

THE
Spiritual Magazine.

MARCH, 1869.

THE ANTI-SUPERNATURALISM OF THE
PRESENT AGE.

By the Reverend WILLIAM MOUNTFORD.

It is proposed to consider the subject of miracles as connected with Christianity. And, perhaps, than this, there is no religious topic which has been more variously and strangely treated, during the last century. And this is saying a great deal. For how has it fared with Christianity, and even at the hands of those, sometimes, by whom it has been accounted as the Tree of Life? Often and often, among other anomalous doings, it has been treated as though a gardener should take up a tree and turn it about to humour every change of wind upon it; and as though to prove it to be a living thing, he should lay bare its roots for every questioner, and even paint them, to make them more seemly.

Miracles are the possibilities of a miracle-bearing tree; but commonly they are regarded as though they were some arbitrary manufacture. In the New Testament they are simply called "signs and wonders;" but in this age, among both believers and unbelievers, it is agreed that they are suspensions of the laws of nature, or else are nothing. Miracles presuppose the existence of a spiritual world containing spiritual agents and spiritual forces, with laws peculiar to it, and with some laws also capable of intertwining and inosculating with some of the laws of man's nature and of the material world. And yet often, by even the advocates of their reality, miracles are argued wholly and simply as material occurrences, and quite apart from the philosophy of their nature, and, indeed, as though there were really no such philosophy known. And this is because of the spirit of the age, which is so strong in us all. It is no matter what a man may be,

whether philosopher, theologian, or anything else, almost inevitably, in some way or other, the spirit of the age will have its say through him, and pervert, if not quench his meaning.

No doubt, things have often been credited as miraculous which were no miracles at all. But the precise opposite of credulity is not always wisdom. And if it be said that it is only at Naples that the blood of St. Januarius will liquefy, it may be answered that there has also been such a place as that in which neither would "they be persuaded, though one rose from the dead." And to-day there are eminent places, where men hold that neither their own eyes, nor the eyes of all other persons are to be trusted for a miracle,—or, as they would say, for anything different from the laws of nature. But with all their scepticism, these sceptics do not remember that a law of nature may be one thing, and their notion of that law be something else, or something a little different. But indeed, when incredulity becomes so intense as that, it is self-confounded, self-confuted, even though it should be in regard to such a miracle as that which happened when the axe-head fell into the water, and Elisha "cut down a stick and cast it in thither, and the iron did swim." For, if a man cannot trust his eyes and ears, how can he rely on his doubts? And how does he know but doubting his senses may be an unworthy, untrustworthy act, and even may perhaps be a mere nervous boggling? And how should even a materialist trust the wisdom which has been filtered for him, as he thinks, from outside through his eyes and ears, if he cannot trust his eyes and ears themselves? But, in the spirit of his times or neighbourhood, a man will think and hold what, under other influences, would have been for him only a speculative, tentative position. And because of its being in us and of us, it is the last thing to be suspected as vitiating sound judgment.

It is in this spirit of the age to judge of everything by uniformity, whether as regards the world or mankind. And so from what he understands to be the uniformity of the laws of nature, a man of the time thinks himself competent to check the report of the past, and to decide that there never could have been water changed into wine, nor a demon exorcised, because at this present time water is never seen changing into wine, nor a demon known to be dispossessed of his corporeal lodgings. And because of what he fancies must be the uniformity of human nature, this man of the time thinks, too, that from himself he knows of everybody else, as to what they can have seen or cannot have seen; can have heard or cannot have heard; can have felt or cannot have felt; and in the same way, as differing from himself, he is certain that in the past they must all have been loose

thinkers; and not the Jews only, but the Greeks and Romans too, and even Socrates and Plato, because of their having reasoned about things which he himself has never met with, and which, if he did meet, he would never believe his own eyes about.

It is by availing himself of this temper of the times, that Ernest Renan largely gets his strength as a controversialist. For what he has to say on the subject of miracles would have been but feeble talk anywhere, one or two hundred years ago, and would sound but inanely even to-day in such regions as are clear away from the influence of Paris and London. "A miracle is not to be regarded, because it never could have happened; and because even if, perchance, it had happened, there never could have been any people who could have been believed about it." This, in form, is the argument of Renan. But, of course, it is good only for people of that way of thinking, only for persons sensitive to the spirit of the age, and who are ready to add, without another word, "And so I think, because so I am sure."

The following quotation is from the introductory chapter to "The Apostles," by Ernest Renan: "The first twelve chapters of the Acts are a tissue of miracles. It is an absolute rule in criticism to deny a place in history to narratives of miraculous circumstances; nor is this owing to a metaphysical system, for it is simply the dictation of observation. Such facts have never been really proved. All the pretended miracles near enough to be examined are referrible to illusion or imposture. If a single miracle had ever been proved, we could not reject in a mass all those of ancient history; for, admitting that very many of these last were false, we might still believe that some of them were true. But it is not so. Discussion and examination are fatal to miracles. Are we not, then, authorized in believing that those miracles which date many centuries back, and regarding which there are no means of forming a contradictory debate, are also without reality? In other words, miracles only exist when people believe in them. the supernatural is but another word for faith. Catholicism, in maintaining that it possesses miraculous powers, subjects itself to the influence of this law. The miracles of which it boasts never occur where they would be most effective. Why should not such a convincing proof be brought more prominently forward? A miracle at Paris, for instance, before experienced *savans*, would put an end to all doubt. But, alas! such a thing never happens." But now, oracular though this might be judged by the manner in which it has been bowed to, what is there in it all more than the mere sceptical spirit of the age? What does it

do more than simply tickle the humour of the time? Psychologically, it is a curious passage, because the sweep of its intention is so wide, while the wording of it is like the unconscious, innocent expression of a child. It is as though a boy, as the easier way of settling with a problem in mathematics, should say, "There is nothing in it. There never was anything learned from that direction. O my master! all the best boys have looked at it, and say that there is nothing in it—nothing at all. And so, now, how can there be? And please, even if it be true, it cannot really be, without we let it be." But here it may be asked, whether it is likely that Ernest Renan, as a boy, ever talked in that manner; and to this it may be answered that it is very unlikely, considering that he was born in Brittany. And it is just as unlikely, too, that he could ever have written the preceding quotation from one of his works, but for his education, direct and indirect. For he was born in Brittany—a country of simple, fervent, unquestioning faith as to the Church. Thence he was carried to Paris, and placed in a primary theological school, whence he was passed on to a similar school elsewhere. Having finished with the latter school, he became a resident in the Seminary of St. Sulpice; which indeed, inside, is wholly ordered by members of the Society of Jesus, but on the outside is pressed upon by the light, sceptical, and anti-Christian air of Paris. Ernest Renan had been brought up like a child of the Middle Ages, and then found himself, as a young man, where with a few steps out of doors, he was in the atmosphere of Paris and under the influence of the Sorbonne. And now, with all this, was it not natural that Renan should have become a Rationalistic author instead of a Catholic Priest? And because of his being a simple, earnest, intellectual man, was it not all the more natural still, that by contrast with the air of St. Sulpice, he should mistake for the spirit of truth itself what was but the spirit of the age manifesting itself through a highly-educated class, in a city singularly self-centred and self-sufficient?

But, says the critic here criticised, "A miracle at Paris, before experienced *savans!*" Elsewhere, too, he explains more exactly what would suit him as to a miracle; that it should be wrought under conditions as to time and place, in a hall, and before a commission of physiologists, chemists, physicians, and critics; and that when it had been done once, it should, on request, be repeated. And no doubt, to the writer, this appeared to be a very fair way of dealing with miraculous pretensions; and no doubt, too, of his most emphatic opponents, there are many to whom, in their secret thought, it would be a puzzle, if such a proposition had been made to Jesus at Jeru-

saalem, why it should not have been accepted at once for the market-place or the court of the temple. For Renan is simply strong in that way of looking at things which is characteristic of this present age, and which commonly is called sceptical, but which, also, sometimes is called practical and even business-like. Not jocosely, but in all seriousness, every now and then are put forth and read invitations to the miraculous, such as that which Ernest Renan makes. One man writes in abstract, scientific terms, and another in plain English; but both one and the other mean the same thing. "Let miracles come to me in my study, and shew themselves inside of my crucible, while my friends are all standing round, and at the moment exactly when it shall be said that we are all ready, and then I will believe; though of course, even then, I should not be absolutely forced to give in, but still I should, I think. And now what do you say to that?" And there really is nothing to say to it. Martin Luther indeed said once, what probably he would have remarked again, if he had heard this scientific, common-sense proposal, that for certain, sometimes, over some of his creatures God Almighty must laugh.

But now, as to miracles, it is not pretended that they are absolutely at the ordering of any man, as to time and place. But indeed is it so that science treats a subject even less foreign to its own domain than miracles?

Are earthquakes as facts, accounted incredible, as not occurring at a time and a place known beforehand, and submissive to the directions of men with clocks and spirit levels, and with magnetic and other machines all ready for use? And indeed a miracle coming to order, would scarcely be a miracle. For, coming to order patiently, punctually, and as a scientific certainty, it would by that very fact have parted probably with something essential to its nature as commonly understood.

But really a Kamtschatkan, unmitigated and simple, arguing with Ernest Renan on Sanscrit, could not shew himself more insensible as to the laws of philology than Renan shews himself on the subject of miracles; for he is utterly unconscious, apparently, of there being any philosophy connected with them, and of there being laws as to miracles, known more or less by some men in all ages, and as certain as gravitation.

But it may be asked how this can be, Renan being a very sensible writer. And so a man may write well on geometry and yet shew himself to be very stolid as to poetry, and even also as to those thoughts akin to the spiritual universe, which are suggested by the strange properties of numbers, or which come in upon the mind like corollaries on the demonstration of certain problems. Thus, even by his constitution, Renan may have a

strong, keen, serviceable, excellent sense of the life which Jesus lived as other men live, and yet be utterly insensible to the life of Jesus Christ, as fed by the Spirit, and going out in miracles, and incapable of seeing corruption. But indeed for his manner of writing, the spirit of his age abundantly accounts just as it accounts for some of the more fervent of his admirers, who like in his writings what is weakest as much as what is best.

Of what use, it is asked, can miracles ever have been among people not fit to be believed about them, such as were the people of old time and the people of the Middle Ages, and such as are all the people of the provinces of France, and men of the people and men of the world everywhere? For, as Renan says, neither men of the world nor men of the people are "capable of establishing the miraculous character of an act." An act is as he says, any act, any miraculous act, and not merely some very recondite thing hard to notice. This is one of those general statements which often pass unchallenged, because nobody thinks that they are intended to apply to him; but it is not, therefore the less mischievous. Perhaps there is not a man of the world who allows this opinion, as he reads it, but thinks, though he is no physician and has never been publicly recognized as critic, chemist, or physiologist, that somehow, certainly, he must have science and art enough for being one of Renan's judges of the miraculous, and must have been intended, indeed, to be included amongst them. Physicians, physiologists, men of criticism and chemistry, men of science, the only competent judges as to miracles! For some conceivable miracles, they might be; but for some others detective policemen would be far better witnesses. And, for still some other miracles that men of the world, as judges, are inferior to chemists, this is a sentiment which can come only from scientific folly, or from much learning gone mad. As to whether the true magnetic pole could be made to swerve for a moment in the heavens, professional men would be the better and perhaps the only proper judges. But men of the people and men of the world are as good judges as men of science on a miracle like this, which occurred in the wilderness: "His disciples say unto him, Whence should we have so much bread in the wilderness, as to fill so great a multitude? And Jesus saith unto them, How many loaves have ye? And they said, Seven, and a few little fishes. And he commanded the multitude to sit down on the ground. And he took the seven loaves and the fishes, and gave thanks and brake them, and gave to his disciples, and the disciples to the multitude. And they did all eat and were filled; and they took up of the broken meat that was left seven baskets full. And they that did eat were five thousand men, beside women and children."

But now what a want of taste and feeling it seems not to pause here for a little while, after such a glimpse into Galilee at that wonderful time. But it is not permitted, as the world now is, to those who know it theologically. For in comes on the mind the recollection of David F. Strauss, the famous writer on the Gospels, who says himself that he cannot believe in a miracle until he has had a solution of the philosophical views which he entertains against the possibility of such a thing. So that with him, even seeing would not be believing, unless, by good luck, there were some sophist standing by, more cunning than himself, who could unloose for him in his mind the knots of his own tying. Any man, down in the depths of learning, or up on the heights of science, in a difficulty of that kind, is to be pitied, because of the pains which he must have taken, before he could get there in his senses. But, now for David F. Strauss himself, pity is not the word, but sympathy. And the sympathy to be felt for him is profound, and as though for a pioneer in the grand advance of civilization, who had got bewildered in a thicket, and at whose position only they can laugh who cannot even faintly conjecture what it is to try a step forwards in theology under religious responsibility. Still, however, it is a certainty that such an avowal as that which Strauss makes of himself is the self-exposure of "philosophy falsely so called."

And now let us consider the arguments against the supernatural, from the uniformity of human nature. At present, almost everybody feels the force of it more or less, and not the less unduly, often, because unconsciously. But as a dogmatic position, it is commonly assumed by persons belonging to two very different classes,—by studious, scholarly men, and by people who call themselves self-made men, and who boast themselves of having been sharpened by collisions with their fellows. Human nature, it is supposed, is everywhere and always the same, and as uniform as a law of nature; so as that everybody knows of himself whether a spirit has ever been seen anywhere, or a vision ever been had, or a miraculous cure ever been experienced. Now, certainly, human nature is everywhere human. But then what is this humanity? For, before beginning to deny from it as a ground, it should be absolutely certain how far the ground reaches. Plainly, we are not all the equals of Plato, or Solomon, or Newton. And if now and then individuals have proclaimed themselves sensitive to a world of spirit, it would hardly seem to be a greater variation in human nature than what is common in every city, where one man wallows in the mire of sensuality, while another feeds on fruits ripened on the topmost boughs of the tree of knowledge. And certainly a seer does not vary from a Troglodyte more than Plato does, and

so why should he not be believed in, on good evidence as to his character?

But, indeed, for those who hold that man is body and spirit, why should it be incredible that there should be varieties of spiritual experience among men, considering that some men do nothing but live to the body, while others live earnestly to the spirit?

If there be a spirit in man, and a spirit with the powers of a spirit, why should it be reckoned a thing impossible that it should make itself more distinctly felt in one man than another? And why should it be beyond belief or expectation even, that now and then there should be a person with whom some faculty of the spirit should be more than dormantly alive?—the eye for spirits even, if any should be near; the ear for more than mortal sounds; and the spiritual understanding for a prompting other than that of flesh and blood? But the fact is, that the anti-supernaturalism of our times is the result of thought akin to materialism. And from this effect of materialism very few persons are wholly exempt. For even the partizans of a spiritual theology argue it commonly like materialists,—argue it as though it were some field of nature, reaching out of sight, indeed, but to be pronounced upon from familiar analogies. Even those who rank themselves farthest from the professors of materialism, shew themselves to be inwardly affected by it, from their unwillingness to have spirit defined in any other way than negatively. They say that spirit is not substance, because matter is substantial; that spirit cannot be known of by men, because though they may be spirit themselves, they can learn only through the five senses; and that spirit cannot act upon matter, because it cannot touch it, from the want of some property in common with it. So that, for some fervent disciples of a spiritual philosophy, spirit is not much more than the indefinable. The universality of the materialism of the age is illustrated by the manner in which even the immaterialists agree with their opposites on some most important points of denial and disbelief. Some of them talk reverentially of George Fox and his doctrine and experience of the spirit; but they resolutely ignore all the signs and wonders in his history, which by Fox himself are ascribed to the spirit. Others of them hold the writings of Jacob Boehme like oracles of spirituality, while they treat like an idle, unmeaning preface the assertion prefixed to one of them, that it was not written out of his mind, but from thoughts which forced an utterance through him from the spirit. And still others of them affect Plotinus, as a great spiritual teacher; but they shut their eyes on the intercourse with spirits which he held, and on his experiences of the ecstatic state.

A man may hold the creed of his sect or party ever so firmly, but yet his thought will be largely governed by what he can never quite escape from,—the spirit of his age. And narratives or doctrines of the supernatural, in a time like this, can be at best only just not rejected. At present, in meditative stillness, spiritual perception may be attained, but out in the world it fails at once, from being stifled by the atmosphere of the world's common thought.

True, thousands and tens of thousands of clergymen preach the supernatural, and millions of persons, week by week, sit and hear them. But this is not evidence of faith, any more than the discords, deceits, and discontent, the treacheries, sensualities, and blasphemies of Monday are proofs of what was preached and acquiesced in, on Sunday. I suppose that nearly every learned and thoughtful clergyman might express himself in something like this manner, "I am one of His witnesses for these things. I see that they were so, and are so. And yet, strange to say, I cannot preach as I feel; or, rather, I cannot make my hearers feel what I wish to preach. And the sermon, which I thought was full of the arrows of the Lord, hits no one where I aim, and is indeed no more than the 'lovely song of one that hath a pleasant voice, and can play well on an instrument.'" And more than that, the sermon does not sound like the same thing, even to himself. And the words, which, while they were meditated in secret, were fraught with the Spirit, being uttered in public, do not reach the spiritual man, but only the ear of the natural man, and are powerless except as they may chance to be approved by the intellect, testing them by logic, rhetoric, history, and some of the natural sensibilities. And the reason is very simple, for the atmosphere of the world and of a worldly church is not that of a Christian study, with its windows opening towards Jerusalem. And even a preacher may be really "in the Spirit on the Lord's day;" but he must be very happily constituted if he does not find that, with crossing the street, on his way to the pulpit, the Spirit has been more or less quenched within him. And, from exchanging looks with his hearers, he is conscious that he is not quite what he was, while in presence with the fathers, in sympathy with Jeremy Taylor, and in fellowship with Baxter and Doddridge,—while sharing so in the communion of the saints. Partly his rationalistic dogmas and forms of speech do not admit fully of either the doctrines or the utterance of the Spirit; and partly, what utterance of the Spirit his words suffice for, often his hearers are not capable of receiving; because in them the sense of the supernatural is very commonly almost suspended; and so "they seeing, see not; and hearing, they hear not; neither do they understand." And

with the people, as well as the preacher, all this is not so much their fault as their misfortune,—the tendency of the time which they belong to, and which it is not possible to quite escape. And this tendency, this spirit of the age, is not of yesterday merely, but of previous ages,—an effect of the manner in which the souls of men have been stupefied by the astounding disclosures of science, and a result, too, of the ordinary modes of religious administration having been persisted in, without the slightest modification, since the days when they were the agony of George Fox's soul, and the scorn of Robert Barclay's logic; and in part, also, a consequence of altered ways of life, the growth of luxury, the increasing subordination of the individual to the body politic, and the predominance of the peculiar influences of the city over those of the country.

Perhaps never before has there been as much unbelief innocent in its origin, as there is at present. In former ages, widely prevalent unbelief has been caused by moral corruption. But the peculiar scepticism of the present age is not so desperate as that. It is not mainly of the heart, and thus the issues of life are not thereby corrupted, as they otherwise might be. And so at present, in their inmost hearts, men have really more faith than they themselves think. And often it is observed that, apparently, while sickness thins away the body, there is also a mental incrustation which gives way, too, and through which the soul seems to look out with a sweet surprise, and a glad sense of the God, who is nearer than was thought. If it may be so expressed, it is for the comfort of the strong more than even of the dying, that faith, at the present day, needs to be strengthened. What general uneasiness there is theologically! Every church is opposed to every other church, and yet also is divided against itself. And the same want of faith or satisfying conviction is largely evident in individuals. Vast numbers are simply acquiescent in their creeds, and timidly recoil from even learning about them. And how often it is to be seen, that if an individual thinks for himself, he is at one time zealous for ceremonies, and at another time resolute against them, as embarrassing crutches; and is a believer in mainly one article of his creed, one year, and another article another year. And from those hearts, which best know themselves, what an unceasing prayer must be rising, from closet to closet, from church to church, from town to town, all round the world, "Lord, I believe; help thou mine unbelief!" The unbelief which is specially of this age, is so far from being atheistic, that it even prays. For such atheism as is possible now, is what really may be confuted within the range of the mind of a child. Indeed, the unbelief of our time is mainly anti-supernaturalism, or more

precisely, perhaps, anti-spiritualism. It is not, however, a denial of the angels any more than of God. But exactly it denies that man, as a class of creatures occupying that particular place in the universe which is the kingdom of nature, is liable to be visited by any other creatures, whether higher or lower, not also denizens of nature. It denies, too, that there are any other avenues to the human mind than what the anatomist can indicate with his scalpel; denies, therefore, that the human spirit is open to be acted upon by the Holy Ghost, as in the early days of Christianity; and denies, too, that men are ever approachable in any way, or for any purpose whatever, or ever so slightly, by angel, spirit, or devil. The denial runs thus, "As to spirit, I have never seen it, and I will believe it when I have. And, what is more, I never have heard of any one, worthy of belief, who ever did see a spirit. When I am told about my head or my hand, I know what is talked about; but about spirit I know nothing, nor anybody else, either; and my common sense tells me the same thing. And that God has given me common sense, I do know. I do not mean to say that we shall not live again; but I mean to say that at present spirit is what my common sense knows nothing about; and I am for common sense." True; but uncommon things may require an uncommon sense, or rather a sense which is too commonly fast asleep. For the purposes of the natural man, which are common sense, the faculties of the natural man suffice; but things which are of God, or which look towards Him, are not discerned so. Says St. Paul, "Now we have received not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit which is of God, that we might know the things which are freely given to us of God."

Often, in the very arguments which they employ, persons writing in defence of the Christian miracles evince their own latent anti-supernaturalism. Continually, in theological works, miracles are defended as realities by those who have no perception whatever of spiritual laws, and no sense whatever of the miraculous. How infected by materialism a person may be, who fancies himself to be very spiritual in his views, is shown in the attempt which frequently is made to render miracles credible by analogy with Babbage's Calculating Machine. This wonderful machine is said to work accurately through a long series of figures, till suddenly it throws up a number which is out of order, and which cannot be accounted for, but which, it is supposed, may possibly result from some undiscovered law of mathematics. And it is gravely suggested that, in obedience to some occult property, the great machine of nature has here and there, and especially about Palestine, stopped its regularity for an instant, and thrown out a miracle, at a time fore-ordained in

the making of the clockwork. Anything rather than suppose the intervention of God, or angel, or spirit! Anything rather than a miracle, as being out of the order of nature, even though really it should be in the order of heaven! A thousand miracles of the strangest origin may be brought in at the back gate, if only they can be used for barring the front door of the intellect against admitting the possibility of signs and wonders having ever been fresh from heaven,—ever having been supernatural, willed, that is to say, in the spiritual world, outside of nature, and at the very seasons respectively of their being shown.

By certain professors of theology there has been lately published an explanation of the day of Pentecost, as having been a day of misunderstanding among the frightened apostles, in consequence of there having been an earthquake, which they thought was a mighty rushing wind, in the house where they were sitting. And the speaking with other tongues, at which the foreigners were amazed, is argued to have been altogether a mistake, and in keeping with the impenetrable darkness plainly discernible in the ingenious but excusable manner in which the Acts of the Apostles are narrated, up to the day of Pentecost, from the resuscitation of Christianity, whenever and whatever that may have been.

The operation of the spirit by its gifts, as described by St. Paul, tests Scriptural expositors very curiously. One says, virtually, that it means what it means, without attempting to realize it in any way. Another sees into not only the credibility but also the philosophy, of the various gifts; and yet, as even Neander does, finds the gift of tongues to be unintelligible and improbable. And a third expositor teaches that the gifts of the spirit are simply natural endowments; that coveting earnestly the best gifts is merely attempting self-culture; and that by the gift of tongues is to be understood not a power for speaking languages, foreign or unknown, but the interjectional, broken utterance of a man choking with emotion. The spiritual blindness of the age is such, that often there is not much more light to be perceived in the Church than there is out of it. And everywhere, too, and in every section of the Church, are to be seen blind leaders of the blind; and continually one or other of them looks up, and with authority says some such thing as that the gift of tongues means broken utterance, that is really an inability to speak.

The anti-supernaturalism of our time is shown, again, in the state of feeling which generally exists on prayer, the Holy Spirit, and on everything else which supposes either that the spiritual world can open in upon the soul, or the soul open out

on that. Of modern treatises on the nature, operation, and effects of the Holy Ghost, the best which can be said is, as Coleridge expresses it, that they believe that they believe. They believe, indeed, but with a faith which has never realized itself. Why is it that so rarely the Scriptural doctrine of prayer is enforced, except by such men as preach everything which is written, and everything alike? Why is it that so commonly men pray by the way of duty merely, and with no sense of the Divine bosom to lean against? Why is it that so many good men pray only the prayer of self-recollection before God, and never the prayer of faith? Why is it that they go through their daily supplications as a spiritual exercise, but never both delighted and trembling at once, feel their souls in that state when they not only speak but are spoken to, when they not only humble themselves, but are lifted up? And in almost any church, anywhere, why is it that it feels as though the heavens overhead were like brass, but that men's hearts fail them for fear, lest praying with the apostles, they should be really hoping against the laws of nature? There is hardly anything which is more foreign to our modern ways of thinking than that a sensible sick man should ever have thought to be the better for calling the elders to pray over him. Says the apostle, "The prayer of faith shall save the sick." But to-day faith feels itself powerless for such a prayer, being benumbed by the phrase "laws of disease." And yet the very same persons who would scout a miraculous cure of the Middle Ages, because of the laws of disease being as inviolable as the bands of Orion or the law of gravitation, these same persons continually forget themselves, and allow or assert that the will of the patient helps on a cure. But, in doing this, they indicate the way exactly in which a miracle is to them incredible. For their objection to believing in a miracle, is precisely because it implies a hand thrust into nature from outside of it; is because it implies the will and action of some one, not of this world, God, angel, or spirit.

It is an old proverb, "Like people, like priest." Of course instances to the contrary must be allowed for; and then it may be said that the spirit of the age preaches from every pulpit. Nor can this be reasonably expected to be otherwise, unless the preachers should at least be all men of rare genius, or have been educated in some other earth than this. The spirit of the age is like the atmosphere; it reaches men everywhere, as they sit at the fireside or in the lecture-room, and as they wander in solitude or kneel in the closet. And with breathing it, when baleful at all, there are very few persons, if any, who can resist being injured by it. And notwithstanding creeds and articles

of admission, it is yet no more to be shut out of church than air is. And if it could be so excluded, then the remedy of intellectual suffocation would itself be worse than the disease. And thus everywhere among the clergy, when they utter themselves, is manifested something of the same anti-supernatural, anti-spiritual state of mind as what plagues other people. It is true, that the doctrines of supernaturalism are almost universally preached, but a discernor of spirits judges not only from doctrine, but also from the manner in which it is developed. And a preacher, may set forth doctrines of a supernatural character and support them by arguments from history and logic, and he may grace them, too, with rhetoric, and lend them also a sincere utterance, and yet have no lively sense of the miraculous, nor much perception of the spiritual, of which miracles are a manifestation. Miracles are for signs; but they are no proper signs, unless there be in us some faculty or mental state to which they signify. A miracle, believed merely from the force of testimony, and from simply the same state of mind which believes in the reports of the diving bell, is not rightly believed, is not believed in the right way, is not believed from the spiritual state from which it ought to be believed, and through which only is it of any good. And that state of feeling is conscious of susceptibilities of its own, and of an order higher than that of nature, and of relations to high answering purposes in God, through which there is not a soul but may possibly be vouchsafed a miracle,—and not a neighbourhood but may have the Spirit poured out upon it.

In order to have the miracles of the Bible answer better the purpose of doctrinal proofs, the theologians of this century have often largely availed themselves of the spirit of the times, for the prejudices which it prompts against the possibility of the supernatural in any other locality or age than the Scriptural. But now Chubb, Toland and Anthony Collins were unbelievers; and yet they were harmless men compared with the hapless clergyman who thinks to uphold the miracles of the Holy Scriptures by denying the possibility of any others. He may not know the mischief of his course, but his successor will inevitably develope it.

On the evidences of Christianity, there is an argument often made, according to which one well-attested ghost story would countervail all the angels who have ever visited this earth, whether singly or in hosts, and all the words of the Lord which have ever come to prophets, and all the miracles of Jesus and his apostles, and all the visions of John the Divine. But Richard Baxter knew better what he was arguing about than perhaps any English controversialist of this day, and his manner of

arguing was the very opposite of that. For he published two collections of narratives of supernatural occurrences in his own time, which had been attested to him as being true, by the persons to whom they happened, or else had been vouched for, as well authenticated, by friends whose judgment he thought he could trust. Such histories were becoming unfashionable in his day, but Baxter saw clearly and published, that to yield the credibility of such things to the sceptics, was blindly to betray Christ to the Sadducees.

Let facts be facts, and good evidence be evidence everywhere, or truth can never be itself. Christianity will never be itself while disciples fear for its fate, or feel it necessary to argue among themselves as to its essence. As an inheritance from the past, the gospel is defensible easily and perfectly; and, when it is itself, it is its own sufficient evidence. But, even as Jesus in his own country had to marvel at unbelief, and "could there do no mighty work," so might Christianity now, in its own country, complain of unbelief, not as directed upon itself, but, worse than that, as general anti-spiritual sentiment, weakening the air, so as that the soul of man can get no breath nor strength, nor can think freely, nor look clearly into the past, nor hope for what is offered it from above, nor trust even its own faculty for receiving.

In those in whom it is strongest, the spirit of the age boasts itself against all the ages of the past, as being unworthy of credit on the greatest things which they have to tell about, and as being incapable, incompetent witnesses on even some very simple subjects of observation. And this it does, notwithstanding that, though calling itself the spirit of this enlightened age, it is the avowed spirit of perhaps not one person in a hundred. Every now and then comes forth some one, who says aloud, after this manner, "I know it, and also every man living, knows by his own eyes and ears, that there has nothing ever been known of the spiritual world—not a word from it even, not a miracle. That there is a state, a region, a fountain-head, a something of spirit, it is now agreed shall be considered as certain. But that anybody knows, or ever has known more about it than anybody else, is nonsense. I am myself the standard by which you may measure Abraham the patriarch; and as to his visions, they were merely dreams, such as I have myself. I am the measure of the man Paul. And, you may believe me, as to voice or light from heaven ever having come to him at the time of his conversion, that it was not so. Simply, at that time, he had an attack of vertigo, such as we all know something about. Oh, the glorious freedom of the spirit, by which I am free to ignore the weary past, so hard to understand, with its miracles and its histories! Oh, the glorious clearing of the mind, by

which now, in my view, there is nothing higher anywhere than the level of my own experience! Oh, what a comfort it is to have miracles shrink into common earthly things, and to know that nobody has ever seen them, any more than I have!" This would seem to be odd comfort; but there are persons whose needs it would seem to meet, because, perhaps, of some particular stand-point or turn, at which they have stopped on their path as enquirers.

The spirit of the age! Just as it is of this age precisely, so certainly is it but a bubble on that stream of spirit which comes down through all the ages of the past, and which will run on for men and through them, till they all on earth shall be no more. Soon, of the self-gratulation and self-glorification of the spirit of the time, all that will remain as palpable effect, will be a few very curious lines in the History of Man.

As certainly as the pendulum swings from side to side, as certainly as feeling is subject to revulsion, as certainly as man walks by one step to the right and another step to the left, so surely will the child born this year see in his generation, as a class, the merest men of science to be reverent believers, not only in the supernatural of the Scriptures, but because of analogy, curious students also in the idolatries of Egypt, Greece, and Rome, and interested even in the superstition of the tribes of Africa, as seeming to suggest the possibility of some singular variations from the commonly received opinion as to spiritual influx.

This world of ours,—this world of our eyes, and of the optical, electric, and other instruments, with which our eyes are helped,—this world of our bodily senses has circumfused about it and permeating it a world of spirit, as to which philosophy conjectures confidently, and which faith is sure of, and as effects resulting from which experience tells of miracles. It may be that in some, perhaps even in many respects, this world may be the antitype of that world invisible; and it may be, as Plotinus has said, that we human beings are the dregs of the universe; but even if it should be so, between us dregs and the wine above there may be a great difference by inferiority, but there must also be a great likeness. To that spiritual world and this world of ours at least there is one thing in common, a great thing,—the company of vanished friends we have had, who know of our wants and ways and wishes, and, at least, who wonder about us. Between us here and them over there, on some points there there must be affinity. And it may be, as sometimes philosophy has taught, that the atmosphere of that world, or rather, perhaps, an effluent, diffusive effect from it, may be necessary to our consciousness as thinking beings, just as the atmosphere

of this earth is the breath which we draw in common with other earthly creatures, such as cats, dogs, and horses. It may be so; and even should it be, that atmosphere of influences might be expected commonly to be imperceptible, and only very rarely to be distinctly noticeable, and strikingly so only in things which at once are denominated miraculous. But, whatever may be the philosophy of the connection between the world invisible of spirit and this visible world of us people in the flesh, that connection exists.

It is true that above and beyond the ordinary experience of mankind there is an influence sometimes felt, of which the effects are what is called miraculous, or wonder-causing; and in the strength of which, it is possible that a common man might shew himself like an angel, for wisdom; and, with stretching out his hand, have it answer like the finger of God for miracles; and have indeed the inborn, latent faculties of his spirit so quickened as that both his words and deeds together would be like signs and wonders from heaven. And, it is true that the outgoings of this world are capable of being quickened by power from the world invisible, so as that a man might be converted from sin to holiness in a moment; and a man that is a leper be restored in an instant; and even in such a manner as that a dead man in the tomb might hear and come forth; and so as that in a vessel, water might be so affected as that upon it might occur instantaneously what could otherwise only be the result of slow processes in the earth, on the vine, and at the wine-press, and afterwards. It is true, also, that now and then in the process of the ages there have been seasons in which, from the outpouring of the Spirit, young men have seen visions, and old men have dreamed dreams, which were signs and wonders, and proofs of that higher order of things which mortals belong to.

It is true that, from outside of the circle of human nature, there are influences for human spirits such as those which once for a simple maiden quickened forethought into the power of prophecy, and made strong feeling be the outgoing of angelic power, and caused the life of a peasant-girl of Domremy to become the career of Jean d' Arc; and such as those, with the experience of which George Fox grew to be a prophet and the mouthpiece of power from above; and under the sense of which John Wesley was wrought up to the recognition of spiritual marvels which the multitude could not believe, and at which still the majority can only laugh,—influences by which every now and then persons are able to affirm, some that they have felt themselves called, warned, or comforted; others, that they have been inspired for work such as otherwise they could only have wondered at and never have done; others, that they have

been conscious of having been guarded in times of exposure, sometimes by angels in form, and sometimes by tendencies started upon them, angelic as to their ends; and others, who have known, like Paul, what it is to be lifted up above the beggarly element of mere law into that liberty with which Christ has made men free,—the liberty of the Spirit,—which, indeed, as to the ends of service, is stricter than even the letter of the law, and which sometimes works on the mind of a person with all its power at once,—a manifold power which makes itself felt simultaneously as conviction for sin, absolution by grace, inspiration from above, and acceptance with God.

It is true that the Waldenses are worthy of belief, and that they believe that among them, at certain periods in their history, have been events sensibly pointed by the finger of God on their behalf. It is true that in the Cevennes, when the Huguenots were nearly in the last agony from persecution, there opened among them a power, by which the machinations of their enemies afar off were sometimes disclosed to them, as though by sudden revelation to one or other of their members,—a power which clothed them with such terror as that almost in the manner of the old promise, one of them could chase a thousand; and so as that, indeed, a mere handful of men, as they were, they resisted for years, and successfully, the concentrated armies of France; a power which, going out from a speaker, made even Catholic enemies succumb and confess themselves; a power which often uttered itself from the mouths of little children; a power through which they believed many times, and where it is impossible to think that there can have been mistakes, that there were let in upon their mortal ears the songs of the hosts of heaven. It is true that men worthy of all credence have testified of experiences by which the early history of the Church of Scotland is not unlike a continuation of the Book of Acts. And it is true that, by what the Spirit has been and has done amongst them, the Friends have been justified in trusting to it. It is true that, even in these latter centuries, there have been branches of the Church which have blossomed with the marvels of ancient times, because of the Spirit which has been in them. And it is true that still and now, there are good reasons for trusting and expecting the Spirit.

It is true, and the saints of all ages cannot have been deceived, or been self-deceived, as to what they felt and trusted; the martyrs who, one after another, laid down their lives for Christ, until they became a great army; the fervent spirits, like Augustine, who tried one way of life and another, till at last, with turning about, their souls caught the light, at which they rejoiced with trembling; the scholars like Thomas Aquinas,

who, with studying themselves as to the natural, became but the more persuaded as to a something that touched, or held, or drew, or whispered them that was supernatural; or students like Cudworth, who gathered up the experiences of the ages, and the thoughts of all great writers, as to what of a spiritual nature had ever been known or felt, and who gazed upon it till they saw the Intellectual System of the Universe take shape in it; and hosts after hosts of gentle souls, such as Madame Guion and the poet Cowper, who tasted, as they thought, of the powers of the world to come. It is true that, except when it gets impeded and disbelieved, there is an opening between this world and the next as it is called, by which comes the Holy Ghost, and through which it may be that sometimes we, some of us, are approachable by various occult influences, some of a high origin, and others of a nature not so good. And it is true that there are good reasons for believing that when Christians can pray again as Christians used to do, and have fitted themselves by acts of faith for seeing it, that there will be felt the approach of a day which, with its coming, will assimilate still more nearly than at present the lives of modern disciples to the experiences of the saints of all ages.

One swallow does not make a summer, nor does one Christian make a church. A believer separated from his fellows by convictions which they do not share; a man living apart from the sin about him, in loneliness; a woman shrinking from unsympathetic contact, and dwelling in seclusion with her own heart,—for these all there is communion with God by the Spirit. But there is an answer from above which is specially for the prayer of two or three. And on an age of controversy separating believers from one another, even though through it there should be higher and better ground to be reached, there is an irremediable, unavoidable drawback attendant,—the loss of the unity of the Spirit. The joy which a man has in common with a multitude is not the same joy which he has all to himself in his closet. And, however a man may be sanctified by the Holy Spirit, through religious experiences apart from his neighbours, yet should he ever become one with a great body, wherein by that same Spirit all the members are assimilated to one another and harmonized together, he would feel a triumphant joy quite new to him, and he would have such a sweet confidence of God's love to men everywhere and in every state, as would be for him like a new sense of salvation.

Fearful is the penalty which the holiest of dissenters incur, and sometimes without knowing it, and even while, perhaps,

it is the voice of Christ from heaven which they obey; but they do not go without compensation from the grace of God, nor yet without that crown which is specially vouchsafed for the martyrs. But yet so it is, that in the Church of Christ, with losing the unity of the Spirit, or the Holy Spirit in common, there is a great, grievous loss.

The Spirit may be quenched, in the present age, from one cause and another, as so largely it is; but it can re-assert itself. If to-day be clouded by scepticism, to-morrow may be broad daylight from a "sun with healing on its wings." And if in this age, because of sectarianism, Christians can hardly be what they ought to be, as to faith, hope, and charity, in the next age, perhaps, divisions will have ceased altogether. It may be asked, perhaps, how such a thing as that can ever be hoped for. And certainly it cannot be expected humanly, as though from controversies argued out. But, even as Jesus Christ, after his resurrection, appeared among his disciples suddenly, while the doors were shut, so perhaps, will it be that the various churches of Christendom, which to-day have their doors shut against one another, will sometime find themselves all included in one great fold, by the manner in which, through the spirit, Christ will manifest himself, so as to be recognised of all, in one church and another, irrespectively of their walls of separation.

And at that time,—oh, dear anticipation, sure though as the heavens themselves, however far off,—at that time Christians will know one another, almost without a word, because of the spirit; and with assembling together they will feel joy in the Holy Ghost, such as at present public worship stirs but rarely. In meditation, also, because of the ease with which men will apprehend spiritual things, it will be as though they "were all taught of God." And while inquiring in some particular direction, where there is no seeing for the eye, and no hearing for the ear,—strange and holy experience, which only the holiest hearts are fit for!—while so inquiring, often for the natural man the darkness will yield to a light not of this world, nor of mere reason, but of the spirit quickening him from within, by which man sees what he could not otherwise have seen, and understands what is only to be spiritually apprehended; "for the spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God."

Strange and incomprehensible language this is for many persons. But yet it means what is the same thing as the words, "Draw nigh to God, and he will draw nigh to you;" that is drawing nigh to God, as a God to be met, for that is his nature, and meet you He will. Men, too, are encouraged to hope even

more than that and to believe that God will help our helplessness, and inform our ignorant prayers, if we will let Him. "Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities; for we know not what we should pray for as we ought; but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered." And now again, because of this age which we live in, does this text seem to need still further translation? It means that there is direct action of God upon the soul, and which a man may yield to or resist; and that that operation is not merely such force as that by which the eagle lives, or the pulse beats, but rather is like the presence of a dear father on his son, in a time of trouble, by which the child feels himself fill with courage and grow strangely quick of apprehension.

In the next age, when men shall have learned how and where to find themselves; when they shall have escaped from the bewildering effects of human science imperfectly mastered and disproportionately esteemed; when they shall have come to see how this earth revolves, and may yet very well have been visited by angels at times; when science, in some great professor, shall have been baptised by the spirit, then will begin great and multitudinous effects to ensue; and because of the spirit of the times then, science will grow poetic with rainbow beauties, and poetry will grow towards prophecy, from the deeper strain which will be in it of spiritual and eternal truth. It will sing familiarly in a style which Milton reached only a few times, which Æschylus just knew of, and which more exactly will be as though King David should have returned to chant from his heavenly experience fresh psalms for his friends on earth.

Also, under the influence of the Spirit from on high, social problems, which now seem to be hopeless, will become very easy of solution. For, when people shall wish to stand right before God, when they shall be willing to let their hearts be drawn and draw them, it will be wonderful in all righteousness how soon and naturally and easily they will find themselves standing towards one another very much as they ought to do. With a general experience of the spirit, yet no greater than there is to-day of scepticism,—but with such an experience of the spirit what is there socially which might not be hoped for? Since, because of the spirit in common, there will be a feeling,—of exactly the opposite origin, however, from communism,—there will be a feeling with the rich for letting their wealth run to common uses as far as prudence and political economy and the state of the world will allow; like the impulse for having all things in common which was felt by the first Christians during the first few days after Pentecost. And things which at

present are continually being reformed, and always to no purpose; things invincible to reason and incapable of being corrected by utilitarian philanthropy, will yield at once to the sweet, subtle effects of that spirit, by which believers will feel themselves all "baptized into one body," and by which they will know themselves for glory and shame, for joy and sorrow, to be really and vitally "members one of another."

There are some special causes of scepticism to-day, which in perhaps the next age, will have ceased almost altogether. And, in that better temper of the times, Christianity as the work of Christ through the Spirit, will manifest itself still more distinctly than it does to-day. It is oddly characteristic of these times that, as regards the gospel, men are more dutiful than believing. They act out of a higher spirit than they are quite sure of. "Lord, I believe; help thou mine unbelief!" This precisely is their state of mind. With their hearts they believe, but not quite, not altogether with their minds. They would believe wholly but for an accident in social progress,—a temporary humour,—the mere spirit of the age.

But already signs are visible of a new period, and with its arrival fresh purpose will be felt from "the powers of the world to come;" and God will be known more dearly as a mighty fatherly Presence about us and awaiting us; and by every believing heart Christ will be more tenderly felt as its personal friend; and by every bereaved and suffering spirit more vividly still than now will be felt across the grave the communion of saints.

And, because there have been wonders in the past, they will not, perhaps, be wanting to the glory of the future; and again, it may be, will the gifts of the Spirit subserve the work of the Spirit in the Church; and one man find himself preternaturally quickened in wisdom for the benefit of his fellows; and another, by the way of prophecy, become like the mouthpiece of thought from outside of this world; and another, by reason, perhaps, of some personal and fitting peculiarity, be known as a channel of healing power for the afflicted; and still another from perhaps some special susceptibility, be remarkable for the faith that will possess him, and through him that will strengthen the brethren.

These are things which we may never see, perhaps, but yet as mere possibilities, they have some meaning for us. It is for human beings and not for any other creatures, that the order of nature is orderly. And when signs and wonders are vouchsafed on earth, it is only to men that they are significant at all. And no doubt, if men could be the better for it, the heavens themselves would be bowed and brought down. The

Lord is willing to meet man as far as possibly He can, consistently with allowing man himself to stir at all.

Creatures, as we are, that have but just lately struggled out of the dust, that often we should feel as though the dust were everything, is very natural. But, beyond the realm of the natural, is the region of the supernatural, which we know of, and to which, as knowing of it, we must certainly belong. And reasonably and rightly may we trust those glimpses of it which have been caught and reported by previous voyagers across the sea of Time, and even though they may have been but as momentary as the observations at noon which sometimes have to suffice for a stormy passage across the Atlantic. For, even of ourselves, we can judge as to whither the current sets which carries us. And, for comfort, we have faith given us by God himself, and as reliable therefore, as He himself is,—faith which, like the magnetic needle in a starless night, by its pointing is “the evidence of things not seen.”

THE HISTORY OF A SPIRITUALIST—ABRIDGED
FROM THE *REVUE SPIRITUALISTE*.

THE Spiritualist, who gives us his experiences in the mysterious regions of this extraordinary phase of human life, is no other than M. Leon Favre, the Consul-General of France. It is copied by M. Piérart from the *Magnétiseur de Geneve*, to which it has been contributed by the author himself. It is particularly satisfactory to have the authentic narrative of so distinguished a man; and more especially as the phenomena which he records occurred to him originally in a part of the world distant from Spiritualists in general. When we see the same manifestations with all their truths, their falsehoods, their singularities, contradictions and revealed verities, repeating themselves in every quarter of the globe, and to minds of every class, we are compelled to concede the reality of the dispensation itself; and, amid all its puzzles and discouraging bewilderments, to renew our convictions of its divine purpose, and of its ultimate and vast benefit to humanity.

“I arrived at the commencement of 1858 at Havana, and lodged at the Countess de Gaalon’s. Three days before my departure she asked me if I had ever seen a table turn. On my replying in the negative, a small table on three legs was brought; we placed our hands upon it, and in a few minutes I perceived that one foot of the table was raised from the floor. I thought

this must be the effect of its swaying to the pressure of the hands of my friend, and I pressed vigorously on my side to counterpoise the weight. But the effect continued in spite of my effort, and I was astonished immediately to find the table announce the Christian name, and then the full name of my father. A conversation with it commenced, and my amazement was augmented by finding the table utter questions and answers in perfect accord with the character of my father, and that he would not have spoken otherwise if he had been still living.

“The next day it was the daughter of Madame Gaalon, a child of from eight to nine years of age, who sat with me. Térésa was more of a medium than her mother, and I was able at my ease to observe the power which manifested itself under her hand, which no force of mine was able to counteract. Then came a spirit, ‘Who are you—a man?’ ‘No.’ ‘A woman?’ ‘No.’ ‘What, then?’ ‘A child.’ And the name pronounced revealed to me the apparition of a sister who died at the age of three or four years, when I myself was only seven or eight; that is to say, more than forty years before. Certainly I was not thinking at all of this child, whom I had so little known, and who retained so small a place in my memory. I continued my questions, but she could not answer them, alleging the early age of her departure. I asked her if she could find the spirit of my mother, which she promised to do at once, and in fact, in a few minutes afterwards, the table foot rose actively and announced my mother. Then commenced a curious conversation; my mother speaking to me of things with which I alone was acquainted, and put questions and gave answers not only remarkable in themselves, but stamped with the impression of her own character. This double *séance* upset me. Such an emotion would perhaps appear puerile to those who are familiar with this species of phenomena, and probably would seem absurd to those who deny them; but all my ideas were confounded.

“My hostess had no interest whatever in making a proselyte of me—her daughter still less. They acted only out of complaisance to satisfy my curiosity. Neither one nor the other knew my family, and did not understand the terms of the conversation with my father and mother, which were perfectly clear to me. I had resisted the force which raised the foot of the table by an effort much superior to that which Térésa could have applied had she been playing the comedy. I had, therefore, the consciousness of a power acting outside of Térésa and myself, and that power must possess intelligence, since it put and answered questions. What could this phenomenon be?

“I am an enquirer and analyst: the unknown attracts me

powerfully—so much so, that the solution of the first mystery never satisfies me, and I never stop until I have reached the utmost limits of my comprehension. But at the same time I have been a magnetizer these thirty-five years, and I have thence acquired a tenacity of will and a force of concentration which prevents any discouragement. I resolved to sound the depth of this problem so irritating, which overturned my habitual ideas and half opened to me the portal of the infinite. For this purpose it was necessary that I should rely only on my own experiments, on the evidence of my own senses, and thence draw the inductions, which should appear to me relatively true, under the condition, which is the rule of all my belief, not to admit as definitive any solution, but always to reserve for my adoption a superior light, if it should appear to me.

“It was in this disposition that I arrived at Tampico, and began to magnetize a light stand or work-table. Every day for three months, in solitude and concentration of spirit, I and a companion held our hands for half an hour on the table. Certainly our will was strong, and our desire immense. Notwithstanding which the result was only disappointment. Still we persevered, and three months after our first attempt, the foot of the little table raised itself slowly and pronounced the name of my mother. We then proceeded conscientiously to the examination of the force which revealed itself, and as, above all, we desired not to be the dupes of our fancies, we endeavoured sometimes to press simultaneously, yet differently, on the table so as to prevent its movement, at others only to touch it with the tips of our fingers, to convince ourselves that the movement was not our own. Quickly, however, the table performed somersaults, like something mad,—sudden, impetuous, irresistible,—showing us that something was at work beyond our will, and even in opposition to it. We could no longer doubt of the acting power, nor of the independence of the character belonging to that power.

“But what was the nature of this force? Was it magnetism, electricity, a disengagement of a fluid in conditions not yet understood? We did not pause at the puerilities which represent these phenomena as those of an excited imagination, or of unconscious movement. These are childish objections, not worthy of the slightest notice.

“We began to read the works already published on this subject: *The Revue Spiritualiste de la Nouvelle Orleans*, edited by a good man, the lamented M. Barthet; *The Revue Spiritualiste de Paris*, conducted by M. Piérart, a conscientious and profoundly learned gentleman,—the only genuinely scientific treasury of such facts that you can recommend to the enquirers

after truth. To these we added all the works of M. Allan Kardec, who has become the accepted leader of a considerable number of adepts, and the originator of the term *Spiritisme*.

"We read with avidity, with astonishment and doubt. We there saw that the different schools—that of the Americans, which did not admit of successive existences, and called itself *Spiritual*; and the French, which adopted re-incarnation as its chief, and so to say, absolute principle, and called itself *Spirite*—that these two great factions of the same original thought attributed all the phenomena of which we have proved the prolegomena, to the intervention of spirits, that is to say to the souls of those who had lived visibly on the earth, and who continue to inhabit it in particular conditions which give them an action upon matter.

"Speak to them," said Kardec, "and they will answer you!" Well, M. Leon Favre and his friend spoke, and they were answered by such a rushing hubbub of contradictory voices, as confounded and astounded them. It was like the eager congregation of spirits in Hades at the invocation of Ulysses or Æneas. Some assured them one thing was the only truth, some another, and other some gave them other dictations as the only eternal verity. Some were Christian, some Judaic, some Protestant, others Catholic, vast numbers were Pagan, and invited them back to Plato and Pythagoras. The spiritual noviciates had yet to learn that all the departed had taken along with them their faiths and feelings, and that beyond the great and important fact that all their spirits really continued their existence, their identities and their passions, all doctrinal truth must be learned here by the only tests of reason and history by which such truths can be established. "From the first step," says M. Leon Favre, "I was struck by contradictions, by daring hypotheses, by impossibilities of all sorts presented as realities, with which the mediumistic dictations abounded."

The inquirers determined to steer their way stoutly through this chaotic Babel of the spirit-world: They had still to learn that it had its Sotherns, its Addison, and the like creatures who were ready to mystify simple and trusting believers.

"New phenomena presented themselves. Names completely unknown were rapped out by the table; others that had belonged to beloved objects stirred our hearts by tender recollections. What was strange was, that the movements of the table indicated faithfully the character of the person who professed to avail himself of the instrument: and this so well, that without words, and simply by its oscillation, the table revealed to us whether the spirit demanded our prayers, whether it was happy, whether known to us or unknown. These comparative experiences con-

tinued for six months, and we acquired a dexterity of comprehension perfectly compatible with the serious examination to which we had devoted ourselves.

“A singular circumstance occurred to corroborate the beliefs that began to form themselves in us. The table related a history very complicated concerning persons of our intimacy who lived two thousand leagues from us. The names, the places, the details, the analyses of characters, all were scrupulously correct. The events, full of an augmenting excitement, went so far that they might sensibly influence our future fortunes. Each day the table developed a new theme, and the spirits confirmed the recitals. We waited with anxiety the arrival of the courier, who should confirm or annihilate these revelations. It came at last. Not a single word in these mystifications, which had lasted three months, was true. They had amused us with a romance, and the better to deceive us, had made use of our relatives and friends, and we were ourselves personally interested in the conclusion of this phantasmagoria.

“But who was the mystificator? Doubts had before shaken us; but this romance? But these relatives, these friends, who at the distance of two thousand leagues, continued their ordinary lives, without an idea of the parts which were assigned to them; and whose habitudes and character were wrought into a rational story having a logical development, affecting us by the interest of events of importance to us, and the details of which were presented with the most minute exactness, so far as they were known to us, and thus more readily causing us to credit what was unknown? Could we in good faith attribute to our investigations an invention of which we ourselves were the dupes? What power in ourselves could possibly be engaged in such manifestations?

“It must be observed that this romance had been conceived outside of ourselves; that we were simply auditors, palpitating with curiosity in the expectation of events which an invisible author was unrolling before us. There *was* then an author, an agent, a power; and as the table was merely an instrument like the pen which now traces out my thoughts, there was then an intelligent being acting exteriorly to us. Still further, this romancer had not invented everything. The names, the characters of the personages, their habits, the places of their abode, were painted with that precision which gives a perfect acquaintance. Who had revealed all this to the invisible one? Perhaps he had read all this in the reservoirs of our memories, and had thence drawn the elements of his fiction; or he may have transported himself to those whom he introduced into his narrative, and studied that which he had to describe. We had

seen one or the other of these powers acting in connection with somnambules, but from what source did they really emanate? We were, in fact, compelled to admit that there was a power independent of us which moved the table; then, that this power was intelligent and manifested in itself all the characteristics of a human being, present but invisible."

This was an astounding *denouement*, in the progress of spiritual experiences: but who have not had such, who have not been confounded by them? They have been the startling discoveries of nearly all earnest enquirers. For a time all has gone on smoothly and deliciously. Friends and the nearest and most beloved connections have come apparently from the depths of the unknown to hail you with all their old affection, and to paint the elysium of immortality to which they assured you that you were advancing; and then in the midst of this heavenly confidence, has come the savage blow of a stupendous, gratuitous and barefaced lie, come as from the same hallowed lips, and struck you down into the abyss of midnight despair. Hundreds have never recovered this cruel catastrophe; but have abandoned in the bitterness of their souls, the whole province of Spiritualism, as wholly and solely diabolical. We have seen not long ago, one of these individuals, after a single week's experience, fling down the instrument of his communications, and rush violently into print, denouncing the whole proceeding as the work of the devil. M. Leon Favre was of more sturdy and philosophical stuff. He adds calmly,—

"We continued our experiments, which confirmed constantly this theory which both our senses and our reason were compelled to admit, at least provisionally, as a truth, namely, that the manifestations were the work of an independent spirit. The table replied in all languages, revealed the name hidden in thought, presented the phenomenon of spirits coming without being called, to assist by their counsels, to utter words of affection, to declare truly future events, displaying an absolute independence, and exhibiting all the manners of the living."

M. Favre had the sense to perceive that *all* was not false; that the inhabitants of the invisible, at least on the confines of the visible were very much like those still in the flesh, good and evil, loving and true, mischievous and mocking. Put upon his guard, he accepted the true and let the false drop; for the false like the clouds must in its own nature quickly disperse, leaving the true, like the sun, the moon, and the stars to shine on for ever. And who that has walked on bravely in spiritual as in daily life, has not soon had to acknowledge even single benefits which were ample recompense for all the falsehoods encountered? Who that discovers in the mine a diamond of princely value, regrets

or remembers the host of false brilliancies, the world of mocking delusions, the cruel disappointments, the deadly toils through which he has had to hew his way?

We cannot follow M. Favre through his detailed experiences: they are extremely curious and interesting, adding luminous attestations to the now ascertained laws and persistent phenomena of this great branch of psychology. He soon adopted the planchette, and noticed with great satisfaction how each different spirit presented its different and characteristic style, both of diction and of caligraphy. He mentions an Abbé who used to attend their *séances* in Mexico, who frequently had the planchette under his left hand, a pencil in his right, and used, whilst talking and even arguing enthusiastically, to have two subjects going on in writing, each as different from the other as possible in handwriting, in topic, idiom, and style of reasoning. So far from the spirits following their particular wishes, or coinciding in their views, they displayed not only the utmost independence, but often the most obstinate contradiction of them. Sometimes when questions had been put to spirits, and they were about to answer a higher authority came in and forbade it. On one occasion a sceptical acquaintance asked them to give him a winning number in the lottery: they gave it, and it succeeded. He asked for another on the next occasion: they refused, on this plea, that they gave the number to convince him; they should not give another merely to gratify an avaricious desire. Nor could any answer afterwards be obtained to such requests.

But the most extraordinary truths now were communicated to them. In Mexico, in 1858, the spirits told them of the coming of the war in Italy, and they announced to them successively the victories of Montebello, Magenta and Solferino, correctly. They also made a prediction regarding M. Favre's personal affairs, which realized itself nine months afterwards.

Here we may pause till M. Favre has completed his important narrative, when we may have a few remarks to offer upon it. In the meantime we cannot avoid noticing the vast difference betwixt the careful and persevering examination of such a man as M. Leon Favre, and the contemptuous treatment of so important and prominently palpable a subject by the majority of our scientific men, and by our newspaper scribes who sneer in their folly at what the most distinguished and reflective men approach with serious and anxious research, as if wilful and shallow ignorance could possibly be wisdom.

W. H.

NOTES AND GLEANINGS.

WHAT IS THE NUMBER OF SPIRITUALISTS IN THE UNITED STATES?

THIS question, put to us by a correspondent, is not easy to determine. Those who profess to give information on the subject are all at variance concerning it. About eight years ago, Mr. A. E. Newton, of Boston, in an admirable article which we hope to republish, estimated the number of Spiritualists in the United States as between two and three millions. Uriah Clark, in his *Plain Guide to Spiritualism*, published in 1863, tells us "The decisive believers number about two million, while the nominal are nearly five million." Mr. Andrew Leighton who visited America in 1865, in his "Notes on Spiritualism and Spiritualists in the United States," published in this Magazine, estimated the number of Spiritualists there as about three millions. Mr. Hepworth Dixon, in his *New America* (published about two years ago), considered three millions to be rather an over-estimate. From Mr. A. J. Davis's *Memoranda of Persons, Places, and Events*, we learn that in 1868 he estimated the number of Spiritualists in the United States to be about four millions two hundred and thirty thousand. In 1866, Judge Edmonds estimated their number to be between five and six millions. In a work published in New York in 1867, entitled *Christianity and its Conflicts, Ancient and Modern*, the Spiritualists of the United States are set down at six millions three hundred and thirty-three thousand. Warren Chase, in a recent article in the *Banner of Light*, estimates their number at about eight million. In 1867, Judge Edmonds, adopting an estimate said to have been compiled by the Council of Roman Catholic Bishops and Archbishops assembled that year in Baltimore, in a letter to the *Spiritual Magazine* gave the number of Spiritualists in the United States as between ten and eleven millions—"persuaded," he says, "that the number is twice as large as my estimate," of the year before. While Mr. Edwin Harrison Green, who made a four months' tour in America in the autumn of 1866, assured the Convention of the British Association of Progressive Spiritualists in 1867, that the numbers of Spiritualists in the United States was thirteen millions. Amid these conflicting statistics one thing is clear:—that the Spiritualists of the United States are very numerous. Another thing seems equally clear:—that there are at present no sufficient data on which a reliable, or even approximately correct estimate of that

number can be formed. This being so, it becomes sensible men to be modest and guarded in their statements on this subject, and to discountenance loose rhetorical flourishes in which a few million more or less seem to be thought of no consequence. It would be a useful exercise to persons of sanguine temperament who are given to this weakness to *count* a million: they would then realize more clearly what that number signifies, and so their patience would be rewarded, and their time not altogether thrown away.

THE LONDON CONFERENCES.

These Conferences grow in interest, and the attendance at them, despite the inclement weather, has steadily increased, so that it has been sometimes difficult to find even standing room. The committee have agreed to vary the programme by the occasional delivery of short lectures, with answers to questions. The first of these lectures was given by Mrs. Emma Hardinge on "The Science of Spiritualism," and this formed the subject of conference on the Monday following. Mr. Harper, of Birmingham, opened the subject of "Spiritual Sight" in an able address; and in the course of the evening Mr. Cromwell F. Varley made a most clear and convincing speech, with illustrations from science, and from his own personal experience. Mr. D. D. Home introduced the question "What is Spiritualism?" and also the subject of "Spirit-mediums, ancient and modern." At each Conference opposition, in a friendly spirit, has been invited: this invitation has in some measure been responded to, and has secured additional spirit and interest to the Conferences.

NOT THE DEVIL.

Mr. Horace Greeley, in a chapter of his "Recollections" devoted to Spiritualism, writes:—

Nor can I unreservedly accept the hypothesis which ascribes the so-called "spiritual" phenomena to a demoniac origin. That might account satisfactorily for some of them, but not for all. For instance: in the township of Wayne, Erie county, Pa., near the house of my father and brother, there lived, twelve or fifteen years ago, a farmer well known to me, named King, who had many good traits and one bad habit, that of keeping a barrel of whisky in his house, and dealing out the villainous fluid to neighbours. Having recently lost a beloved daughter, he had recourse to "*Spiritualism*," and received many messages from what purported to be his lost child—one or more insisted that the aforesaid whisky barrel must be expelled from his premises and never be reinstated. So said, so done, greatly to the benefit of the neighbourhood. Now, I feel confident that the devil never sent or dictated *that* message; for, if he did, his character has been grossly belied, and his biography ought to be re-written.

A. J. DAVIS'S CLAIRVOYANT VISION OF WILLIAM AND MARY HOWITT.

In his last published work—*Memoranda of Persons, Places, and Events*, Mr. Davis records the following experience: it is extracted from his private journal:—

PORTLAND, ME., March 10, 1854.

What keen, cold weather! The very atmosphere seems to sparkle and crackle like a silk dress loaded with diamonds. . . . There is something mysteriously delicious in this frosty, crispy air; it fills me with live lightning, so to say, and promotes lucidity of clairvoyant vision.

Yesterday I had a trans-Atlantic observation. . . . Saw many places and persons of renown. I penetrated the shadowy walls, and had a pleasant view of William and Mary Howitt, the noted authors and translators of several volumes from the German. . . . There was a sick person in the house and a child. I could not clairvoyantly approach Mr. Howitt without feeling an influence from his sphere. He possesses a wonderful concentration of mind—few things disturb him; yet he is remarkably sympathetic, and alive to the nobler impulses. Music imparts a sense of pleasure to his mind, but chiefly phenomenal displays of divine guidance, with some philosophical investigations absorb his thoughts. He is a very excellent judge of human nature; and sometimes can almost perceive and scan the motives of men. The organization of his person is extremely well balanced. His mind is deep and reflective; and the spiritual and intellectual nature predominates over the public and social. He seems to be a bright and beautiful spirit, and his sphere delights me. . . . He could have been a kind-hearted and much-beloved minister of the Established Church. He has a keen appreciation of true wit; takes a peculiar delight in what others term "vagaries;" he sincerely loves the fine arts and good society; and the Truth he worships, but is not independent of precedents and accredited authorities.

Another person I perceive. . . . Mrs. Mary Howitt, a self-poised, lady-like, matronly, finely organized woman. Her round body is wearing away somewhat under the industry of her feeling, sentiments, and thinking powers. Not selfish, but is rather easily absorbed in the comfort and education of others. She causes others to feel brighter, happier, better than herself. Her magnetism is stimulating, and acts tonically upon those she is moved to aid. Is fond of retirement; is spiritual (religious) in feeling; loves poetry better than philosophy, and beautiful word pictures better than either. . . . I see harmony and much independence in the life of these noble persons.

My visit to-day over the Atlantic was of short duration—about thirty minutes. . . . I went entirely for another object, a *use*, to obtain a fact in geology for one of my lectures; but, incidentally, under invitation of their guardians, I could not refuse to look into that home. For some reason I did not observe London as a great city, but only this family by itself.

MRS. L. M. CHILD ON "UNACCOUNTABLE THINGS."

Mrs. Lydia Maria Child, author of *The Progress of the Religious Ideas* (a work which deserves to be republished), has written in *The Independent* of New York, an article on "Unaccountable Things," in which she condenses the account of a "Remarkable Case of Physical Phenomena," which we reprinted in our February number from the *Atlantic Monthly*, and shews that though such phenomena are identified with Modern Spirit-

ualism, they are of much older date; and concludes by saying:—

“It is neither wise nor kind to treat with contempt any who testify of what they have seen or heard. It is far better to receive their testimony with equal candour and caution, and be ready to profit by any truth that may be evolved therefrom. Though science has been groping about with her lantern for thousands of years, and though her lamp is often newly trimmed and burns brighter and brighter, yet she has merely discovered a few things that lie on the surface; of the interior depths she knows nothing. Since she cannot explain how the smallest insect came to be a living thing, it is surely presumptuous to assume cognizance of all the relations of men with the Universe. Coleridge spoke wisely, as well as beautifully, when he said: ‘There are errors which no wise man will treat with rudeness while there is a probability that they may be the refraction of some great truths still below the horizon.’”

TEACHINGS OF THE TALMUD CONCERNING ANGELS.

Dr. Emanuel Deutsch, in a recent lecture on the Talmud, thus speaks of its teachings concerning angels:—

Next to women, angels were the most frequent bearers of some of the sublimest and most ideal notions in the Talmud. “Under the wings of the seraphim,” said the Talmud, “are stretched the arms of the Divine mercy, ever ready to receive sinners.” Every word that emanated from God was transformed into an angel, and every good deed of man became a guardian angel to him. On Friday night, when the Jew left the synagogue, a good angel and a bad angel accompanied him. If, on entering the house, he found the table spread, the lamp lighted, and his wife and children in festive garments, ready to bless the holy day of rest, the good angel said, “May the next Sabbath and all following ones be like unto this; peace be unto this dwelling—peace!” and the bad angel, against his will, was compelled to say “Amen.” If, on the contrary, everything was in confusion, the bad angel rejoiced, and said “May all your Sabbaths and week days be like this;” while the good angel wept and said, “Amen.” According to the Talmud, when God was about to create man, great clamouring arose among the heavenly host. Some said, “Create, O God, a being who shall praise Thee on earth, even as we sing Thy glory in heaven.” Others said, “O God, create no more! Man will destroy the glorious army which Thou hast on earth, as in heaven.” Of a sudden, God turned to the contesting host of heaven, and deep silence fell upon them all. Then before the throne of glory there appeared, bending the knee, the Angel of Mercy, and he prayed, “O Father, create man. He will be Thine own noble image on earth. I will fill his heart with heavenly pity and sympathy towards all creatures; they will praise Thee through him.” And there appeared the Angel of Peace, and wept: “O God, man will disturb Thine own peace. Blood will flow; he will invent war, confusion, horror. Thy place will be no longer in the midst of all Thy earthly works.” The Angel of Justice cried: “You will judge him, God! He shall be subject to my law, and peace shall again find a dwelling-place on earth.” The Angel of Truth said: “Father of Truth, cease! With man you create the lie.” Out of the deep silence then was heard the divine word: “You shall go with him—you, my own Seal, Truth; but you shall also remain a denizen of heaven—between heaven and earth you shall float, an everlasting link between both.”

SPIRITUALISM IN BRAZIL.

In an article on this subject the *Banner of Light* says—

We have before us the translation of a letter from Lima, in Peru, written by a person of character and standing, in which is given the art of natural, or magnetic healing, by certain classes of doctors in Brazil. The writer is conversant with the people of that part of South America, and recites facts of great and general interest. They are of special interest also, because the system of curing diseases which is followed by these native doctors is based on the acceptance of great spiritual truths. Their practice may be more or less confounded with rank superstition, but any one at all conversant with the laws of communication and influence will be readily able to separate what is real and true from what is exaggerated and the offshoot of mere mysticism.

There are classes of these doctors, who are in reality mediums. They hold themselves subject to the direction of a leader, whom they style their Master Spirit, and who does not hesitate even to use corporal punishment in order to keep them in subjection. On stated days the sick are brought to a designated place of meeting, usually in a scattered neighbourhood outside of a city, where the circle of doctors is to be held. The time chosen is usually just at night, and the healing process consumes the whole of the time until morning. The lights are turned down as low as possible for the larger portion of the session. Several spirits dictate modes of cure, and present themselves to the different doctors as called for.

The medium doctors never attempt cures while in their natural state, but use certain charms for inducing a condition much like somnambulism. They smoke tobacco, and blow the smoke over their arms and person. After they sit silent for a while, they walk to the nearest wall of the room and strike it hard with the palms of their hands. The medium doctor personates always the spirit which is supposed to take possession of him, and not himself but the spirit is addressed by those present. A variety of superstitious incantations are practised, and movements are made in the same spirit. The sick are minutely examined, passes are made, and the prescriptions ordered for their diseases. The remedies are generally herbs, barks, and resin. So wonderful are many of these cures, people from choice pass by the educated doctors and apply to these natural magnetic physicians.

That the laws of magnetic influence work in tropical countries with amazing effect is no new fact in the history of modern scientific investigation. Climate and habits of living make everything different from what it is in the temperate belts.

 A DREAM AND ITS FULFILMENT.

A correspondent writes to the *Edinburgh Courant*:—In 1850 I was a salesman in a large West India house in Glasgow, and, though not a part of my duty, was commissioned with our head bookkeeper to find out a trifling error in the ledger which had already cost a great amount of unavailing labour. What our governor said he meant—"The balance must be made ere I return to-morrow, and you two must work all night, if need be, to find out this error." The sum, I think, was 13s. 6d. I need hardly add that the books were kept by double entry. We toiled on till past midnight, when my eyes got so wearied I could with difficulty trace the figures in ledger or journal. I made Mr. F., my companion, aware of this, and added, "I shall knock you up

(our lodgings were in the same street) at 5 a.m. to resume the work." On reaching my bedroom, I hurriedly doffed my clothes, and was almost asleep as soon as my head was on the pillow. With an almost equal amount of speed I shuffled on my garments at 4.45 a.m., and was knocking at F.'s bedroom window at five. I could not then, while waiting for him, resist the idea that I had actually gone over all this before—every action was stamped on my mind, but I said nothing. When we reached the office and I was in the act of lighting the fire, I could resist the impulse no longer, and told Mr. F. what I was certain had been a dream. Passing from this point, I told him I had dreamed all this procedure, and that then we sat down to the books, and I took the ledger and allowed it to open at any page, and in this folio was the long looked-for error. Mr. F., with the natural impetuosity of an Irishman (for he was one) exclaimed, "By St. Patrick, we will try it." We did so. The account was that of a respectable sugar refining firm in Greenock still in existence, and in less time than I can take to write it, we discovered the 13s. 6d. mistake.

BRAIN WAVES.—A THEORY.

Mr. Woolner, the sculptor, tells me the following story of two young men—one of them a personal friend of his own, now living. These two men lived very long as great friends, but ultimately quarrelled, shortly before the departure of one of them to New Zealand. The emigrant had been absent for many years, and his friend at home (Mr. Woolner's informant) never having kept up correspondence with him, had naturally almost lost the habit of thinking about him or his affairs. One day, however, as he sat in his rooms in a street near Oxford Street, the thought of his friend came suddenly upon him, accompanied by the most restless and indefinable discomfort. He could by no means account for it, but, finding the feeling grow more and more oppressive, tried to throw it off by change of occupation. Still the discomfort grew, till it amounted to a sort of strange horror. He thought he must be sickening for a bad illness, and at length, being unable to do anything else, went out of doors and walked up and down the busiest streets, hoping by the sight and sound of multitudes of men and ordinary things to dissipate his strange and mysterious misery. Not, however, till he had wandered to and fro in the most wretched state of feeling for nearly two hours, utterly unable to shake off an intolerable sort of vague consciousness of his friend, did the impression leave him, and his usual frame of mind return. So greatly was he struck and puzzled by all this, that he wrote down precisely the date of the day and hour of the occurrence, fully expecting to have news shortly of or from his old friend. And surely, when the next mail or the next but one arrived, there came the horrible news that at that very day and hour (allowance being made for longitude) his friend had been made prisoner by the natives of New Zealand, and put to slow death with the most frightful tortures. Of this same kind, though happily different in result, is a story of his own experience, which Mr. Tennyson, the Poet Laureate, tells me, *viz.*, that some years ago he was induced to try (successfully) the curative effect of mesmerism by passes of the hands upon a patient, who became so sensitive as to be aware on one occasion of his approach by railway two hours before he reached the house, and when his coming was entirely unannounced and unpremeditated. On another occasion, the same patient positively asserted to a third person that Mr. Tennyson

had been there the day before, when Mr. Tennyson himself was equally positive to the contrary—till he afterwards remembered that he had come as far as the grounds of the house, and then changed his mind and turned back.—*The Spectator, January 30th.*

[Will Mr. Hutton explain what he means by “brain waves?” Without an explanation, these are mere words without meaning.—ED.]

THE ARTICLES ON SUPERNATURALISM.

These articles, of which we give the first in our present number, are appearing anonymously in the *Monthly Religious Magazine* published at Boston, and with the third of them the editor gives the following curious narrative:—

The Publisher of this Magazine has received a communication which illustrates the idea which a very excellent Unitarian minister has of the freedom and range which belong to religious investigation. We should be glad to print it; but, fearing the author might object, we give its substance,—which is, that his name be removed from our subscription list on account of the sudden fit of Spiritualism which he thinks has overtaken us in the article “On Science and the Supernatural;” that he can scarcely believe his own eyes when he reads, in the *Monthly* which he has trusted hitherto, a declaration of faith in the table-rappings as “revelations from on high,” and the article is editorially recommended.

We do not understand the writer of the articles to recommend table-rappings as revelations from on high, or to regard the methods of Spiritualism as safe and trustworthy. We certainly do not so regard them. But, however this may be, we should be ashamed of our intolerance as conductors of a liberal periodical if we attempted to cripple the free utterance of an able writer and Christian scholar and thinker on this or any other absorbing question of the day.

Per Contra. We received three communications from eminent clergymen of different denominations, expressing warm sympathy with the spirit of the articles. One is from an eminent Orthodox divine who ranks among the first of our living writers and thinkers. We hope and believe he will not regard us as guilty of any impropriety if we make a single extract from his letter, knowing our motive and the cause we have at heart.

“I have received two late numbers of your Magazine, December and January: I know not from whom, but I am greatly obliged for them. I suppose they may have been forwarded on account of the two articles on supernatural truth. These articles I have read with a really profound interest, thanking God that you have any man among you who could write them. I feel greatly drawn to him: he is a good deal more than Orthodox to me. Would to God there were half as much spiritual insight in any of our good people who call themselves believers, and sound in the faith!”

WHERE THE LIARS GO TO.

An anecdote is told by a correspondent of the *New York World*, the editors of which, in printing it, seem charmingly unconscious of its personality. A clergyman, catechising a little boy, was trying to impress on his tender mind some useful lessons from the Bible. “Where, my child, do the liars go to?” “To New York, sir, to write for the newspapers.” We think some of them have found their way to London.

REMARKABLE CASE OF PHYSICAL PHENOMENA.

"To the Editor of the *Leader*."

"Sir,—I read with considerable interest the article in your last issue entitled 'Remarkable Case of Physical Phenomena,' and reprinted from the *Atlantic Monthly*. The singular circumstances therein narrated somewhat resemble those that occurred some years since in my own family, at home in England. A servant that we had then was attacked with a peculiar species of fits, having outwardly much the appearance of hysteria, but in her case the noises were confined to raps only; whatever room she was in, it mattered not, these raps came on the walls, floor, chairs, ceilings, and even on her own person they were often distinctly audible. I had medical advice for her, but my doctor could do her no good, and was evidently puzzled with the case. She at last became seriously ill, but I found that she derived the greatest benefit by my simply placing the open palms of my hands upon her head; this would often quiet her when in the most violent paroxysms, and by making the usual de-mesmerising passes, I was enabled to bring her to. In doing this, however, great care was required, as it appeared as though there were a struggle going on within her, and she was very violent, foaming at the mouth and tearing at anything within reach. When she was 'herself' again, she used to be quite unaware of what had passed while in this state, but she had a vivid recollection of seeing 'spirits' all around her, and this impression she continually persisted in, seeming very frightened of them. After this state of things had lasted some months, I got her removed to a distance, thinking that change of air and scene would possibly do her good, and it had the desired effect, she got better and ultimately entirely recovered her health. She has since married, and is now living in London. I am, &c.—SYDNEY J. SAUNDERS."—*The Leader, Melbourne, Australia, 24th October, 1868.*

J. G. WHITTIER, THE AMERICAN POET, ON MESMERISM AND CLAIRVOYANCE.

It is too late now to regard mesmerism wholly as charlatanry and imposture—to rank its phenomena with the tricks of Cagliostro and Count St. Germain. Grant, if you will, that the everlasting and ubiquitous quack has taken advantage of it—that he has engrafted upon its great fact the fictitious and shallow legerdemain of common jugglery—still a FACT remains, attested by unnumbered witnesses, which clashes with all our old ideas and our habitual experience—which throws open the door for "thick-coming fancies," and interminable speculations—a miracle made familiar—an impossibility realized—the old fable of transfusion of spirit made actual—the mysterious trance of the Egyptian priesthood

reproduced. This first fact in mesmerism dimly reveals a new world of wonder—a faint light falling into the great shadow of the mystery which environs us like an atmosphere of night. It affords us a vague and dim perception of the nature of what we call life; it startles the Materialist with phenomena fearfully suggestive of the conditions of a purely spiritual being. In the language of another, when we plant our first footfall upon the threshold of the portal to which this astonishing discovery introduces, long and deep are the reverberations which come forth from the yet dark depths which lie beyond it. Having made this first step, we are prepared to go “sounding onward our dim and perilous way,” passing from one wonder to another, like the knight of the nursery tale, in the Enchanted Castle—

“His heart was strong,
While the strange light crept on the floor along.”

Without assenting in any respect to this theory, I have been recently deeply interested in reading a paper from a gentleman who has devoted much of his leisure, for the last seven years, to a patient investigation of this subject. He gives the particulars of a case which occurred under his own observation. A young girl of great purity of character, in a highly exalted state of what is called clairvoyance, or animal electricity, was willed by the magnetizer to the future world. In the language of the narrator, “The vision burst upon her. Her whole countenance and form indicated at once that a most surprising change had passed over her mind. A solemn, pleasing, but deeply impressive expression rested upon her features. She prophesied her own early death; and when one of her young friends wept, she said: ‘Do not weep for me; death is desirable, beautiful! I have seen the future, and myself there. O! it is beautiful, happy, and glorious!—and myself so beautiful, happy, and glorious! And *it is not dying*, only changing places, states, and conditions, and feelings. O! how beautiful! how blessed!’ She seemed to see her mother, who was dead, and when asked to speak to her, she replied: ‘She will not speak; I could not understand her. They converse by willing, thinking, feeling, without language.’”

All this may, in part, be accounted for on the theory of cerebral excitement—the disturbed over-action of a portion of the brain, or, to speak phrenologically, of the “religious organs.” Yet the mystery even then is but *partially* solved. Why in this state of exaltation and preternatural mental activity should similar images and thoughts present themselves to persons of widely varied temperaments and beliefs, from the cold Materialist to the too ardent Spiritualist; from the credulous believer to the confirmed sceptic?

For myself, I am not willing to reject at once everything which cannot be explained in consistency with a strictly material philosophy. Who knows the laws of his own spiritual nature? Who can determine the precise conditions of the mysterious union of soul and body? It ill becomes us, in our ignorance and blindness, to decide that whatever accords not with our five senses, and our every-day experience, is an impossibility. There is a credulity of doubt which is more to be deprecated than that of belief.—*Stranger in Lowell.*

A CHILD'S LIFE SAVED THROUGH A DREAM.

In the work of a physician, published a few years since, we read that a mother dreamed that her child, who was out at nurse, had been buried alive, and hastening to the place in great alarm, found that the child supposed to be dead was already buried. She insisted upon having the grave opened, and succeeded in restoring her son, who grew up to man's estate.

THE DIALECTICAL SOCIETY AND SPIRITUALISM.

WE find that the debate referred to in our last number was resumed unexpectedly on the evening of Wednesday, January 20th, in consequence of the absence of the gentleman who was to have read the paper on "Metaphysics and Theology." The discussion on this occasion was even more favourable to Spiritualism than on the former, one or two gentlemen finding themselves in so very small a minority that they were fain to modify their previous assertions. One of the nameless speakers above mentioned went so far, in an outburst of candour, as to say he did not think he would doubt the evidence of his senses if they seemed to prove the truth of the phenomena! The committee is to proceed to its work forthwith; and the presentation of their report will give rise to another discussion, when, probably, Spiritualism will be more adequately represented.

The committee began by the following invitation in the newspapers:—

To the Editor of the "Star."

"Sir,—Will you allow me, through the medium of your paper, to inform those of your readers who are interested in the above question, that a committee has been appointed by the council of the London Dialectical Society for the purpose of instituting a thorough and searching inquiry into these so-called spiritual manifestations, with a view of obtaining a satisfactory elucidation of the phenomena.

"As the committee have undertaken this task solely in the interests of science and free inquiry, it is hoped that many of the believers in Spiritualism will recognise the advantages to be derived from a careful and honest investigation of the subject; and will be willing, either by personal attendance at the *séances*, or by forwarding any experiences or suggestions of their own, to assist the committee in arriving at a sound and just conclusion.—I have the honour to be, Sir, your obedient servant,

"G. WHEATLEY BENNETT, Hon. Secretary.

"32A, George-street, Hanover-square, W."

Letters to the same effect have also been privately addressed to various persons. The following among other answers have been sent:—

"Oakfield, Kilburn, N.W.

"7th February, 1869.

"Sir,—I have seen your letter informing the public that a committee, appointed by the Dialectical Society, is about to

institute a thorough and searching 'inquiry into so-called Spiritual manifestations, with a view of obtaining a satisfactory elucidation of the phenomena,' and you ask believers 'to assist the committee in arriving at a sound and just conclusion.'

"I am a believer in the occurrence of the facts, both from my own observation, and from testimony, the latter mode being of course the more extensive, inasmuch as it embraces the observation of all those who have witnessed the phenomena in all ages, down to our own. Of course the sum of what all have seen, is greater immeasurably than what any one can see. I consider testimony therefore of the first importance in a matter which, if it be true, cannot, in its very nature, be done to order, and submitted to pre-organized tests. Its laws are not known, nor the conditions under which it appears. If they were, and phenomena could be had the moment you say 'now we are all ready,' they would cease to be what they evidently are.

"The first thing in such an investigation is to assume nothing, not even that a committee of the Dialectical Society can 'obtain a satisfactory elucidation of the phenomena.' No committee has ever done so yet. A committee of Professors of Harvard University, amongst whom was Agassiz, after having made an examination, did not think proper to publish their report, though they had published their intention to do so, and were frequently and publicly asked for it.

"I do not think a committee seeking test phenomena will arrive at a sound conclusion, unless it also take full cognizance of testimony in books, and by a personal examination of witnesses who will depose to what they have seen. There is an extensive array both of written facts, and of witnesses, of the highest range and value. The committee might easily obtain the attendance of 20, 50, or 100 witnesses of repute in literature, the sciences, and the professions, who will give their testimony. Testimony is all important if only for this consideration, that the report of this committee will, when made, itself fall into the category of testimony; and it would be inconsistent to claim a greater weight for it than for other testimony from a credible source. Credible testimony has already been given in many thousands of instances. Your committee will only add one more to the list. If it report in favour of the phenomena, no one will believe it; and if it report against, the facts will still occur, as they have done throughout recorded history, sacred and profane.

"The 'phenomena of so-called Spiritualism' are in fact a history of the supernatural (using the word in its common sense). That is a wide inquiry for your committee, and one of supreme importance. If their report is to have the effect of settling that great question of humanity, I should like to know their

qualifications for the post. You ought to have at least one of the Archbishops amongst you, to represent the religious side of the question, with Professor De Morgan and Professor Tyndal to represent the pure and applied mathematics, and you should have all history and testimony at your fingers' ends. Otherwise, I for one shall hold myself at liberty to object to your report, whether it be favorable or unfavorable.

"One thing is essential to give your report even a negative value, and that is that you rigidly state all the conditions under which each investigation takes place, because your doing so may at all events shew under what conditions spiritual phenomena will *not* occur.

"I hope you may have more success than I anticipate; and if you follow the very excellent programme of your society, and can give even this subject fair treatment, you will be entitled to the best thanks of the community.

"I am, Sir, your obedient servant,

"W. M. WILKINSON.

"G. Wheatley Bennett, Esq.,

"32A, George Street, Hanover Square, W."

"23, Russell Road, Holloway, N.

"February 11, 1869.

"G. Wheatley Bennett, Esq.

"Dear Sir,—I beg to thank you for your courteous letter of the 6th ult. which I regret has only just come to hand. At the present stage of the inquiry I have but two suggestions to urge upon the committee:—

"First. That in investigating phenomena with the laws of which (should the committee decide such phenomena to be genuine) they do not even profess to be acquainted, they should confine themselves (in the first instance at all events) to simple observation without attempting to dictate the conditions under which the phenomena shall, or shall not, occur.

"Second. That as it is only a very small fraction of the whole body of facts bearing on the case which can come under the personal observation of the committee or of any committee, it would be highly desirable to obtain the evidence of persons of known intelligence and veracity, especially of men of science, who have preceded them in this investigation; and that to this end a letter of inquiry be addressed to them requesting them to state any facts in relation to the subject which have *come under their personal observation*. I would more particularly suggest that

such application be made to the following gentlemen, whose addresses I append as far as they are known to me:—

- “ CROMWELL F. VARLEY, Esq., Fleetwood House, Beckenham.
- “ ALFRED R. WALLACE, Esq., 9, St. Mark's Crescent, N.W.
- “ Professor DE MORGAN, 91, Adelaide Road, N.W.
- “ Captain DRAYSON, R.A., Woolwich.
- “ Dr. J. M. GULLY, The Priory, Great Malvern.
- “ Dr. J. J. G. WILKINSON, 4, St. John's Wood Villas, N.W.
- “ Dr. DIXON, 8, Great Ormond Street, W.C.
- “ S. C. HALL, Esq., 15, Ashley Place, Victoria Street, S.W.
- “ NEWTON CROSLAND, Esq.
- “ WILLIAM HOWITT, Esq., The Orchard, Hare Green, Esher, Surrey.
- “ ROBERT CHAMBERS, Esq., St. Andrew's, Edinburgh.
- “ H. D. JENCKEN, Esq., Kilmorey House, Norwood.
- “ J. G. CRAWFORD, Esq., 52, Gloucester Crescent, N.W.
- “ W. M. WILKINSON, Esq., Oakfield, Kilburn.
- “ Lord ADARE, 5, Buckingham Gate.
- “ The MASTER of LINDSAY, Grosvenor Square.

This would probably at present be sufficient. I must however add that I have held no communication on the subject with any of the gentlemen named (some of whom are not even personally known to me), and that I cannot say how far they may have the time and disposition to respond to such an inquiry, but I think the application would be well worth making.

“ Yours respectfully,
“ THOMAS SHORTER.”

THE REV. F. R. YOUNG'S ACCOUNT OF HIS CURE BY DR. NEWTON, AND OF HIS OWN POWER OF HEALING.

WE briefly referred to the cure of Mr. Young by Dr. Newton in our August number. A full narrative of the case is given by Mr. Young himself, in No. 3 of *Daybreak*, which we here present. Mr. Young writes:—

“Friday, May 22, of the present year (1868) will for ever remain one of the most memorable days of my life. It was on that day, when the sun was shining brightly and bathing the world with its light and heat, that I arrived at Newport, Rhode Island, and first came under the healing powers of Dr. J. A. Newton. I had heard of him through the *Spiritual Magazine*, Mr. William Howitt, and Mr. Coleman, and was assured that if I placed myself in his hands I should be speedily and radically cured of the neuralgic affection in my head, for which I had been suffering for eleven years. The accounts which had been given me of

this remarkable man were so altogether astonishing and so very much resembled the accounts we have in the Gospels of the miracles performed by Christ, that my first feelings were those of simple surprise, and it was not until I had become a little more familiar with some of the facts and phenomena of modern Spiritualism that I felt a quiet faith in the power of Dr. Newton to remove my disease. Having once attained to that state of mind, and becoming satisfied that it was my duty to cross the Atlantic in search of health, I made arrangements for doing so, and left Liverpool for New York on Saturday, May 9, arriving at the latter place on Tuesday evening, the 19th. After spending a day in New York, I embarked on one of the river boats for Newport, and arrived there in about eleven hours. Fortified with letters of introduction from Mr. Coleman and Mr. Howitt, I at once wended my way towards Dr. Newton's residence, a fine old house built entirely of brick, and having certain associations connected with it of the war of the Revolution. As the sunshine of that bright May morning lighted up the face of the waters and made the very streets of the town look cheerful, it seemed like the divine benediction falling out of the heavens upon the step I was taking; and as I entered the office, or, as we should call it in England, the surgery of Dr. Newton, I felt a quiet confidence that I was in the path which God designed me to walk in. The moment Dr. Newton and I met, I found in his face and simple kindly manner a human image of the outside sunshine, and but few words had been spoken when I was convinced that the errand upon which I had come would be fulfilled. I was about to give him the history in detail of my affliction when he stopped me by saying, that after I had been cured he would be very glad to listen to anything I might wish to say, but that the cure itself was the first matter to be attended to. He then poured a large quantity of very hot water upon my head while I was leaning it over a basin into which the water fell. After my head had been dried with a coarse towel, I was made to sit upon a moveable seat, similar to a music-stool, the doctor standing behind me, and placing my head against his chest with his hands crossed upon my forehead. He then moved my head in various directions until all at once a clicking noise was heard at the top of my spine. The doctor immediately cried out, "That noise is the sign that you will be cured; the disturbance of the nerve current has been removed." He then faced me, and lifting both his hands towards heaven, he looked me hard in the face, saying, "Look at me. In the name of God our Heavenly Father, and of the Lord Jesus Christ the Great Healer, I bid this disease depart from this dear suffering brother and never more afflict him. It is gone—it is

gone—it is gone for ever, my brother ; you are cured ; rise up on your feet and be cured.” At that instant I felt a strong current of new life flowing into and through every part of my body, and I was conscious that I had entered upon an altogether new phase of existence. From that day to the present hour, July 13, I have been entirely free from my pain, and have felt as well, I should think, as it is possible for any human being to feel. Physically speaking, I am a new creature ; old things have passed away and all things have become new. Of course it is not for me to say absolutely that the cure will be permanent, but, if I may judge from my present experience, I see no reason why it should not be so. But even if a relapse should take place, Dr. Newton is now *en rapport* with me and could at once operate upon me. Wonderful as my case is, it is only one of thousands, so far as Dr. Newton is concerned. He has cured almost every form of disease, and removed almost every kind of suffering. In fact, he appears to have done everything but raise the dead. And yet even he does not cure all cases, and this failure enables him to keep alive the consciousness that it is not he who cures, but God who works in and through him. He tells me that he has cured something like a quarter of a million people, and that he could cure as many more if they had the needed faith. Dr. Newton is an extremely simple-minded and very benevolent man, and gives himself none of the airs of a charlatan. His long experience must have convinced him that the power he possesses is a delegated and not an original one, and, therefore, that it would be in the highest degree indecent for him to be puffed up or to pretend to be what he really is not. Most of his cures are done without fee or reward. In my own case he steadily refused to take a single dollar, and I saw him act in like manner towards several others. During my stay I witnessed several instances of his healing power ; some of them being so manifest as to defy all attempts at explaining them away. On the very morning that my own cure was effected, I witnessed his cure of a paralytic who for three years had been unable to walk without the aid of crutches, and even then, only in a partial degree. This woman was brought by her parents to Newport, and, in less than five minutes from the time when she came under Dr. Newton’s hands, she got up from the couch on which she had been laid, and walked away up the street and back again, a full mile, and afterwards walked and ran and jumped and danced, as so many signs that her cure was a complete one. I also saw him cure a young man who had a withered hand. Indeed I might have seen day by day, and almost hour by hour, examples of this healing power had I chosen to have done so. Every now and again, there are trains from Boston and Providence freighted

with the lame, the halt, the blind, and the diseased, sometimes to the number of 500 or 600. These come to Newport, and a large majority of them are sent away perfectly cured. In one part of Dr. Newton's house there is a room of considerable size, full of crutches, sticks, spectacles, eye-shades, bandages, and other memorials of disease and sickness which have been left behind by patients as so many signs and trophies of their cure.

"There is one question which unbelieving or doubting persons may put. 'If what you say of Dr. Newton be true, how is it that the suffering world does not go out after him so far as it has the opportunity of doing?' The reply is a simple, and, as we would venture to add, satisfactory one. Dr. Newton does not cure every case which is brought to him, nor does he attempt to do it. Now these cases of failure are just so many stumbling-blocks in the way of the faith of those who might otherwise believe in Dr. Newton. Because he fails in some cases out of, say a thousand, therefore, for such is the inference, he cannot cure. Of course the logic of such an argument is very pitiful. When our Lord was on earth He could not do many of His mighty works because of the unbelief of the people; and, if in His day and in the East the power of such a Being as He was could be doubted and restricted, is it very wonderful that even Dr. Newton's power may be called in question? 'The disciple is not above his Master.'

"Dr. Newton asked me if I had faith in his power to cure me; when I replied that I had come 3,000 miles to see him, and I could give him no better answer. No doubt faith in the patient has a very great deal to do with his cure. And why should we, who profess and call ourselves Christians, be surprised at such a condition, or sneer at those who demand it? Have we not read that most beautiful and touching narrative in the 9th chapter of St. Mark's Gospel, which treats of the cure of the poor boy who had been suffering from epilepsy, and whose disease had at last resulted in dumbness and deafness? When the father of the child appealed to Jesus, He said unto Him—'If thou canst believe, all things are possible to him that believeth.' As though he had said 'The question is not about my ability to cure your child, but about your faith in that ability.' I grant, most freely, that Christ often cured without the faith of the patient, but this only proves not that faith is unnecessary, but that it is not an absolute condition. The place and power of faith have been so misapprehended, and therefore misrepresented by theologians, that few people realise how simple and yet how powerful a thing faith is. The history of the world, and especially of all great movements, attest beyond dispute the truth of what Christ said to the two blind men,

‘According to your faith be it unto you.’ When I went to America, I did so believing fully that Dr. Newton could cure me, and I do not know that there is anything unreasonable in the supposition that my confidence had something to do with the cure.

“Let me just add that I made many searching inquiries in Newport, Boston, New York, and other places, relative to Dr. Newton; and that all the replies I obtained were eminently favourable to him. Even those who still had lingering doubts about some of his cures never for one moment attempted to cast the slightest suspicion upon him as a man. Indeed I do not see what room they could have for doing so. He is so open-hearted and childlike that any man who comes into contact with him must feel that he is dealing with an honest man.

“FREDERICK ROWLAND YOUNG,

“Minister of the Free Christian Church, Swindon.”

In a subsequent communication to *Daybreak* Mr. Young writes:—

“After Dr. Newton had laid his hands upon me, and commanded my disease and pain to depart from me, he told me of a strong impression on his mind that I myself possessed a similar power of healing; and after praying, which he did with much simplicity and earnestness, that God would be pleased to help me to realise the truth in respect to that matter, he urged upon me to put this impression to the test. I ought in this connection to state that several months before, some members of my family were told, by spiritualistic means, that I should be completely cured, and also become ‘a healing medium of great power.’ And yet, with the knowledge of this fact brought freshly to my mind by what Dr. Newton had said and done, the bare thought of the possession of so great and wonderful a power was almost too much for my belief; and it was not until I had made it a matter of very solemn and serious prayer to God, that He would ‘make His way plain before my face,’ and enable me to do His will, whatever that will might be, that I found courage in my heart to put my possession of this power to the test of actual experiment.”

Mr. Young then gives several instances of his successful exercise of this power, honestly confessing that in other cases he has failed; adding:—“My *failures* have been quite numerous and palpable enough to convince me that this power of healing is not mine, or dependent for its exercise upon my mere will. Sometimes, when my own faith and the faith of the patient have been all that could be desired, and when, as far as one could see, no hindrance to a cure has existed, I have failed, and have taken no pains whatever to conceal or break the force of

the failure, in so far as it could be used as evidence against me. But I have *succeeded* quite often enough to be equally convinced that God has been pleased to endow me with this power; and to Him, and Him alone, I desire, and wish my patients, to give all the glory and gratitude. If it be thought that my failure, in any single case, tends to cast an honest doubt upon the reality of my possessing the power of healing, it may be sufficient to remind my readers of what they may find in the New Testament. In the 19th chapter of the Acts of the Apostles, and at the 11th and 12th verses, it is thus written:—‘ And God wrought special miracles by the hands of Paul; so that from his body were brought unto the sick handkerchiefs or aprons, and the diseases departed from them, and the evil spirits went out of them. These words prove, at all events, that the Apostle Paul was endowed by God with the power of healing. But it is also written in St. Paul’s Second Epistle to Timothy, fourth chapter, and 20th verse:—‘ Erastus abode at Corinth, but Trophimus have I left at Miletum sick.’ Now if the possession by the Apostle Paul of the power of healing involved the certainty of his being able to exercise it under all circumstances and upon all persons, then he certainly would not have left this friend of his sick at Miletum. But it is quite evident that the power was not at the absolute disposal of the Apostle; and yet, who, because such was the case, would pretend to challenge the reality of his possessing it? If such were the circumstances under which St. Paul was endowed, surely I may be pardoned for now and again failing in my attempts to cure others.” He adds:—

“Several persons, through the press and in more private ways, have been pleased to speak of my cases of healing as *miracles*. I WISH IT TO BE DISTINCTLY UNDERSTOOD THAT I HAVE MOST CAREFULLY AND CONSCIENTIOUSLY AVOIDED DESIGNATING THEM BY THAT TERM; partly, because I have not wished to use a word which has certain sacred and Scriptural associations; and partly, because I am far more anxious to confine myself to the facts of the case, than to use any term which might imply that I had any fully-formed theory to account for my healing. I speak of ‘healing the sick by the laying on of hands, faith in the living God, and prayer to Him.’ As far as the use of these terms carries with it the implication of any theory, I am content that it should be so, but no farther. The facts are something like these:—I have been called to attend a person suffering from pain, or some such physical affliction, which has baffled the resources of such of the medical profession as have been applied to for its removal. I have in each case explained that I have no more power, in and of myself, to cure the sick than I have to create a world; but that I am quite willing

to do what in me lies, and then leave the result to Him who, first or last, is the only Healer of all our diseases. I have then prayed with my patient, laid my hands upon the part affected, and called upon the disease and pain to depart, and invoked the names of God the Heavenly Father and our Lord Jesus Christ. The disease and pain have there and then departed, wholly and entirely, to the immense relief and joy of the patient, and in so manifest a way as to disarm the possibility of unbelief in the minds of those who have witnessed the cure."

Correspondence.

A SPEAKING MEDIUM.

To the Editor of the "Spiritual Magazine."

SIR,—Yesterday I went for the first time to hear a speaking medium, a Mr. Jackson, evidently a plain good man, who at one time was a policeman in this town. The character of the addresses delivered through the medium was proof positive that they could not be the production of his own powers. One of these addresses came professedly from George Fox, and was certainly in character with the keen inspiring criticism so abundant in Fox's Journal. I venture to hope that no good Friend or Quaker would feel hurt on perusing some of the salient points of this remarkable address; for if they be untrue they could be easily refuted, and if they be true it would be the greatest kindness to publish them for the purpose of revealing the Friends to themselves, and moving them to the cultivation of a free, genial, and noble life. The spirit who had possession of the medium, said, speaking of the Society of Friends, "They set me up as their founder." Disclaiming all intention of founding a sect of "keen traders," of people whose religion was in a great measure a negation, whereby they had contracted "a hard crust of prejudice;" he said they needed the love of God and man operating in their hearts and lives "to enliven the torpidity of their spiritual nature." If so enlivened, they would divest themselves of the "secluded cramped fashion of earth." Again, "It is said that a century and seventy and odd years ago, I sowed the seed of their body, but the tree bears little fruit."

Supposing this scathing criticism to be all true, I should not infer that the Friends are a worse sect than any one of the other sects. It appears to me that all sects, established and voluntary, are rapidly decaying, and that, instead of mankind continuing to be broken up into hostile parties, the doctrine of human brotherhood and solidarity will be more and more recognised, appreciated and lived.

Several other of the addresses were instructive and edifying. There are four leading characteristics of spiritual teaching which are very beautiful. It affirms,

I. That God is all-good, and is ever loving unto every one.

II. That true religion consists in doing honestly, thoroughly and continually what its individually perceived and believed to be the ever-wise will of this Good Being.

III. That every created human being will sooner or later be saved.

IV. That the Church is the human mind, the spiritual temple of the Lord. Surely these bright truths are destined to effect a wonderful revolution, sweeping all our wretched priestcraft and sectcraft, with innumerable other evils that oppress and deface the world, into the realm of night.

I am, Sir, your obedient Servant,

WM. HUME-ROTHERY.

3, Richmond Terrace,
Middleton, Manchester,
Feb. 22nd, 1869.