the South of France pursued by sixty thousand soldiers bound by priests; their towns and farms burnt; themselves hurled into dungeons till their nails peeled from their hands and feet, their hair from their heads. These, and such horrors attending the Catholic church in every country which obtained dominance; these, or similar barbarities perpetrated in the dungeons of Rome and Naples in our own very day, till the righteous vengeance of God smitten those Catholic dynasties, temporal and spiritual:—by what spirits, by what inspirations, by what *black art* have these abominations been perpetrated?

Sir, when Spiritualists are turned upon by the priests of this church, and of necromancy and dealing with the devil, strong as is the language which they have we not the right to retort it, being the sacred language of *Truth*? Have we not a right to ask the Catholic priests—what is the nature of our persecutions? What people we have persecuted? What saints we have persecuted? What murderous soldiers we have marched forth against any class of men? What men, whilst in their very appeals to the common God of Christians have burned, imprisoned, tortured, ruined, maligned, excommunicated, damned in this world and the next? I ask your Reverend Lecturer to answer these questions. I call upon him to point out by what Scriptures Catholicism has trailed the fire of hell after it through these ages? I call upon him to show me where the Spiritualists have assumed these terrible and infernal attributes? Where have they shut up God's Word from the world, and murdered those who dared to use it? I put it to the common sense of the audience what kind of spirits inspire us and inspire them.

Does it not occur to every man, when he sees the Catholic priests attempting to crush Spiritualism, that this has been their universal practice through all ages? Is there a church, or an opinion, except their own, which they have tried to smother, and so long as they had the power, did it? They say they are actuated by the devil. They said the same of Luther. Protestantism declared a pestilence breathed from the bottomless pit. If they could have had Luther and his coadjutors, we should have had no Protestantism now. Spiritualism alone that they denounce,—there is not a church, a sect, a doctrine that they have not treated the same. They tried to compel Galileo to recant the grandest discovery of science, and had they prevailed, we should have imagined that the great sun was daily going round this little earth. Spiritualists receive only the common treatment from them.

Your Lecturer draws a dismal picture of the effects of Spiritualism in America. He tells us the American Spiritualists have gone back to Pantheism. They represent God not as a person, but merely as a principle, like gravitation and electricity. That spirits after all are not spirits, but merely something that has been drawn up into the eternal sun whence they came. Yet, with a singular inconsistency, he immediately afterwards tells us that they teach that they are spirits, and that these souls will be eternally happy.

Now, if your lecturer knew anything really of America, or American Spiritualism, he would have known that these doctrines, and worse, had become immensely prevalent in the United States, through loss of faith in churches which had ceased to exhibit any of the miraculous powers of the primitive church, and gave the people only cold, heartless, cheerless traditions in their stead. It is out of the question to state that Spiritualism in America has been fast recalling men and women to a vital faith in Christianity. I do not pretend to say that false doctrines have been preached to many Spiritualists by devils, for never had the devil so good a cause for alarm as in the advent of Spiritualism. Through the doctrines of the churches, through the frightful persecutions by the Catholics, through the doctrines of infidels, made by these things, and taking advantage of them, the people of America, as well as of Europe, to a vast extent, had lost all the

in Christianity, nay, even in spirit itself. People said, "Since the fathers fell asleep all things have remained as they were." No church could show them the living powers, the sentient spirit of the Divine which glorified the early church of Christ. People said, "Give us not words, empty words, but the same signs which you say were vouchsafed nearly 2,000 years ago." And none could give these. Then came forth God's kind and confirmatory revelation, Spiritualism, with its manifestations, and the devils trembled.

"Wherever God erects a house of prayer,  
The devil's sure to build a chapel there."

The devil, therefore, put forth his whole strength, and sent forth his lying spirits, to mingle with and render suspected the good spirits and good manifestations of Spiritualism. To some extent he succeeded, as he did against Moses before Pharaoh; as he did against the primitive church, producing Manicheans, Nicolaitines, and other misguided persons. But as a whole, Spiritualism has triumphed over these diabolisms, as it did in its first form of Christianity. What is the fact as to America? Professor Hare said, in his time, that upon a careful calculation twenty-five thousand persons had, by Spiritualism, been converted from Atheism and Deism to Christianity. Can the Catholic Church, or any church, show such a glorious testimony of its divine vigour and truth as that? Has the Catholic Church, or any church, converted twenty-five thousand Atheists and Deists in the last five hundred years? Nothing is so notorious as that this power of conversion by any preaching, any argument, any logic or learning, has been long lost and gone from the churches. We were obliged to exclaim of the multitude lost through the teaching of dead forms, as Perseus exclaimed of the people of his day—*O curvæ in terras animæ, et cælestium inanes!*

Hare, a first-rate scientific man, tells us, that it is on this absence of living power in the churches that Comte has been enabled to establish his deadly Positivism. He says: "One of the pre-eminent blessings resulting from this new philosophy will be its bringing religion within the scope of positive science. Comte builds his inference that theology is to be abandoned on the fact that Christianity has no positive evidences. But very different is the position of Spiritualism relative to positive science. It starts from the same basis of intuition and induction from facts. It does not controvert any of the results of positive science within the ponderable material conditions, to which the results contemplated by Comte belong. It superadds new facts respecting the spiritual world, which have so entirely escaped the researches of the materialists, that they entertain the highest incredulity merely upon negative grounds—merely because the facts in question have not taken place within the experience of those who have investigated the laws of ponderable matter, and of two or three imponderable principles associated therewith. Such was the ground of *my* incredulity, which, however, vanished before intuitive demonstration." P. 25.

How is it that theologians, at least, cannot see, if scientific or natural philosophers do not, the immense, the all-important value of Spiritualism, as a weapon against the Atheist and Deist? Once let it be proved that the phenomena of Spiritualism are real, and the Sceptic and Atheist lose every argument on which they build. If it be admitted that spirits really do visit us, and prove it by moving matter and by showing spiritual intelligence, there is an end of argument. These facts take their place immovably in the very centre of the arena of Positivism. The evidence of men living nearly 2,000 years ago may be denied; but the evidence of men now living, in thousands and tens of thousands, cannot be denied. Men cannot long deny the evidence of their own senses and of their understandings. The great triumph of Christianity thus comes, as it must come, from the positivism of Spiritualism. It proves Christianity by analogy; it adds a new and invincible force to all historic and moral proofs of it.

And then, as to the *quality* of spiritualistic inspiration. Your lecturer says that the Spiritualists deny Christianity. I have never yet found any such Spiritualists. He adds, that a crucifix or a Bible defeats the manipulations. This is simply a—fib. I have seen for months together spiritualistic manipulations proceeding in the presence of a crucifix. It is to the Bible that the spirits especially direct their votaries; and, probably, we have here the root of the

Catholic opposition to it. The Catholic Church for ages has made the Bible sealed book to the people; the spirits strongly recommend its universal study. In my own family, they have always sent us to the Bible and to Christ. They recommended us to commence our *séance* regularly with reading a portion of the Gospels, and they were always kind enough to point out the chapters and the verses to be read, through the table and the alphabet; and it was wonderful how *apropos* were these selections of Scripture made by the spirits themselves to the communications which followed.

In conclusion, let me express my surprise at the example of the teaching of a spirit quoted by the lecturer from an illustrious French nobleman. A wicked soul declares that God is infinitely good, and desires to pardon it; but its own obstinate malignity caused it to reject pardon. Is there any heresy in this? Is not this the very teaching of the Gospel? He admits, too, at the end, that the facts of Spiritualism confirm the idea of another world. Is that a heresy? Does this priest really understand Christianity? Does he read the New Testament? Or does he keep his flock company in the Scriptural embargo which he imposes? Finally, he very naively remarks that the same recorded facts of Spiritualism confirm the miracles and legends of Catholicism. So the reverend father does not object even to what he believes the evidence of the Devil, if it be but in his own favour.

I am, Sir, yours faithfully,

WILLIAM HOWITT.

P.S.—Let it be understood that my quarrel is not with the Catholic faith; that is no business of mine, any more than my faith concerns the Catholic; my remarks apply to the persecuting and calumniating spirit of the Roman hierarchy. I number valued friends among Catholics. Mr. Home, the great medium, is a Catholic. And what of la Sœur Collette?

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The spirits of the loved and the departed  
 Are with us; and they tell us of the sky,  
 A rest for the bereaved and broken-hearted,  
 A house not made with hands, a home on high!  
 They have gone from us, and the grave is strong!  
 Yet in night's silent watches they are near!  
 Their voices linger round us as the song  
 Of the sweet skylark lingers on the ear,  
 When, floating upward in the flush of even,  
 Its form is lost from earth, and swallowed up in Heaven.—A.M.

## MR. NOVRA'S LECTURE.

MR. HENRY NOVRA, whose name will be remembered by the readers of the *British Spiritual Telegraph*, has been delivering a lecture at St. James's Hall, of which the catchword is "Spirit-Rapping Explained and Exposed." Mr. Novra is a conjuror, keeping a shop in the Quadrant, and he attends evening parties at Christmas, with his boxes of tricks to amuse the children. About two years ago he was at Malvern, in company with Mr. Kennard, and there saw some manifestations which, after mature consideration, he informed his friend were produced by *either a monkey or a small child*, concealed under the petticoats of the medium. This discovery was so satisfactory to Mr. Kennard, that he immediately commenced getting up the *Anti-Spiritual Society*, the object of which was to prosecute all persons who had the gift of the Spirit. Mr. Kennard was the chairman and Mr. Novra the secretary of the society, and we believe they have since remained the only members of it. Mr. Novra has since found out how the manifestations are done, and on the 19th December, he showed some wonderful dissolving views and diagrams, very much akin to those silly productions of Mr. Delaware Lewis, in *Once a Week*. We have neither space nor time to comment on such exhibitions, further than to say that those who have more money than wit may go to hear the lecture repeated at "7s. 6d. Sofa Stalls, or Reserved Seats 5s." We did not observe either Dr. Bly or Mr. Dickens at the lecture.

## THE NEW YEAR.

Ring out wild bells to the wild sky,  
The flying cloud, the frosty light:  
The year is dying in the night;  
Ring out, wild bells, and let him die.

Ring out the old, ring in the new,  
Ring, happy bells, across the snow:  
The year is going, let him go;  
Ring out the false, ring in the true.

Ring out the grief that saps the mind,  
For those that here we see no more;  
Ring out the feud of rich and poor,  
Ring in redress to all mankind.

Ring out a slowly dying cause,  
And ancient forms of party strife;  
Ring in the nobler modes of life,  
With sweeter manners, purer laws.

Ring out the want, the care, the sin,  
The faithless coldness of the times;  
Ring out, ring out my mournful rhymes,  
But ring the fuller minstrel in.

Ring out false pride in place and blood,  
The civic slander and the spite;  
Ring in the love of truth and right,  
Ring in the common love of good.

Ring out old shapes of foul disease,  
Ring out the narrowing lust of gold;  
Ring out the thousand wars of old,  
Ring in the thousand years of peace.

Ring in the valiant man and free,  
The larger heart, the kindlier hand;  
Ring out the darkness of the land,  
Ring in the Christ that is to be.

TENNYSON.

## Correspondence.

### THE OD FORCE.

*To the Editor of the "Spiritual Magazine."*

SIR,—My much respected friend, Mr. William Howitt, has, with his usual vigorous style, produced in your last number, a very admirable article on the persecutions of Reichenbach for his discovery of odyle force. I can venture to say, however, from positive knowledge, that could the Baron be made aware of the fact, that one of the first writers in our language had so far misunderstood his meaning, as to defend and praise the ill-coined word "odyle," he would be not a little annoyed.

Chemists have, in classing the primary organic combinations of certain elementary principles, chosen to express their ideas by affixing the terminal *yle* to the radical of the word, indicative of the complete compound, to which the material in question has reference. My late friend, Dr. William Gregory, though a professor of chemistry, was a man of very inexact mind, and like his father, was restless in the harness of close and severe categorization of thought. This fact explains the blunder he committed in using the fanciful word *odyle* in his flowing translation of Von Reichenbach's Researches. Nowhere, in the original German work, does the word occur, and really, considering attentively all the author says, in the 215th paragraph of the first part, the last of the sixth treatise, where Von Reichenbach gives his reasons for the new name to his force; the fanciful termination of *yle* to the word *od*, reduces the meaning to absurd nonsense. A more singularly inappropriate word could not have been fabricated, for the termination would refer by analogy to amyle, ethyle, formyle, &c. a special kind of bodies belonging to organic chemistry, and to which the special nomenclature should be confined. *Odyle* would signify a material organic compound—a radical formed of two or more of the elements, hydrogen, carbon, nitrogen, and oxygen, and would thus superadd a notion not advanced by Von Reichenbach.

It is unnecessary to enter here into an elaborate discussion of the clear thought of Von Reichenbach, which will be found stated by himself in the 222nd, and a few subsequent pages of my edition of his work. In my first essay which I offered to your magazine, I endeavoured to show that all forces were emanations of a grand trunk force, to which Newton gave the title of Universal Gravitation. Von Reichenbach has clearly established by numerous and very ingeniously-devised experiments, that a force, the character and distinctions of which were never before

laid down, exists in nature, is universally diffused, and though not identical with magnetism, electricity, chemism, the crystallic force,<sup>2</sup> the various forces of the multifarious forms of organic beings, of the sun's rays, of heat, &c., yet, as far as his investigations have gone, while it differs from them, it is still associated with every substance in existence. Thus, Mesmer's idea of an universal force is proved to be no absurdity; and if the reader wishes for a longer dissertation on this subject, I may refer him to page 430 of the eighth volume of the *Zoist*, where he will find a sort of review, written under peculiar circumstances, of the two translations of the *Researches on the Od*, but not on the *Odyle Force*.

I remain, Sir, yours faithfully,

7, Hyde Park Place.  
10th December, 1860.

JOHN ASHBURNER.

A PLAIN MAN (whose letter was omitted last month for want of space), in reply to a critique by "Hampden," in the *News of the World*, on his letter in our October number, writes:—

"If 'Hampden' will take the trouble to read my letter, he will see that in my own drawing-room, with no one present save two members of my own family, most extraordinary manifestations took place. All comparison, therefore, of these with the tricks of Herr Frikell is beside the question.

"'Hampden' seems determined to confine his remarks to physical manifestations: he omits all mention of the intellectual ones. There is no doubt nothing so from their very simplicity, more open to trick and deceit than physical manifestations; but because such is the case, are we to turn the entire subject into a riddle? Because certain clergymen have rendered themselves notorious by their vice and immorality, are we all to become Atheists? Are we to hang all schoolmasters because one of the fraternity chose to thrash a boy to death? Why should we not rather endeavour by investigation to discover what, at present, seems to be a mystery, and which may in time become as familiar as the steam engine or the electric telegraph? Did Daguerre ever imagine, when he blackened his finger with the nitrate of silver, that his researches would eventually lead to the beautifully finished photographs of the present day? Had any man a hundred years ago predicted that a message could be sent from here to Constantinople in two seconds, or that any one could in a day breakfast in Dublin and dine in London, would he not have been considered a maniac, and treated accordingly? We Spiritualists of the present day are not considered maniacs, but are only pitied as "Men of more than ordinary intelligence and respectability suffering themselves to be deluded by an imposture."

"As I stated in my letter, I have no doubt that many tricks are practised by some mediums, who, fearing not to make their money, at times by tricks, imitate the genuine manifestations, when they are unable to elicit the true; but persons of independent income—actuated by no pecuniary motives—must be pardoned for believing the evidence of their own eyes, and when they find that, through themselves, certain results are produced which they cannot account for, are they to be considered blockheads because they wish to investigate such phenomena; or, because they honestly state the conclusions to which these investigations have led them?

"Now to please 'Hampden,' I will, for argument sake, admit that all physical manifestations, such as rising tables, &c., are juggles and tricks, that Mr. Home is a humbug, and that 'Mr. Thackeray's friend' is a liar: we will say that all physical manifestations are done by trick, or electricity, or anything he pleases; but what about intellectual manifestations? What reply can he give when a man never convicted of falsehood in his life tells him, *and can prove it*, that in

his own house, with no one present save one member of his own immediate family, he has received plain answers to plain questions? Trick being out of the question, can electricity produce rationality? Work the wires of the telegraph, and a question will be given, but unless at the other end of the line a rational being responds, no answers are received. I consider nothing is so convincing of the fact of a communication with the world of spirits as receiving in our own homes, from invisible respondents, rational answers to questions we address to them."

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*To the Editor of the "Spiritual Magazine."*

SIR,—Since I last had the pleasure of addressing you, two points in connection with Spiritualism have especially come under my notice and attracted my attention, viz., the tricks resorted to by certain paid mediums, and the arguments undertaken for the purpose of convincing the unbeliever.

Let me ask what can be the use of arguing on a subject as yet incomprehensible? The most common-sense observer and narrator of facts cannot convert certain sceptics, as, although he is perfectly convinced of what he sees and hears, still he does not know the whole truth, and consequently cannot bring to bear all that might be said upon the subject. It is possible we may never be able to understand it, although I hope this is but the commencement, and that Spiritualism will develop itself day by day. Still, at present, discussion is useless, but that is no reason why a Spiritualist should be laughed at.

As well might any Christian be turned into jest for believing in the most sacred mysteries of our faith, that faith surrounded by so many points our poor comprehension cannot understand, and so truly called by Bossuet, *les saintes obscurités de la foi*.

In Spiritualism we are only asked to believe in what we see, and for this we are turned into ridicule by men who, as I have said before, have come to the conclusion that it is impossible for the Almighty to cause any new phenomena to be observed; that he dooms us for ever to remain as we are, and that all further insight into nature is denied us. Add to this that all Spiritualists are knaves, fools, or liars, and the picture is complete.

On the other hand what a hold sceptics have on us, if you take into consideration the gross impositions practised by persons pretending, for pay, to be mediums. At a *séance* not long since, where a paid medium was present, the table was raised in a manner which at once showed me that some one else than a disembodied spirit moved it. I managed to get my foot under it, when much to my amusement the medium, not feeling it, began to move the table again, and seemed considerably disgusted on my causing it to dance a lively measure to a tune I whistled. At once the same person spelt out, as from the spirits, "*Nothing more to-night.*" A lady at the table immediately expressed her surprise at the orthography, but when the statement came out that "*The party was not conjeyneal,*" so disgusted was she that she rose and left the room.

I candidly confess had I not prior to such an exhibition seen unmistakeable manifestations at my own house, I would not now be as thorough a believer as I am. If, then, thorough believers in Spiritualism become disgusted at such pranks, can you wonder at sceptics taking advantage of them? My only surprise is that they do not turn them to better account. In *Once a Week* I have read the most sapient remarks of Mr. Delaware Lewis, who gives us some silly diagrams, but a single argument in the whole tedious article I do not see. He simply denies the fact, "*It must be a lazy tong.*" It must be this, and it must be that, but no argument of any kind that meets the real facts. One of the most amusing suggestions to account for Mr. Home floating in the air (I forget where I heard it) was, that that gentleman had a figure made to resemble himself, which, being inflated with gas, of course floated round the room; but how such a quantity of gas was got in, or how disposed of after the exhibition was terminated, without affecting the olfactory organs of the company, this philosopher did not say.

I would much wish to know how sceptics would account for the two following circumstances which occurred at my own table, in my own house, and the truth of which I am willing to substantiate to any gentleman through you:—

A friend of mine, under orders for India, on a certain evening *en séance* asked how many days would elapse ere he sailed. The answer was twenty-seven. "Impossible, I am to sail in a few days!" Still the same answer, "twenty-seven days." A few days afterwards all his arrangements were made, and subsequently he went to Portsmouth. Seeing that the ship could not arrive for some days, in consequence of adverse winds and a variety of causes, he obtained leave from the commanding officer to come to London, on the understanding that the arrival of the transport should be telegraphed. Many were our conversations at his delay, and at last we felt sure the prophecy would be fulfilled. On the twenty-seventh day we had a few friends to dinner, and on their assembling some of the sceptics began joking about it, saying, "the spirits were wrong." Still our friend did not appear, and on dinner being announced the following note was put into my hand:—"The twenty-seventh day. The prophecy is likely to be fulfilled. I have got a telegram, and must be on board to-night!"

Again.—On speaking a short time since to a lady on the subject of Spiritualism, she told me that thirty years ago, when very young, she was engaged to be married, but the melancholy death of the young man put an end to her hopes. She had never married in consequence, and had never even mentioned his name so deep was her grief; but she concluded by asking me, did I think it possible she could obtain a communication from him? I told her I would ask at our next *séance*, which I did, without naming the lady, and received the following answer:—"The lady shall receive tidings of the loved one, in tokens she alone will understand." Q. "Must she be present?"—A. "Yes." Q. "Will you tell me the gentleman's name?"—A. "Yes" (naming him.)

On my next seeing the lady she seemed quite sceptical, in consequence of a clergyman having spoken to her on the subject, and declined coming to us, and she tried to turn the whole into a jest. I said nothing at the time, but prior to leaving asked why she had not told me the name? At once she lost her bantering manner, and said she had already told me her reason. "That is no reason why I should not enquire of the spirits." "I did so, and know it. It is (naming him.)" The effect was electrical—she had fainted!

Yours faithfully,

A PLAIN MAN.

17th December, 1860.

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*To the Editor of the "Spiritual Magazine."*

SIR,—I forward you some "Spiritual Experiences." Though I have not even seen a table turned, nor ever heard a rap, yet I believe in the principle of cumulative testimony. I intend to be very brief, in order that others may follow my example, by forwarding you short testimonials.

My wife's mother dying, her sister just three weeks before, and at the same hour as that of her death, heard seraphic strains of music that sounded as in the air.

My housemaid having left her sister in December, at Cork, as the boat was leaving the quay told her of something she intended to do. Lying on her bed one Sunday afternoon, her sister appeared at the bedside, and reminded her that she had not fulfilled her promise made at the time referred to. In a few days came the intelligence of the sister's death. This was in May.

My wife has told me of a house "possessed" near Wexford, now some years since, and testimony would therefore be difficult to gather; but the particulars are very strange.

J. H.

Liverpool.

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*To the Editor of the "Spiritual Magazine."*

DEAR SIR,—Allow me a few lines about *Björnram*, the wizard of Finland, who lived here in the time of Gustavus III., protected by this king (between 1760 and the beginning of this century) and who appears to have been gifted either with extraordinary mediumistic powers, or with uncommon magical knowledge, His life is described in the *Biographical Dictionary* of 1837, in the periodical *Treid*, Nos. 56 and 63 of 1837, and Strentz in various masonic dictionaries in Germany.

as also in C. Dahlgren, Swedish Masonry, &c. I omit quoting his life, or discussing his powers and merits, mentioning only that the French Minister Bourgoing describes him as a retired and discreet man, who had not the least appearance of a charlatan, and never boasted of his miraculous gifts, which he seldom, and only after great entreaties, condescended to manifest.

But, if I abstain from critical researches, for which I don't feel prepared, I think nevertheless that some points in the debates about Björnram bear some resemblance with the present spirit manifestations, and particularly as your endeavour is to elucidate the facts, and not only to show the continuity of the phenomena in consecutive periods, but also the spirit in which mankind, especially the learned of the age, have received and treated them, it may be worth the while to produce a specimen of such reception from that period.

I begin with quoting the words with which Count Oxenstjerna celebrated the memory of the then recently deceased brother Björnram in a meeting of the Grand Lodge of Sweden in 1802. This illustrious deputy of the Great Orient in the North appears to have been more wisely penetrated by the truth of the celebrated *dictum* of Erasmus Rotterdamus—*Morbus est, non judiorum, dammare quod non inspereries*—than by your big British *scientifouli*, who invert the moral by saying, "Condemn boldly without any investigation." The words run thus, "The Royal Secretary Gustavus Björnram, not only left the crowded world and conversational circles, but even private friendships, as he was rarely seen at our meetings. He lived in private and retirement, occupied with investigations of occult science, the results of which he seldom revealed. We don't judge as to what unknown, but connecting bonds may once, after the night of mystery, be discovered between the spiritual and the natural world, nor how far the power from the one may act upon the other. At one period all occult science was reputed an encroachment on the supreme order, or it was scorned with ridicule and levity. At other periods, it was the aim of superstition, which superseded true religion. But those enlightened few, who walk the middle path of stern reason; and without prejudice, rest their unfettered judgment on the veneration of true religion; take care neither to adopt impressions from miraculous nature with credulity, nor to reject those still undeveloped means, whose disclosure, to His thinking creatures, the Author of All possibly may have reserved himself. They do not presume to tell beforehand how far the sojourners in the regions of immortality, and of mortality, may mutually be able to cross the frontier, which now separates their respective realms. Howsoever our senses may be startled, our minds will not be shaken. In the external sphere we only see the point from which we start; in every new power of nature we discover a new confirmation of the Creator's omnipotence; in every unexpected radiance, which illuminates our thoughts or our sight, we see powerful sparks of the immortal light, for which we are born or re-born, and of whose restored brightness in another world we, through purification, already here perceive the dawn. Those were the meditations of Björnram, while he investigated the recesses of nature and philosophy. He now sees what he sought, and meets those truths, the contemplation of which, through virtue and religion, he aimed at."

I think these sober words may be used as an antidote to the condemning *zabies*, which still prevails within your foggy precincts. But, to make the semblance more striking, I observe that just as the Faradays, together with the Wizards of the North, in the present day, invent and fabricate machinery to explode the whole spiritual facts—so also in that time and region an ape was near at hand to counterfeit Björnram, and thus to bemoil him in the interest of that naturalistic faith, which every spirit manifestation puts in jeopardy. When the fact had spread abroad that Gustavus III. had one night, "*al improvisto*," called at Björnram's, together with six of his suite, and had conducted him to a lonely church in the country, where he had been fully satisfied as to his magical powers; a doctor, Mr. Kedin, the Dickens of that day, was at hand, who firmly asserted that, having got a timely warning, he had himself been on the spot, and through the bellman's favour, had entered the church previously, and had thus actually witnessed how Björnram, preceding the illustrious company, with wires, strings and staves, had fixed large paste-board mannekins, to deceive the king and the royal suite. Dr. Hedin, being ignorant of the particulars, was not

aware that he had selected the wrong chapel as the scene of his pretended observations, nor that his feigned fact of fixing, in a dark night, strings and rings, hoops and paste-board, from the top to the bottom of an unknown church, all at a moment's notice, while Gustavus III., one of the most clever intellects of his age, with six of his suite were intently observing what was going on, would have been a far more miraculous contrivance than the apparent wonder, which he tried to explode.

I think there is in all this some analogy with the situation in which the question of spiritual agencies is now placed in your country by the regardless denials, and suppositions of sceptical opponents, who certainly would not shrink from resorting to fallacious fancy in order to preserve intact the narrow compass of their threatened would-be rational intellect.

Björnram was reputed to be a reader of Swedenborg; at least, the heads of the congregation in Sweden at that time, Count Adam Lewenhaupt, the Grand-ranger Munck, and Baron Axelson, considered him to be so, and thence it is understandable why Björnram insisted upon the distinction between the white, or allowable magics, and the black, or infernal, against which Swedenborg so repeatedly warns his readers.

Yours, C. D. H.

Roeskilde, Denmark, Dec. 10, 1860.

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*To the Editor of the "Spiritual Magazine."*

7, Lower Craven Place, Kentish Town,  
December, 1860.

SIR.—You have, of course, read Mr. Delaware Lewis's article, with diagrams, entitled "Spirit Rapping made Easy," &c., published in *Once a Week*, a periodical which I think has hitherto been considered pretty good, but which, if it continue to publish such senseless effusions as that proceeding from the pen of Mr. Lewis, I fear will soon degrade itself, and rank very meanly in the estimation of any one with a grain of consideration. I am far from being a spiritualist myself as yet, but I am open to the conviction of my senses, and if I saw any of those wonderful manifestations described in your Magazine, I could not help being convinced of something beyond the reach of ordinary mortals. I have already seen many things which are passing strange, but I have not yet had evidence sufficiently conclusive to make me a convert. But to return to the subject of Mr. L.'s article, I will ask any person to sit down and (if they can command sufficient patience) read it throughout, and if they do not pronounce it to be one of the most insane ebullitions ever placed in print, I can fully believe them to be, indeed, easily gulled, and a ready tool for the most abject simpleton to sharpen his wits upon.

Let us merely give a cursory glance at the wonderful discoveries he professes to make. He rests quite content in the belief that he has discovered that raps are caused by table drawers, that tables rise by being lifted with the foot, and that we are deceived by a shadow in place of Mr. Home passing round the room, while that gentleman calmly places his foot on the shoulder of the amazed spectator, thereby making him believe the shadow had touched him in passing. At the same time we are assured by our wondrous delineator, that the room is in perfect darkness, though he confesses in a few lines before (in quoting from the *Cornhill*) "that our vision was becoming accustomed to it, and masses of things were growing palpable to us." If so, I ask in the name of reason, could not the veriest simpleton detect the difference between a shadow thrown by the magic lantern, and a reality. Again I ask, would it not be a natural impulse for any person feeling his shoulder touched, to look behind him immediately, and if he did so, Mr. Home's imposition would fare very badly.

His observations on the formation of raps show an utter ignorance of the subject, for, to my knowledge, a sofa table with drawers is but seldom if ever used for manifestations at *séances*. I have heard raps frequently produced from circular tables, but never from such an one as Mr. Lewis represents; besides, I cannot yet understand how, even with the assistance of drawers, he procures the quick succession of raps as they are generally heard. He also makes it a very

easy matter to lift a table with the feet. No doubt it is, if it be a small coffee or chess table, though at the same time, particularly ungraceful and liable to discovery by any person disposed to examine the matter. Of course I mean it managed in the way represented in the diagram. We will, however, grant him that a small table be lifted by these means, and by a lady, and probably he will inform us that a large table is lifted in the same way, now I should regard it as an extraordinary demonstration of strength in any lady, even with assistance, to lift a large lloo table or a dining table, from the ground steadily upwards. If she did this, she indeed deserves to be termed a physical medium.

Had I the time and wish, I could bring forward a host of these assertions on the part of Mr. Delaware Lewis, but such is not my desire. I think I have said enough to call attention to his paper, and I would advise those who wish to know further of it, to give it the benefit of a perusal. Mr. Lewis is a young aspirant in the field of literature, and no doubt ambitious of fame, but I think it would be wise for him in future to confine his attacks to subjects in which he is better versed than he is in that of Spiritualism.—I am, Sir, yours most obediently,  
A. J. OWEN.

*To the Editor of the "Spiritual Magazine."*

SIR,—I read the letter of S. E. B., headed "Ghosts in Costume," with a friend, J. D., who has been for several years a writing medium. He thought he had something among his memoranda bearing on the subject. Having found it, he gave me leave to copy it.

My friend tells me that the best time for his hand being used as a medium is in the morning on waking. If the writing which may come be of interest, he transcribes it in a note book at his bedside. His memoranda reads as follows:—

"May 15, 1859.—The following communication was made through my hand this morning. After several sentences had been written, I laid down my hand, being vexed by what appeared incoherency; for no sooner was one topic opened than another was introduced. Presently, feeling a new sensation in my arm, I held my hand to be used again: this came:—

" 'What was written was by several spirits.'

"At the same moment there appeared to me a figure, small, as if in perspective, of a man of above middle age, in ordinary garb, but dusty and faded; his hat looked out of shape and as if unbrushed for years, his boots rusty brown, down at heel and turned up at the toes; one hand was carelessly stuck in his pocket, and with the other he held a bulky umbrella, the ribs of which were kept together by a ring, after the fashion of forty years ago. I saw this figure with such minuteness, that I observed his front teeth to be wanting as he spoke the above words—which were not, however, audible, but expressed telegraphically through my right forefinger on to my left hand. In this way I received answers, from this apparent person, to questions. I said:—

" 'Well, have you anything to say?'—'Nothing particularly,' was the answer expressed and communicated, as just mentioned.

" 'What brings you, then?'—'We come about you mediums so as to get to know what is going on in the old world.'

" 'Did you know me?'—'No.'

" 'I don't remember you; were you a Londoner?'—'No; I belonged to one of the Northern Counties.'

" 'When did you leave here?'—'About 1830.'

" 'Well, but what do you want with that umbrella?'—'Oh, I used always to carry it: it was a habit.'

" 'But don't you cast aside a useless habit like that; it must be troublesome now?'—'No; it seems natural. The things we wear according to our taste are as much parts of ourselves as our bodies; old tastes and habits leave us as we get new thoughts. At present I feel comfortable in my old.'

" 'How do you occupy yourself?'—'I go about looking at things, and making observations.'

" 'What, alone?'—'I don't care for company.'

"I have been told that spirits have guides who look after them, and seek to elevate them?"—"Yes, and they come and talk to me sometimes; but they say things that I don't agree with."

"To the next question I put, I received no answer: the figure disappeared, and the writing ceased."

Information as to the costume of spirits must come from spirits. Mediums who record the sayings and appearance of their shadowy visitors deserve the thanks of enquirers: they will be a set off against the sneers bestowed upon them as "dreamers," or worse, by the "world."

I would observe, in conclusion, that it would seem that the individual converts his garb into the most external part of himself, and that—after casting off the concrete external—it remains about him, in thought, for a time,—until his interior state becomes represented by another garb. The quickness or slowness of this change must necessarily depend on many conditions and circumstances.

If it be really so, the subject of the above paper had really on him, and with him, the shapes of clothes and umbrella as stated to be visible to the medium. They were creations of the spirit's mind as his thoughts.

Queen Square, London.

SARAH WELTON.

## Notices of New Books.

*Death Deeds: an Extraordinary Incident connected with Barbadoes.*  
Skeet, King William Street, Charing Cross.

THE displacement of coffins described in our last number, and of which we published a lithograph pictorial representation, has brought to our notice a little work just published with the above ominous title. At this season of the year, our readers are very properly looking out for all the merriest books and carols, so appropriate to the time, and perhaps will be little disposed to purchase what is probably the most lugubrious looking little book which has ever emanated from the press. It is possible that the natural tendency we have towards extremes, may awaken a curiosity to see the most dreary of books, as one would like to see the most beautiful book, and the very worst. We are speaking now only of the outside adornment of the cover, which is firstly plain black, and has then carved on it in white lines the representation of a stout coffin, studded also in white, with the usual rows of nails, and in the broadest part of the lid, is the title in white, "DEATH DEEDS." We have been obliged to hide it from the children, for fear of given them the nightmare.

On opening it we find it to be an elaborate description of the coffin displacement in the burial ground of Christ Church, Barbadoes, of which it gives many particulars omitted in the article in our last number. Amongst other things, it is said that the whole has been corroborated directly to the author, "by the venerable Lord Combermere, who was Governor of the island when the circumstances occurred, and by several others who witnessed the opening of the vault, in 1820." It appears also that the phenomena is not unknown in England; that Lord Chatham's coffin was found upon its side in Westminster Abbey, in 1806, and that there have been various similar displacements, but no instance so remarkable as that at Barbadoes. The moving of the coffins on four previous occasions had, when the vault was opened for the last interment, aroused the whole island, "and the news having reached Government House, his Excellency the Governor, Lord Combermere, stated his intention to be present. Accordingly he attended with his aide-de-camp and staff, and visited the vault. In his presence every part of the floor was sounded, and it was found to be perfectly firm and solid. The walls were next examined, and the three sides, together with the roof and flooring, presented a structure as solid as if formed of entire slabs of stone. The displaced coffins were re-arranged, the new tenant also put in its

place, and when the mourners had retired with the funeral procession, the floor was carefully sanded with fine white sand, in the presence of Lord Combermere and the assembled crowd, and the door placed in its position. With the utmost care the new cement was laid on to secure the door, and when the masons had completed their task, the Governor made several impressions on the cement with his own seal, and many of those attending him added their own private marks."

The general curiosity rose to such a pitch, that it could not wait the next regular opening of the vault, and at the end of nine months and eleven days, namely, on the 18th April, 1820, Lord Combermere obtained permission from the surviving relations to open it. "Barbadoes has seldom witnessed such a gathering. The towns were deserted and thousands hastened to the scene." Lord Combermere arrived—the seals and private marks were examined, and found in their original state. The cement was unbroken, and the large impressions of the Governor's seal were as sharp and perfect as when made, but now hardened into stone. The coffins were then found in the state described in our drawings. "One coffin, which it required seven or eight men to move, was standing upon its head with its feet resting against the middle of the stone door, *yet the sand on the floor bore no trace of footprint, or of having been in any way disturbed.* The coffin of an infant had been hurled with such force against the opposite wall that the corner had left an indentation in the stone wall."

"Lord Combermere directed one of the gentlemen of his staff to make an accurate drawing of the position of the coffins, a copy of which he forwarded to the Colonial Office with his despatch, containing a statement of the occurrence." We should recommend *Punch* to move in Parliament for a copy of the despatch and diagram.

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*Man: Physical, Apparitional, and Spiritual. With Illustrations from the Natural and the Supernatural.* By JOHN JONES. Baillière, Regent Street.

THIS work is now ready. We regret that an affliction of the eyes has, as the author informs us in the Introduction, prevented his giving it that careful supervision which he desired. The prevalent demand for literary finish is stimulated into an almost morbid activity by the high-spiced literature now in fashion. It is not, however, to the fastidious literary critics that this book appeals, but to the seekers after facts, and especially of those facts which have a human interest—which relate to man's well-being, present and future. To such we would commend it as a repertory of facts,—some gathered with great industry from varied sources; others—and we think these deserve most attention—have come under the author's own observation and experience. His experiments on the properties of shells and minerals will be certainly interesting, and to most of our readers, in all probability, new. His view that all bodies in nature have each their own special aura, is fully confirmed by the experiments of Reichenbach, and it doubtless furnishes the key to many things in nature that have hitherto been mysteries. The experience of the writer is fully corroborative of the truth of Spiritualism, of which, indeed, he is an earnest advocate. To this and kindred subjects he has devoted much time and study. He is evidently an independent thinker, unshackled by authority, with very decided convictions, and by no means disposed to place his light under a bushel. It is too much the practice for men to lock up and put away facts and experiences which do not happen to be in fashion, and bring them out only, if at all, before private and very select circles. We think God's facts should be otherwise dealt with, and therefore would welcome all who honestly labour to augment our knowledge or awaken our thought concerning them; and solicit for them a fair and generous hearing. Without endorsing all the author's views and theories, some of which seem rather startling, we think there is much in this work curious and valuable, and hope to be able to find space for some extracts in an early Number.