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THE QUARTERLY JOURNAL OF SCIENCE ON  
HUMAN LEVITATION.

BY THE EDITOR.

MANY years since, when the subject of miracles was much seldomer discussed than it is now, Theodore Parker laid down the rule that a miracle must be one of three things: 1st.—A transgression of all law which God has made; 2nd—A transgression of all known laws, but obedience to a law which we may yet discover; or, 3rd—A transgression of all law known, or knowable by man, but yet in conformity with some law out of our reach. The object of introducing these definitions was to show that, according to the first, a miracle involved a contradiction and therefore was not possible; that according to the second, the event which to-day appears miraculous may be common-place to-morrow; and that according to the third, a large number of the phenomena of the universe by which we are constantly surrounded, although happening continually before our eyes, may in reality be considered miraculous. "Finite man," he remarks, "not only does not, but *cannot* understand all the modes of God's action—all the laws of His being. There may be higher beings to whom God reveals Himself in modes that we can never know, for we cannot tell the secrets of God, nor determine *à priori* the modes of His manifestation. In this sense a miracle is possible; the world is a perpetual miracle of this sort. Nature is the art of God; can we understand it? Life, Being, Creation, Duration; do we understand these actual things? How then can we say to the Infinite, 'Hitherto shalt Thou come, but no farther; there are no more ways wherein Thy being acts?' Man is in nowise the measure of God."

Since the time at which the work was written, from which this quotation is made, the question of miracles has come to be one of the most prominent topics of public consideration. On all hands men are found now, discussing the fixity of the laws of nature, the possibility or impossibility of miracle, and not only the operation, but the very existence of the supernatural. Not simply in pulpits and in religious works, but in literary associations and gatherings of scientific men; in popular lectures, and in the general newspaper press, are questions, which in the last century, were held too sacred to be dealt with except on special occasions, and by very select men, now treated with the greatest coolness and often frivolity. The whole of the subjects involved in the action of the supernatural, have become largely removed from the domain of religion, into that of science, and the result has been the promulgation of a great amount of scepticism. Moreover, a strange anomaly has arisen here. On the one hand, clergymen of the Established Church, and ministers in other orthodox religious denominations, have in many instances embraced what they have been pleased to term—though it is difficult to see with what reason—rationalistic views to the utter rejection of the miraculous element in theology. On the other hand, may be found a large class of men, adopting and maintaining most persistently, faith in miracle, while they reject Christianity and every other form of revelation. The opposing parties of old have here so completely changed places, that they remind one of the case—legendary or not—where two opponents debated a question until each converted the other.

The change in the aspects of public opinion on these questions is due to the operation of various causes, working in modern society. On the one hand, science is becoming exceedingly materialistic, and with the wide increase of its power and influence, has arrogated to itself a dogmatism utterly foreign to its true spirit. It has enlarged its boundaries, and taken upon itself the authority to decide on every question that falls within the range of human thought. It has declared that there is nothing known of the Universe but matter, and no power perceived to regulate it but law, and that, therefore, the operation of mind in nature, if it exist at all, which is somewhat questionable, must be relegated to the region of the unknown, and no longer allowed to perplex men's minds. It has pronounced religion to be a delusion, since, although it may have considered it desirable to retain the name, it has only been with such a change of meaning that the reality has completely disappeared. On the other hand, the manifestations of Modern Spiritualism have produced a marvellous effect in an opposite

direction upon minds of a most sceptical character. These phenomena have proved, not simply that what is usually called miracle was possible in the past, but that it actually occurs in the present; and that the supernatural, instead of being removed altogether from human affairs, has been found operating in all times and all places. Such are amongst the most potent causes which have served to mould the opinions of the thinking men of to-day.

The phenomena of Modern Spiritualism, although essentially of a scientific character and of a nature to be investigated only in the light of carefully conducted experiments, have yet been largely ignored by scientific men. Like their old opponents the clergy, whom they are never tired of denouncing, for their bigotry and refusal to examine new facts, for fear of arriving at conclusions foreign to their preconceived opinions, they are themselves found constantly opposing Spiritualism, for *à priori* reasons, and refusing to investigate, because such investigation on the part of others has led to conclusions opposed to the scientific hypotheses so prevalent to-day. There are fortunately honourable exceptions to this rule, and amongst these we may name Messrs. Wallace, Varley and Crookes, whose researches into spiritual manifestations have been productive of the very highest results. A series of papers published by Mr. Crookes, at intervals, in the *Quarterly Journal of Science*, have had the effect of bringing these modern phenomena before the notice of a large number of persons who would probably, otherwise, have remained in entire ignorance of their very existence. Mr. Crookes' articles have been reprinted and are probably well known to most of our readers. In the current number of his journal occurs another, also of a most valuable character, bearing upon the same subject, entitled "Human Levitation, illustrating certain Historical Miracles." The paper is a long one, extending over thirty pages, and our space will therefore only permit us to give a summary of its contents, with extracts of some of the most important passages.

The author of the paper commences by referring to the definition of man given by Archbishop Trench, as "The animal that weighs less when alive and awake than dead or asleep," which the Archbishop calls "a fact which every nurse who has carried a child would be able to attest," and also supports by a reference to Pliny. He concludes, "That the human consciousness as an inner centre works as an opposing force to the attraction of the earth and the centripetal force of gravity, however unable now (that is since Adam's fall) to overbear it." Whether this be a fact or not, probably remains unproved even at the present day, and the writer of the paper makes a com-

parison between it and the fish about which the "Merry Monarch" is said to have puzzled the Fellows of the Royal Society. The scientific men of to-day are never tired of repeating the statement, that with them "experiment has superseded dogma," while the truth is that upon fifty different subjects with which they profess to deal, experiment has never been tried and nothing but dogma prevails. The writer of the paper under consideration draws attention to this circumstance and asks the question, what experiments could be appealed to to settle such propositions as the following—"which are not so absurd as plenty that have had to be met and very laboriously demolished"—should they be made to-morrow?

(1) That between the weight of every adult man (or, say male white) with and without his soul, *i.e.*, alive and dead there was a difference of a drachm and a quarter, but (2) that in the case of no brute animal (or, say no woman or no negro) was there a thousandth of this difference; or, if you please, always a difference in the contrary direction, so that the human and brute soul (or the male and female human, or the European and the negro) should be so widely different physically as for the one to possess gravity and the other levity. Would there, in any of these cases, be any record of experiment to this hour that could negative the statement? If not, then who, the theologians or the scientists, are the rasher dogmatists or the more unphilosophical?

There can be no manner of doubt that a vast amount of dogmatism prevails at the present day in scientific circles upon subjects which have never been tested by experiment, and, in truth, which lie beyond the range of experiment altogether. The objections, urged mostly against spiritual manifestations—and these are usually put forward with as much dogmatism as that employed by the Pope in issuing a bull—are not only not based upon any experiment whatever, but are usually entirely of an *à priori* character. The thing is impossible, and therefore can't have happened, is the argument that one is usually met with when speaking of the more marvellous of these phenomena. The objector seems to forget, or persistently refuses to see, that many matters which Science not only recognises to-day but claims to be peculiarly her own, would have been declared impossible by the most eminent of her teachers in the last century. When a man talks of the impossible in connection with natural phenomena, he arrogates to himself an amount of knowledge which he not only does not possess, but which is unattainable by human-kind. The writer of the paper under consideration draws attention to what he calls a "wonderfully unlucky dictum that investigators ought to approach an enquiry with preliminary notions of the naturally possible and impossible;" which, as he truly says, "amounts to this, that before investigating whether nature contains  $x$ , you ought to know what nature does and does not contain." If these are the

requirements necessary to be possessed by an investigator, then it is quite clear that all investigation is impossible. And if such attainments are not within the reach of human beings, he who fancies he possesses them does but in his conceit erect a barrier to his progress in investigating, which must render all his labour of no effect. The question should not be what is or what is not possible, but—what is based upon fact and what is not.

The author of the paper enters into a somewhat lengthy discussion on the subject of miracles, and gives a definition of his own, which we by no means agree with, but may pass by without further notice. This question of miracle has been already most ably discussed in these pages by Mr. Wallace, and we ourselves shall have something to say on the subject hereafter, but for the present we pass it over, not caring to consider whether the spiritual phenomena be deemed miraculous or not, so long as they are admitted to take place. Whether they fall within the range of miracle or not will depend entirely on the definition given of a miracle, and, as Locke said, "To discourse on miracles, without defining what one means by the word, is to make a show, but in effect to talk of nothing."

There is one point which the writer of the paper deals with, and which we cannot pass over. It is in reference to that theory so commonly held in modern times, one of the articles of faith in the Positivist creed, and a dogma almost universally accepted by Materialists—that as all phenomena, physical and mental, take place in accordance with law, and that as every effect must have a cause, there is a possibility of human beings attaining to such a knowledge of these causes and their effects, as to enable them to predict not only every change of weather, but all the actions springing from human beings either individually or collectively. Of course this gets rid completely of the freedom of the will and volition as an originator of force, and reduces man to the condition of a piece of machinery impelled to a particular course of action by agencies which he has no power whatever to control. The passage in question, which we shall quote at length, has a reference to the statement of Professor Tyndall, that prayer for a change of weather was absurd and useless, because it asked for a miracle to be performed; and then it was no less unreasonable than to petition the Almighty to delay an eclipse. The writer remarks:—

He [Dr. Tyndall] then lays down as "science" the gratuitous paradox that winds and clouds of to-morrow may be, like the planetary motions, predetermined by only brute cosmic forces, which, if as true as it is demonstrably false, would not even then give the fixity he wants, as the planetary system itself is invaded at any moment by unknowable comets and meteors, and solar radiation hourly

altered by storms of the photosphere. He requires, at the outset of his attack, all the present century's discoveries to be ignored. But let us grant him a solar system as simple as mediæval ignorance ever fancied; this would not help him. Yonder is a gardener who may dig twenty more spadefuls before dinner, or perhaps only nineteen, Is Dr. Tyndall prepared to prove that whether they shall be twenty or nineteen is already as determined, by laws of brute matter, as the next transit of Venus? If not, he should have warned readers that the whole prayer argument was a mere *jeu d'esprit*, hanging on the assumption of this extreme necessitarianism. Relax one stitch thereof, and the whole fabric falls, thus: If there be any uncertainty about that twentieth spadeful, on this may depend whether a slug is turned up or not; on the slug may depend a young swallow's dinner who is feeble, and on this may depend whether he shall follow his colony and reach Africa; but on this fledgling's arrival or non-arrival may depend whether a certain insect shall serve him for supper, or be left to lay a million eggs, which, in that case will next month be each a locust laying a million more; and on this billion of locusts and their progeny may depend whether at Christmas all Ashantee and three Senegambias of forest shall be green as Eden or a leafless wilderness, and its mean temperature 100° or only 70°; and on whether such an area be the hottest or coolest portion of the planets intertropical lands, may well depend, by Dr. Tyndall's own showing, the winds and drought, or wet of a season, over half Europe, or the whole. It behoved him then to be quite sure about that gardener's last spadeful; and all such causes which yet he wholly leaves out of account. The weather of large districts may as plainly be still more quickly affected by events that acts of man or beast unconsciously bring about—as forest fires; avalanches that a goat may set rolling; dykes burst and Zuyder Zees refilled for ages, by the burrowing of a rat; shoals of herrings or of whales, that by turning right or left may make a month's difference in the break-up and drifting to us of half a year's polar ice. Here we confine ourselves to visible nature and known forces. Let the insane assumption be granted that there is no invisible nature, nor aught unknown, and even so He that owns and actuates the cattle on a thousand hills, might thus plainly, by only one of their hoofs, make the winds His ministers and flames of fire His messengers.

The writer then goes on to state that he hopes he will be understood to have no knowledge of the limits of the "naturally possible and impossible," and that by nature he understands "the course of whatever has happened, and thus can make no distinction between saying a thing happened, or that God did it, and saying it is natural." He maintains that if once only some one planet has "been overtaken by steam enough to deluge it totally in one day, or if a bodily levitation like those of Mr. Home, testified by the Editor of this journal, by Lord Lindsay, and many others, has only once occurred to any man, then each of these occurrences is sometimes natural." The definition here given of what is natural differs very considerably from that which is usually accepted, but this fact is unimportant, seeing that we have the definition before us and can by it interpret the facts hereafter quoted by the author and the light in which he views them.

Neither Spiritualists nor admitters of historical miracle, then, believe, as they are taxed with doing, any interruption of natural law. We as fully hold the continuity and eternity of evolution and its laws as Sir William Grove does. But to the false charge of our holding this superstition, there is added the boast that modern practical science has abandoned the same, and insists on absolute continuity. This is no truer than the above, as an example from those making

most practical claim to science will show. While the Sydenham Crystal Palace was building, in August, 1853, a scaffolding fell and killed some men, so that an inquest had to be held. The witnesses and experts, including three first-rate engineers, named Vignoles, Crampton, and Fox, agreed that the fall was "one of those events that cannot be accounted for;" that neither the materials nor plan of construction could be better (*Builder*, 1853, p. 546); the two former that both were such as they would repeat identically, and Crampton advised that this should be done, "believing it to be perfectly safe,"—safe by physical law, though in fact it had fallen. Neither our engineers nor coroners' courts, then, object to miracles in Dr. Newman's sense—events without physical cause, or breaches of physical law. They will on occasion, on what they consider "*dignus vindice nodus*," admit as readily as any mediæval monk, that "*Deus intersit*" in this capricious manner. But, as Paul said, that if the Sadducees were right, he and his fellows must be "false witnesses of God," in testifying that he raised up a man from death, whom he raised not up if so be that the dead rise not;" we must admit that, similarly, if the view of continuity common to St. Paul, Grove, Tyndall, and ourselves be sound, these engineers are just such witnesses, in swearing that, to overthrow the scaffolding, He interrupted natural law, which He did not interrupt if (as we hold) it is continuous.

Events that we hold to be, like all events, natural and "in the wheels," but which are not explicable without the volition of unseen beings, and have so been taken to attest the presence of an invisible population, require some distinctive name. Any that were clearly predicted would of course, by my definition, be miracles; but when they are not predicted, this definition excludes them, and I would suggest the non-scriptural but classic and patristic term *thauma*. In every historical age of the most civilized countries, these have been as well attested as any terrestrial facts, not reproducible at will, can be attested; and during the centuries, before and since the Reformation, that the frightful superstitions as to the crime of witchcraft held sway, plenty of such facts were always sufficiently testified to induce English judges and juries, and afterwards American ones, to consign hundreds of unfortunate, harmless women to death. One phenomenon always then held to fix this crime—and which, if proved in court, would cost the subject his or her life—was bodily levitation; in which some force was seen to work, in Archbishop Trench's words, "as an opposing force to the attraction of the earth," and also to "overbear it." The thing is testified now, of Mr. Home, a Scotchman, the American Davenports, when children, the eleven cases already recorded, as witnessed by the Editor of this Journal, and probably of more individuals now living, and by a greater mass of respectable testimony than it ever was in any single past age; though there were examples in every age of which civilised records remain. Now the most striking point is the close correspondence of minor details in the old accounts with those noted by modern witnesses, who evidently never saw nor received any tradition of those accounts, and, indeed, are generally under the error that the whole is as new a discovery of this age as galvanism or photography.

As Newton is held to have proved that gravitation and inertia in every mass are proportional, we might expect that whatever overbears the former would be equally capable of neutralising the latter; and in fact the elder records hardly speak of visible suspensions like those of Mr. Home, but mainly of sudden unseen transfers of the person to a distance; like that alleged of Dr. Monck last year, from his own residence at Bristol to the garden of his friend, Mr. Young, at Swindon; or the earlier but better attested one of Mrs. Guppy, from her house at Holloway to a circle of her friends assembled at No. 61, Lamb's Conduit Street; or, a few months ago, that of Mr. Henderson, a well-known photographer of London, for a smaller distance, but attested by 18 persons besides himself—the nine assembled with him at Mr. Guppy's, and the whole Stokes family at Highbury, where he was unexpectedly found. It is easy to see that two or three such transfers occurring to one man, as Abaris the Scythian, in the time of Pythagoras, could not fail to procure him the surname of "*Æthrobat*," or air-walker; and in the next age the story that Apollo, of whom he was a priest, had bestowed on him a golden arrow, whereby to be conveyed wherever he desired. But this most natural error, that the adepts can be levitated at will,

and in what direction they please, does not tinge the older, yet more sober, record of our earliest historic æthrobat, him of the Old Testament. "And behold," expostulates the courtier to whom Elijah (vainly sought for three years) had first re-appeared, "Thou sayest, Go, tell thy lord, Behold, Elijah is here; and it shall come to pass, as soon as I am gone from thee, that the Spirit of Yahveh shall carry thee whither I know not; and so when I come and tell Ahab, and he cannot find thee, he shall slay me." Then he recounts his piety (1 Kings, xviii. 2), "And now thou sayest, Go, tell thy lord, Behold, Elijah is here; and he shall slay me." He dares not go till the prophet has sworn, "I will surely show myself to him this day." Like all our modern æthrobat, though he cannot will nor direct his levitations, he can prevent them. The allusive and matter-of-course way that their general fact here comes in, so that, but for this and one mention after his final disappearance, we should not guess the phenomenon to have occurred in all Hebrew history, is inimitable, and makes it far stronger than if particular cases had been described. Not even was it introduced by any such note as that respecting young Samson, "And the spirit of the Lord began to move him at times in the camp." It seems assumed that readers of this brief abstract from the annals will no more need telling that Elijah was frequently air-borne, than to be told what country the Pharaoh ruled; or than the sons of the prophets needed to explain when, after his ascension, they said to his successor (2 Kings xii., 16), Behold now, there be with us fifty strong men; let them go, we pray thee, and seek thy master; lest, peradventure, the spirit of Yahveh hath taken him up, and cast him upon some mountain or into some valley. And he said, Ye shall not send. And when they urged him till he was ashamed, he said, Send. They sent, therefore, fifty men; and they sought three days, but found him not. And . . . he said unto them, Did I not say unto you, Go not?"

About three centuries after this, but in Europe, and not yet in quite such broad historic daylight as in Ahab's Israel, we find the pair of levitants, Abaris and Pythagoras. If it were still mythic twilight, all, or the main share of this and any other marvellous feature, would be heaped upon the crown of the great seer and martyr, the greatest European of his age, or perhaps of any age, the founder of the most civilised religion of the next thousand years, whose votaries ceased to quote him by name, but only as "He," and maintained that "Three kinds of beings are biped—birds, men, and our master." But the habitual air-walking is ascribed only to his humble friend Abaris, of whom nothing else is known; and but one single levitation to the great sage. According to all his three biographers, it was universally held that once he had on the same day addressed a class of his disciples in the city of Metapont (near the modern Taranto), and another circle in Taormina, at the foot of Etna. As in every modern case, we observe, it is only into the company of friends, either recorded to be at that moment speaking of him, or very presumably having him in mind, that the levitant is carried. That Pythagoras was a born thaumaturge, or first-rate "medium," as it is now called, appears, apart from all legend, by the most remembered of his peculiar dicta, namely, that "All things whatever are to be hoped for, because all are possible to the gods."

We then have a long account of what happened in connection with Christianity itself in the days of our Lord, viewed in the light of certain Apocryphal books, as well as the New Testament, which may be passed over here. The writer also enlarges upon the similarity of the modern manifestations, to those which took place in the days of Christ, both before and after His resurrection. Dealing with spirit-possession, and then with certain cases of levitation which occurred in the first century he remarks:—

As the Gospels represent spirit-possession to have been a most prevalent affliction at that time, so do they indicate the levitation of the possessed; as in

English and American witch trials, two centuries ago and later—Mark, ix., 17-26—A demon that “whithersoever he *took* (καταλαβη) his victim, tore and rent him, often also “cast him into the fire or into the water.” Luke ix., 39—“Lo, a spirit *taketh* him;” 42—“The demon *threw* him down.” The phrases are as distinct from any used of a lunatic throwing *himself* down, or injuring himself (Mark v. 5) as in the English witch levitations. The phenomenon was more associated with bad than good spirits, being only once related of Christ between his temptation and death; and only on Peter’s request does he grant to him also to come unto him on the water. We never again read of it among the wonders attending any apostle; but one of their first seven deacons, Philip, seems to have been congenitally a psychic excelling them all, “for unclean spirits, crying with loud voice, came out of many that were possessed” (viii. 7), and, as an instance of hereditary mediumship, “the same man had four daughters, virgins, which did prophecy” (xxi. 8). He accordingly affords the last Scriptural case of an *æthrobat*; for after his baptism of the destined founder of African Christianity (viii. 33), “the Spirit of the Lord caught away Philip, that the eunuch saw him no more, and he went on his way rejoicing: but Philip was *found* at Azotus;” this phrase, instead of “found himself,” seeming to imply that he alighted among friends, as in most other recorded cases of the kind.

Whether we read Christian, Jewish, or Pagan accounts, the first Christian century abounds in thaums beyond any other. False Christs were to arise, and to “show great signs and wonders.” The most typical instance of these doubtless was Philip’s original rival, Simon Magus, the mere beginning of whose career the Acts do but touch. For a whole generation he travelled and proclaimed himself both the Hebrew Messiah and an incarnation of each people’s chief deity; basing all his claims on a series of prodigies which no contemporary, friend or foe, seems to have ever denied. In the *Recognitions*, a work soon after ascribed to Clement, and certainly current in the next century, his translations through the air figure among these; and another Clementine (or, as now held, pseudo-Clementine) book, the *Apostolic Canons or Constitutions*, contains the professedly earliest account of his end at Rome, by a public display of this faculty, in defiance of one or two Christian apostles; at whose prayer that he might fall—but not fatally—he is related to have so fallen as to have broken both legs, and then, from shame, to have committed suicide. If one of his opponents was Paul, and the other unnamed, nothing was more natural than for a dramatic instinct to fix on his first rebuker, Peter, as having thus re-encountered him; and this may have originated the whole momentous legend that brings Peter to Rome, the first traces of which appear in the Patristic repetitions of this adventure.

An equally attested *æthrobat* of that century, whose long life was held indeed nearly to fill it, was Apollonius of Tyana, the most famous and closest of all imitators of Pythagoras. His life, by Philostratus, a work of some bulk, and written, Dr. Newman says, with elegance, has the rare advantages of being certainly drawn up within a century of his death, and from all the materials that a literary empress, the wife of Severus, could collect;—the philosopher’s own writings, a diary of his favourite and constant companion, Damis, memoirs by his chief earlier acquaintance, and the archives of the numerous cities that had received and honoured him. A century later, this book was made the basis of an attack on Christianity, answered by Eusebius, and now lost; but there is no evidence of Philostratus himself having written with any view, as Dr. Newman says, “of rivalling” the Christian marvels. None of his translators (including Berwick, a clergyman) have believed they detected any such aim, and it seems clear that this courtly professional bookmaker could have seen no documents of the despised sect, or some trace of allusion would be found. All his marvels imitate, on the contrary, tales current of Pythagoras; and most are either childish, objectless, or such as elude any real test—witch-finding, communicating by whispers with birds and animals; when imprisoned with Damis, drawing his leg out of the fetter, and then putting it in again, &c. But there are two that Dr. Newman thinks resemble Scripture miracles in forcing themselves into the history “as a component part of the narrative”—the first being the alleged cause

of his acquittal when on trial before Nero, for the crime the latter had invented, of philosophising in Rome. His accuser, Tigellinus, coming to unroll the bill of indictment, found only a blank paper (which may have been a miracle or may not). The other is the latest and most detailed point of his whole public career. He surrendered similarly before Domitian, who had revived the edict banishing philosophers (among whom the apostle John seems to have been reckoned), not only from Rome, but from the Continent. The trial attracted great notice, the grandest tribunal being used, and decorated as for a festival; but it ended sooner than was expected, by the Emperor acquitting him, only adding that he must be detained for a private interview that he desired after the day's business. The aged prisoner, with thanks, briefly declined the honour, unless the Emperor could detain both his soul and body. The former no human power could; no, nor, unless the gods willed it, even his body. He added a line of Homer, wherein Apollo says, "You cannot put me to death, for I am not liable thereto;" and on these words, vanished from the court; on the same afternoon as suddenly surprising his friends Damis and Demetrius, while talking of him in a grotto at Puteoli. One other such levitation occurs many years earlier, when at Smyrna he was crowded by sick persons, and by deputations inviting him to various cities. The Ephesians sent begging him to stay a pestilence; whereon, thinks his biographer, he designed to imitate his great master's passage from Italy into Sicily, for on replying "Yes, let us go at once," immediately he was at Ephesus.

The writer then proceeds to deal with certain objections sometimes raised against one of these cases, and then passes on to a later period. He remarks:—

Iamblichus, in the next century (*De Myst.* Lib. III., c. 5), declared that one of the marks of obsession by spirits was, for the body "to appear elongated or thicker, or be borne aloft in the air."

In the century of the Church's triumph, at least one Christian and one heathen case of levitated persons are recorded. Sozomen relates after Hilarion, the founder of monachism in Palestine, that as four of his monks, whom he names, were returning to their convent of Bethlelea, in the desert of Gaza, the youngest, but most esteemed, one Malchio, who soon afterwards left this life, suddenly vanished from their midst, and later in the journey reappeared (*Ecl. Hist.* Lib. VI. c. 32). The other case is an Egyptian prostitute, who came to Zosimas, an abbot, to beg his prayers and instruction in Christianity. As she was kneeling at his feet, he told her to turn and pray for herself and others. This he described her doing like Hannah, silently moving her lips:—"Juravit autem, sermonis sui testem appellans Deum, quod animadvertans longius protrahi orationem, oculos aliquantum à terrâ sustulit, viditque ipsam orare in altum sublaturum, et in aëre suspensam, velut ad cubitum unum; quod cum vidit, majori correptus metu, multumque anxius, et omninò nihil proloqui audens, solùm intra se dicebat identidem, Domine miserere. Sic autem in terrâ jacens, scandalizari cœpit senex cogitando, ne fortè spiritus esset atque orationem simularet." Plainly, in the days of the British Solomon and the *Novum Organon*, this poor woman would, on any British ground, have made acquaintance with the halter or the stake. But Zosimas, after due probation, baptised her; and after the life of an exemplary nun, she became revered to this day as St. Mary Ægyptiaca; though nothing approaching miracle seems to have been ascribed to her as a Christian, or after this first interview (*Acta Sanctorum Aprilis*, Vol. I., p. 79). Ecclesiastical miracles in general follow a distribution quite opposite to that of these phenomena. The darker and less historical the age, the more miracles, but the fewer of these phenomena. The testimonies to these, absent so far as we see in the ages from the fourth century to the ninth, increase in number, respectability, and accuracy, from the latter to the present day. Till the last two centuries, indeed, all persons known in Christendom to be subjects of levitation were probably either burnt or canonised, according to the ruling clerical view of their orthodoxy or the reverse. The following is an attempt to collect some of the chief examples not condemned, with the volume and page of the Bolandists' *Acta* where particulars may be found:—

*Forty Levitated Persons, Canonized or Beatified.*

Name, Country, and Condition.	Date of Life.	Acta Sanct.	Vol.	Pages.
Andrew Salus, Scythian Slave ...	880— 946	May	VI.	16*
Luke of Soterium, Greek Monk...	890— 946	Feb.	II.	85
Stephen I., King of Hungary ...	978—1038	Sept.	I.	541
Ladislaus I., Ditto (his grandson)	1041—1096	June	V.	318
Christina, Flemish Nun ... ..	1150—1220	July	V.	656
St. Dominic, Italian Preacher ...	1170—1221	Aug.	I.	405, 573
Lutgard, Belgian Nun ... ..	1182—1246	June	III.	238
Agnes of Bohemia, Princess ...	1205—1281	March	I.	522
Humiliana of Florence, Widow ...	1219—1246	May	IV.	396
Jutta, Prussian Widow Hermit ...	1215—1264	May	VII.	606
St. Bonaventure, Italian Cardinal	1221—1274	July	III.	827
St. Thomas Aquinas, Italian Friar	1227—1274	March	I.	670-1
Ambrose Sansedonius, Itln. Priest	1220—1287	March	III.	192
Peter Armengol, Spanish Priest	1238—1304	Sept.	I.	334
St. Albert, Sicilian Priest ... ..	1240—1306	Aug.	II.	236
Princess Margaret of Hungary ...	1242—1270	Jan.	II.	904
Robert of Solentum, Italian Abbot	1273—1341	July	IV.	503
Agnes of Mt. Politian, Itln. Abbess	1274—1317	April	II.	794
Bartholus of Vado, Italian Hermit	1300	June	II.	1007
Princess Elizabeth of Hungary ...	1297—1338	May	II.	126
Catharine Columbina, Sp. Abbess	1387	July	VII.	352
St. Vincent Ferrer, Sp. Missionary	1359—1419	April	I.	497
Coleta of Ghent, Flemish Abbess	1381—1447	March	I.	559, 576
Jeremy of Panormo, Sicilian Friar	1381—1452	March	I.	297
St. Antonine, Archbp. of Florence	1389—1459	May	I.	335
St. Francis of Paola, Missionary	1440—1507	April	I.	117
Osanna of Mantua, Italian Nun	1450—1505	June	III.	703, 705
Bartholomew of Anghiera, Friar	1510	March	II.	665
Columba of Rieti, Italian Nun ...	1468—1501	May	V.	332*-4*,360*
Thomas, Archbishop of Valencia	1487—1555	Sept.	V.	832, 969
St. Ignatius Loyola, Sp. Soldier...	1491—1556	July	VII.	432
Peter of Alcantara, Spanish Friar	1499—1562	Oct.	VIII.	672, 673, 678
St. Philip Neri, Italian Friar ...	1515—1595	May	VI.	590
Salvator de Hortâ, Spanish Friar	1520—1567	March	II.	679-80
St. Luis Bertrand, Sp. Missionary	1526—1581	Oct.	V.	407, 483
St. Theresa, Spanish Abbess ...	1515—1582	Oct.	VII.	399
John à Cruce, Spanish Priest ...	1542—1591	Oct.	VII.	239
J. B. Piscator, Roman Professor	1586	June	IV.	976
Joseph of Cupertino, Italian Friar	1603—1663	Sept.	V.	1020-2
Bonaventure of Potenza, Itln. Friar	1651—1711	Oct.	XII.	154, 157-9

As the lives of all these are pretty fully recorded, we have the means of drawing several generalisations. It is plain that all displayed the qualities most distinctive of the present "spirit-mediums," and many were accompanied from childhood by some of the same phenomena, though I find nothing resembling the "raps." The hereditary nature of their gifts is shown by the Hungarian royal family producing five examples; and it is also notable, on this head, that out of 40 there should not be one of British or French birth, although some of the most remarkable spent much of their lives in France, and all other Christian races seem represented. A feature absolutely common to the whole 40 is great asceticism. Only four married, and all were in the habit of extreme fasting, "macerating" their bodies either with hair shirts or various irons under their clothes, and many of submitting to bloody flagellations. Again, all, without exception, were ghost-seers, or second-sighted; and all subject to trances, either with loss of consciousness only, or of motion and flexibility too, in which case they were often supposed dead; and the last in our list, after lying in state for three days, and being barbarously mutilated by his worshippers, for relics, was un-

questionably finally buried alive.\* Many were levitated only in these unconscious states; others, as Joseph of Cupertino (the greatest æthrobat in all history), both in the trance and ordinary state, and (like Mr. Home) most frequently in the latter; while a very few, as Theresa, seem to have been always conscious when in the air. Several were, in certain states, fire-handlers, like Mr. Home. The Princess Margaret was so from the age of ten. Many had what was called the "gift of tongues," that is, were caused (doubtless in an obsessed state) to address audiences of whose language they were ignorant. Thus the Spaniard, Vincent Ferrer, is said to have learnt no language but his own, though he gathered great audiences in France, Germany, England, and Ireland. Connected with this, we should note how general a quality of these persons was eloquence. All the men (unless the two kings), and most of the women, were great preachers, though few wrote anything, except Bonaventure and Thomas in the thirteenth century, and Theresa in the sixteenth, who were the greatest Catholic writers of their ages. It is also very notable that the list contains the founders of six religious orders—the first special preaching order, Dominicans, the Jesuate Nuns, Minim Friars, Jesuits, Carmelite Nuns, and Oratorians; and all of these, except the second, great and durable.

The great majority of them, though often seen suspended, were at heights from the ground described only as "a palm," half a cubit, a cubit, and thence up to five or six cubits, or, in a few cases, ells. But the Princess Agnes and the Abbess Coleta were, like Elijah, carried out of sight, or into the clouds; and Peter of Alcantara and Joseph of Cupertino to the ceilings of lofty buildings. The times that these and others were watched off the ground often exceeded an hour; and the Archbishop of Valencia (1555) was suspended in a trance 12 hours, so that not only all the inmates of his palace and clergy, but innumerable lay citizens, went to see the marvel. On recovery, with the missal he had been reading in his hand, he merely remarked he had lost the place.† In this and all cases the subjects were either praying at the time, or speaking or listening to a particular religious topic that, in each case, is recorded to have generally affected that person either with trance or levitation. We have seen that Apollonius vanished on declaiming his favourite verse of Homer. So the topic of the Incarnation would cause Peter of Alcantara to utter a frightful cry, and shoot through the air "*ut sclopeto emissus videretur*;" that of Mary's birth would have a like effect on Joseph of Cupertino; and Theresa, after obtaining by prayer the cessation of her early levitations, was yet obliged to avoid hearing John à Cruce on the Trinity, finding that this topic would cause both him and her to be raised with their chairs from the floor. A contemporary painting of them in this position, beside the grating where it occurred, has been engraved in the volume above cited. Joseph of Cupertino, on entering any church having a Madonna or his patron, St. Francis, as an altarpiece, would be borne straight thereto, crying, "My dear mother!" or "My father!" and remain with his arms and robe so among the candles as to alarm all with the danger of his catching fire; but always flying back to the spot whence he had risen. Others were raised up to images or pictures, as the Abbess Agnes in early girlhood, often before a crucifix, "*in tantum eam arripuit amor Sponsi sui, quòd relictâ terrâ tam alté fuit corpus suum purissimum sublevatum in aère, quòd ipsi imagini, supra altare in eminenti loco positæ, se pari situ conjunxit; ubi osculans et amplexans, visa est super Dilectum suum innixa.*"

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\* This appalling story of insane superstition, to be paralleled probably among no non-Catholic people on earth, will be found in *Acta Sanctorum Octobris*, Vol. XII., p. 158-60.

† This prelate, the annual income of whose see was 18,000 ducats, had no sooner settled in his palace than he got rid of all luxurious furniture, and made it a hospital or poor-house; himself often sleeping on straw, if beds ran short for the paupers. Charles V. had named another person for this see, but the secretary to whom he was dictating mistook the name, and taking another paper said, "I imagined your Majesty to have said Thomas of Villanova, but the error will soon be rectified." The emperor said, "By no means: the mistake was providential; let it stand."

Of invisible transfers to a distance, the only subjects seem to have been Columba of Rietti, said to have been carried from her mother's house in that town to the nunnery that afterwards received her, at Spoleto, 20 miles distant; and the river transits of Peter of Alcantara. The lives of Joseph of Cupertino, indeed, allege that the rare miracle of "geminatio corporis," or bodily presence in two distant places the same day, was twice vouchsafed to him while dwelling at Rome—once to assist at the death-bed of a named old man of his native village, whom he had promised to attend if possible; and again at the death of his mother. It is also related of the great Spanish æthrobat that, while the business of a jubilee detained him at Madrid (1558-9), a lady, Elvira de Caravajal, in Estremadura, declared her resolve to have no other confessor till Father Peter might be within reach; and the same day he presented himself at her castle, announcing that he had been brought expressly from Madrid, and that she ought not to choose confessors so distant. There is doubtless plenty of exaggeration, and many stories of this kind must be apocryphal, but the notable fact is that they are told only of the same persons as the fully-attested levitations and other phenomena parallel to the modern so-called Spiritism.

A number of other facts of a similar kind are quoted by the author of this article, which we have not space to copy. They are all intensely interesting and of the highest degree of importance at the present time. Influenced largely by the scepticism which prevails so abundantly in this age, we have become so accustomed to disbelieve everything of an extraordinary character that we have not ourselves witnessed, that the history of the past has become to us worse than useless. Records of circumstances contradicting the narrow notions bound up with modern materialistic science, have been looked upon as the result of imposture, or delusion, or a mixture of both; Modern Spiritualism has, however, thrown a new light on these subjects and given us in fact a key to unlock the mysteries of the past, by which alone we can understand their real value. The author concludes his article as follows:—

The conclusion we draw is, that the very common notion of our having, or philosophers having, divided all describable events into the "naturally possible" and "naturally impossible," and assuming to have fixed this limit, can lead to nothing but priestcraft and superstition. Unless our calling things "impossible" could prevent their happening, it only gives them *prestige* whenever and wherever they may happen. Prince John of Brunswick was probably brought up to hold very nearly these most falsely-called "Positivist" ideas—and we see the natural result. The more impossible or preternatural a Faraday or Comte can persuade us to consider any feat, the more helplessly will its occurrence hand us over to whatever body of men or beings can at all manipulate that feat.

Whether this paper has been written by Mr. Crookes himself or by one of his contributors, he is deserving of considerable praise for giving it a place in his *Quarterly Journal of Science*, in the pages of which it will be read by large numbers of persons who are inaccessible to Spiritualistic literature. Science and Spiritualism, have hitherto, not only kept largely apart, but they have assumed an attitude of hostility to each other. The

time is coming when they must shake hands and be friends, and unite together to work for one common end.

We may not hope to read  
 Nor comprehend the whole,  
 Or of the law of things  
 Or of the law of soul ;  
 E'en in the eternal stars  
 Dim perturbations rise,  
 And all the searchers' search  
 Does not exhaust the skies ;  
 He who has framed and brought us hither  
 Holds in His hands the whence and whither.

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### DEMONIAC POSSESSION.

A SINGULAR CASE IN THE SOUTH OF ENGLAND, WITH SOME SUGGESTIONS REGARDING THE TREATMENT OF SUCH CASES.

ON all hands does the cry come up around us—"There is Possession in the land!—Demoniac Possession!" An extraordinary cry to be heard in this wise, this scientific century, when the mind of man at length has been supposed to be cleansed of all superstition. You take up a popular magazine, and in it you find an account of demoniac possession falling upon hundreds simultaneously in the same district,\* and this not beyond the summer excursion of the English tourist, and where the phenomenon has been made the object of careful scientific research, by physicians dispatched for that purpose from Paris by the Emperor of the French. You hear, again and again, in private circles, accounts of the most extraordinary occurrences, related by persons of all ranks, from the peer to the peasant; of extraordinary occurrences which baffle the acumen of the physician, and which even the "mad doctor" is fain to dismiss as not common insanity. The scientific man; the young Quakeress, carefully nurtured amidst the refinements of a wealthy and religious home; the servant-girl, healthy and free from care, and unwrought upon by over-intellectual stimulus; the labouring peasant-woman of the Continent, who earns her living by incessant physical labour in the open air; these, and many another type of some special class in society, low and high, might readily be brought forward as examples of this wide-spreading mysterious epidemic seizure.

We have already in the pages of the *Spiritual Magazine*

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\* This article was written in 1866, shortly after the paper upon the "Devils of Morzine," in the *Cornhill Magazine*, had appeared.

referred occasionally to this important field for investigation. We now purpose once more to enter yet more systematically into its consideration ; giving every now and then some special article upon the subject, with suggestions, springing out of the material laid before our readers, for the formation possibly of a theory more philosophical regarding the nature and cause of the phenomena of this peculiar phase of spirit-manifestation, than as yet is held by our men of science. We will begin by giving a sketch of a case of possession at present to be found in the neighbourhood of an important town in the South of England. It is a case which attracted the attention of a circle of Spiritualists who have recognized its special character, and have sought to alleviate the sufferings of the afflicted woman—though with but slight success—owing, perhaps, to the physical as well as spiritual difficulties which opposed their best endeavours. The names of the persons concerned cannot be given—nor yet the place of the woman's residence. The writer of this article can certify however the truthfulness of the narrative. I give this account as written down at the time by a friend, Mrs. B., simply changing the initials of the names.

“During the winter of 1865, Miss A., from S—, in the South of England, was in London. We, being believers in Spiritualism, came to speak about possession and insanity in connection with it. Miss A. referred to a typical case of possession, an account of which had appeared in the *Spiritual Magazine* a few months previously (July, 1865), translated from the exhaustive work on the subject of *Demoniac Possession*, by Dr. Justinus Kerner. This article was entitled ‘The Maid of Orlach.’ In the conclusion of this article, the translator suggests an hypothesis whereby to explain the mystery, or at all events to cast some rays of hope upon its terrible darkness ; namely, that judging from many facts already upon record, it might appear as though the permission of God to evil spirits to enter the bodies of human beings, were in fact a portion of a vast and benevolent scheme planned by an All-wise God, to promote the progression of the evil spirits towards higher good, and ultimately to unite them with Himself. To use the concluding words of this article, Demoniac Possession might possibly prove to be ‘one act in an unutterably affecting Divine Drama, created by the Poet of Poets ; where the actors are disembodied spirits, where the stage is the fleshly body of humanity, and where the end will be final progression for all the actors towards God. Yes, progression—slow though it may be—of the blackest demons in the lowest hells.’ A progression, however, be it observed, rendered possible through the instrumentality of the comparatively good and innocent, who are

brought thus, by irresistible fate, into loathly proximity with the cruel, base and impure, and thus, in order to associate their degraded nature with that which is higher, but which still through imperfection, is not *so high* as to render a certain union impossible; whilst at the same time these innocent victims, through trial and temptation, through struggle and pain (being ever upheld by the invisible, powerful hand of God), wax more and more pure, casting off in their fiery furnace their own imperfection; rising ever and ever into a higher altitude through their mission of self-sacrifice, and finally become the highly-blessed, having been associated by the Creator-Saviour as fellow-labourers with Himself in His eternal labour of purification and salvation of souls.”\*

Illumined by this ray of hope, let us take courage and dare to descend into the contemplation of the dungeons of Hell—slimy and slippery as are the steps, gloomy, cruel and revolting as will be the sights we must inevitably encounter upon our wanderings.

In the following February, Miss A. thus writes to Mrs. B. :—

“ *February 14th, 1866.*—I have lately met with a case of possession. The sufferer is a poor woman, very respectable and apparently perfectly sane. But she has, she says, dwelling in her chest, a female spirit who is revengeful, tormenting, uncertain, full of bad language, and who delights in talking of low disagreeable things. This is one of those cases, to prove that madness, if properly understood, is frequently the possession of the body by evil spirits—the more fearful cases being possession of the mind! This poor woman (whom I will call Johanna) knows well that she is possessed by an evil spirit. She prays for deliverance from it. She reasons with it, and refuses to utter the wicked words which it tries to force through her lips. She declares that frequently the wicked words of the spirit hang round her lips, until they become black from forced repression of these words. Johanna—except when suffering from stomachic derangement—appears never to lose the sense of her own identity. Nevertheless her self-command and self-consciousness have not saved her from the charge of madness. At one time she was put into a mad-house, and kept there for a whole year, but let out again, as she could not be pronounced by the doctors insane, except as to the ‘delusion of hers that she was possessed.’

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\* This theory of Possession, startling and unorthodox as it may at first appear, will not be found, however, inharmonious with conclusions drawn from Scriptures by the Rev. Andrew Jukes in his learned, admirable, and comforting little work, *The Restitution of All Things*. London: LONGMANS, 1869.

“Nevertheless that this idea was no *delusion*, even the doctors must have seen had they not been mentally blind, since Johanna, informed by the spirit of events about to take place, foretold their occurrence, and her prophecies were found to come true.

“Evidently for years Johanna has possessed the faculty which we Spiritualists call ‘mediumship.’ At one time, she assures my sister, she used to hear many beautiful spirits who would converse with her about God and His works of creation, and also about people; they would inform her of approaching deaths, also of important events in the lives of persons known to her. She says that one very grand spirit—whom she at first called God—said that ‘he was coming to sweep through the world and renew the elements and bring purity into the world in place of the evil and destruction now there.’ Also spirits of a much lower order appear to have for many years been in the habit of manifesting themselves both to and through her. By noises of various sorts they intimate their presence, and occasionally show themselves visibly. The noises thus made have been audible to persons present, though unseen of all except Johanna.

“Johanna has been for some time living in an almshouse, the history of which is so peculiar that I cannot avoid associating it with much of the poor woman’s affliction. The subtle, magnetic power of mind acting upon inanimate substances, and thereby rendering them media of communication to other minds, although ignored by the world at large, to experimentors in the science of animal magnetism, and to Spiritualists, has become a thoroughly proved fact. Thus you will perceive in the history of the house a certain origin for much of Johanna’s trouble, bearing in mind her peculiar susceptibility to spiritual influence.”

[Here follows an account of this house and the history of a strange family who inhabited it previously to its becoming an almshouse. Strange and tragical events had taken place within its walls. It had been the abode of turbulent natures, and sensitive, suffering natures, natures which were linked with suicide and madness.]

“After this tragedy (one of many connected with the place) poor people were allowed to find shelter in the house, and Johanna and her sister came in. Also a number of very bad people lived in the almshouse, until the sisters informed the clergyman of the fact; upon which the bad people were turned out. Shortly after this Johanna fell ill, and it was then she says that the evil spirit entered into her—probably through her lowered physical condition being enabled to gain an admittance into her unhealthy organism. She described the spirit as enter-

ing with a great shock between her shoulder blades.\* The evil spirit blamed Johanna greatly for getting the bad people dismissed. Johanna was now pronounced mad and removed to an asylum. Whilst in the asylum, the spirit within her was wildly anxious to get back to the almshouse, and was enraged with her for having been the cause of the bad people being removed from thence. The evil spirit in truth seems to have threatened Johanna in spirit, if not in actual words, thus—'You have turned out the people out of their house, but I will live in you as my house and I will not be turned out!'

"Johanna declares that her presence in the madhouse, with her indwelling raging demon, did much mischief there. She declares that the evil spirit—or spirits—for they at times might be termed 'legion'—who dwelt within her as their home—went out as if on excursions into the lunatics and harmless idiots, and made them rave. At this time, however, a beautiful wonder occurred; for after her torments 'an angel came and ministered' to her. To use the words of Johanna, 'One day a great angel came, so strong that if he had put out his power, he could have crushed the house down, and said to me, "I will heal thee of thy pain!"' (The evil spirit hurts her physically with internal heat and pain.) And then the great angel made hieroglyphics and signs over me (here she imitated the movements of 'mesmeric passes') and so drew the fire out of me; and I was so comfortable, so comfortable and peaceful for many days. But after that (I think she said when she had returned to the almshouse) the evil spirit came into me again.'

"Johanna gives terrible descriptions of the low and revolting habits of evil spirits. Many strange spiritual things she saw in the madhouse. Amongst others, she described various spirits who never moved out of certain corners of the rooms, and who declared that they were bound there by their 'master,' and must remain there bound—some said for thousands of years—others for ages. *These spirits always call the highest power which they perceive, 'God,'* so that Johanna in quoting their words adds, 'that is *their* God, not my God—their God is their master.'

"I have given this poor sufferer medicine which has relieved some physical discomforts, and have tried to strengthen her with assurances that God over-rules all things, and that His hand is in this matter; to which sentiment she quite agrees. I have also urged her to continue reasoning with the spirit, and

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\* The Maid of Orlach described the evil spirit entering into her by her left side, when with five cold fingers he seized her on the back of her neck, and with this seizure entered her. Another possessed person has described a similar entrance through the sole of the left foot.

resisting its evil impulses. But above all I have urged the necessity for prayer. She herself thinks that the only remedy would be to be 'prayed over.' I have promised, therefore, to try the effect of united prayer for her. We have written to Mrs. L., sending a lock of Johanna's hair, and to C. and to S., asking them to unite with you and us, and with Johanna in prayer, at from half-past eight to nine o'clock next Sunday evening. Let us all, though separated by physical distance, become united together at the same hour for this one purpose—the relief, if such be the Divine will, of this poor sufferer.

"Though Johanna is prosy, and often rambling in her accounts of her sufferings, she is always herself, and quite distinct in her utterances from the spirit. She is a religious woman, having tried various churches—our own, the Roman Catholic, the Apostolic Church, and that of the Plymouth Brethren, and various others—endeavouring to see whether the ministers of any of these churches could understand or cure her case. All, with the exception of the clergyman of the Church of England (who told her that there was no such thing as possession), thought that they knew something about it, but none could cure her. Let us—a little band of Spiritualists who do believe in possession—at all events unite in prayer to the Almighty: to beseech of Him, if it be His will, to release her from her bondage; and if it be *not* His will to cast forth the spirit, at least to alleviate her sufferings, and to enlighten us, if He see fit—for the sake of others—regarding this fearful mystery of possession.

"Duly at the hour appointed, my husband and myself," writes Mrs. B., "being alone, united in prayer for poor Johanna. My husband had provided himself with the ancient form of prayer for the casting out of evil spirits formerly in use in the Church of England, and commenced reading it aloud. All the time, silently, the spirit-voice within me\* prayed with him; but I observed that this voice prayed not alone for Johanna and the casting forth of the evil spirit, but that the Almighty Father would take compassion upon the evil spirits themselves, and if He saw fit to remove them, provide also for their progression and purification in such other bodies as were suitable habitations for them. Habitations where, comparatively speaking, they would be innocuous. The form of exorcism contains no prayer whatsoever for the unhappy spirits. This omission my husband observed after reading the exorcism aloud. He then prayed aloud such words as were given to him by inspiration. His prayer in spirit, and almost in words, was identical with that prayer prayed

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\* Mrs. B. is a medium who is conscious of a "still small voice" which converses and prays with her in her own mind, and to which for years she has listened as to the voice of a friend.

within my mind by the internal voice. Thus we prayed for half an hour. Nothing further occurred to us.

“From our friend Mrs. L. we received the following account of what transpired at the time appointed with her and her husband. Mrs. L. is a seeing as well as hearing medium:—

“On Saturday I asked my guardian angels to come with some other dear spirits and unite with me in prayer at half-past eight on the Sunday evening. At the appointed time the angels and spirits appeared and held up a small prayer, which was written in light, whiter than snow, and which they said we must all breathe together, in order that the prayer might be possessed of greater vitality. My husband all the time was reading. I had not mentioned my appointment with the angels to pray for the poor woman. I had not wished to make him uneasy, as he thinks I have too many calls for prayer made upon me. Twice I breathed the prayer quietly to myself with the dear spirits; then I believed that the prayer would be efficacious, because I felt so much strength taken out of me. I then sat quietly thinking about the A.'s and the poor woman, earnestly hoping that our prayers for her might be helpful. Suddenly there came a loud noise on the back of my husband's chair. He started forward, exclaiming, “There is some animal upon me!” I saw a long, dark arm and hand, but did not see the whole form. The hand appeared to be trying to injure my husband. I felt very nervous lest it should succeed in its endeavours, for he said it had given him quite a shock, and that he felt a creeping sensation all over him. I, therefore, then told my husband what I had been doing, and what the dear angels told me; which was that the dark spirit had been obliged to leave Johanna through our prayers, and had come here to find a home in some human being through whom it might trouble us. It was about a quarter to nine when the spirit endeavoured to hurt my husband. After this he received from our dear spirit-friends comforting and assuring messages.’

“S. also wrote from abroad that he had joined in prayer at the appointed time, but nothing had occurred to him. What occurred meanwhile at S——, on the Sunday evening, was as follows. I give this in the words of Miss A.:—

“The united prayers of last Sunday night do really appear to have been answered in one or two ways. Firstly by the relief of the sufferer, and secondly by clear instructions having been given for her treatment. Johanna says that she has been left in peace since Sunday. Her sister also says she has been much quieter. Johanna at the time experienced nothing either painful or pleasant. She says when she knelt down to pray at half-past eight on Sunday, the spirit moved her to

laugh,\* but that she overcame the impulse. At the moment she began to pray she felt that she was gone with some one to Winchester (in trance no doubt). At Winchester she remained with her conductor some time in prayer. On her return (*i.e.* on coming out of the trance-state) she found that "the spirit inside her" was "good-like."

"We here, four of us, were in earnest prayer and received the following spiritual instructions. "We (the spirits communicating) cannot drive out the evil spirits from the woman. Not even the powerful weight of prayer can overbalance the evil of ages. Yet will the influence of your prayerful wishes be, as the drop of water from Lazarus to the tortured Dives, to the Debased One; and for the other (Johanna) suffer it to be so now; for that one being turned out, others would enter in and learn to progress through her agency. Needs must there be such sufferers. But were they taught and managed properly the evil could be restrained, and they (the possessed) might learn self-control. It is a much greater evil for such persons to be treated as mad, than for the cause of the evil to be acknowledged, and self-restraint to be taught. If the possession be *not* acknowledged, the sufferer is made doubly mad. The spirit, named Debased One, will in the course of ages be as powerful in influence for good as she now is for evil. The reason she entered Johanna (whose spiritual name is Patient Endurance, was because she perceived in her a native holiness. The means by which she entered was through Johanna's familiarity with evil, coarse things connected with the people about her—low thoughts, not evil deeds. Patient Endurance must not pray *against* the evil spirit, but must rather pray *for* her, even as a mother would pray for a sick and peevish child. The Debased One will have to be instructed and can be instructed by Patient Endurance. This is the mission of love conferred on Johanna by God. She will do this for His sake, who spent a life-time here amongst demons that you might be delivered from them. For His sake, we pray that Patient Endurance will bear with, will help, yes, even will love the poor Debased One. In order to teach the evil spirit better things, Patient Endurance must never allow any one to talk with her about evil people or evil, uncomely things. She must not permit her thoughts to dwell upon such things. She must feed the spirit within her with the pure bread and wholesome food of delicate thought—not with loathsome uncleanness. Patient Endurance should go out into the sunshine and amongst

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\* This tendency to laugh at time of prayer in cases of possession has repeatedly been observed by Dr. Kerner and others.

the fields and trees. She must seek to make the evil spirit love to dwell amidst fair scenes, and to love Him who is all goodness, peace and love.”

“ Before writing this message Miss A. felt overpowered by the most noxious odour, which we were assured proceeded from the presence of this evil spirit. Also one night the L.'s had been greatly annoyed in the same manner.\*

“ ‘ I feel very strongly,’ continues Miss A., ‘ the need for an entire change of scene and surroundings for a patient such as Johanna. There are such degrading habits amongst the poor—such indulgence in “ gossip ”—but indeed, for that matter, are the rich and educated classes much less given to this evil habit? There is so much indulgence in talk, which leads to the familiarization with impure and unlovely ideas; and how little do any of us realize the effect of indulging in unkind thoughts—in uncharitable surmises! Did we do so, surely, we should take more heed what rubbish we put into that crucible, out of which we are looking to produce only pure gold. One perceives how, in the case of Johanna, the heart is the crucible of the Almighty Alchemist. But not even the magic powers of the Holy Spirit can instantaneously turn foulness into purity, nor dross into pure gold.

“ ‘ What one desires for such cases as this of poor Johanna, is an asylum where the sufferers should be surrounded by voluntary companions who believe in Spiritualism as we do; healthy, sane, well-educated, refined, cheerful persons, whose presence and aura should keep at bay low and dark spirits. Such service to be beneficial should be voluntary.’ ”

On a certain Sunday evening early in March, Mrs. B., at the usual time of prayer, received by spirit-writing various directions regarding this case. “ It is a typical case of possession from which you will learn many things. Note down all that happens and carefully observe your sensations, for the evil spirits will endeavour to torment all concerned in the endeavour to cast them out. But no real harm will be permitted to occur.” The communication ended with sanitary directions and certain curious observations regarding the noises as of animals made by evil spirits.† A letter received within a few days by Mrs. B. from Miss A. is as follows:—

“ I never had heard Johanna make a noise like an animal;

\* Such evil odours are frequently spoken of by Dr. Kerner.

† Regarding the manifestation of spirit in animal or bird-forms, or through the voices of animals, a whole volume might be written—a most instructive volume too—the animal and bird manifestation belonging both to the celestial and supernal realms. Examples of both from the Scriptures of all nations might be found alone to fill a volume.

but last Sunday evening one of her evil 'possessors' got into me, palsied my right hand, which continued to shake after the *séance* was broken up, through supper and through family prayers. One of my sisters suffered also. The spirit spoke through my lips—'Won't I plague you a bit!—won't I plague you just! You shan't get any messages! ha, ha!' I silenced myself; but was presently seized with a strong inclination to bark. My telling my sister this, opened the closed gates, and I continued for some five minutes to bark irresistibly whenever I tried to open my mouth. My sister said 'Let us talk of something else,' but in vain—I could only bark. I grew alarmed, and with an urgent prayer and a violent effort I got rid of the barking, but the shaking of the hand continued. Nevertheless, I was not distressed, nor mentally fatigued, not spiritually depressed. My limbs only were affected. This was comforting, for it gave me an assurance that although I must expect suffering from intimacy with such an afflicted person, Christ will surround us all with the holy charm of His watchful care. I have been out to see Johanna again. As she lives so far from us, and we have no carriage, I cannot see her as frequently as I otherwise should do. She experienced nothing unusual on Sunday. It is difficult to collect or remember all the facts which she narrates as she wanders from subject to subject. She says, however, that the evil spirits endeavour to induce her to make the noises of animals, also to make grimaces. One spirit once told her, 'I am a dog—I am Death—I am the spirit that makes animals moan before a death occurs, and I will make all the dogs round here bark and moan to-night, to prove to you that I can do this.' And sure enough all the dogs did howl and moan. Another spirit runs along the floor like a mouse. Johanna having in vain consulted many doctors, clings to the idea that a certain man could take the spirit out of her at midnight. She often speaks of a fair young man in London who prays for her—most probably belonging to the Apostolic Church, as we shall see later on: She said, 'When I knelt down to pray (upon the Sunday night already referred to, when the spirit laughed within her) he took me to Winchester, and I was with the Catholic Priest there until I got up off my knees, and then I was myself again.' Last Sunday morning Johanna went to the Roman Catholic Church, and she says that the music did for her what the grand angel once did—draw the pain and the fire upwards out of her head.

"*March 20th.*—I saw Johanna this morning, and found her quieter than last week. She labours under the great disadvantage of having an egoistical nature, being touchy and apt to take affront at anything or nothing, and this disposition renders

her of course excitable, and doubly susceptible to evil suggestions of an unkind or suspicious character. She is also very captious with her sister. She frequently speaks of one special spirit—although there are many, she says, who influence her—*making her feel as though she were another person*. As for instance, she says, ‘Well then, miss, she made me like the humpbacked man who comes round with ornaments to sell.’ Or, ‘She made me feel like one of the angels of the Apostolic Church; not like one of those men I saw here, *but like one in London I have never seen.*’ (This is the one with whom she went, she says, in the trance, to Winchester.) Many other curious remarks of this kind evidently show that in some mysterious manner Johanna is made *clairvoyante* by the spirits, and brought into *rapport* with certain individuals. For instance, I had been speaking to Johanna of a friend of ours, who though a ‘mad-doctor,’ would not believe what I had told him concerning her. This conversation occurred last week. To-day, Johanna said, ‘How is your doctor-friend, miss? She (the spirit) has kept on at him all the week: “You won’t believe, won’t you? Then I’ll make you.” And so she goes on “worretting” at him.’ I asked Johanna how she knew it was my friend that the spirit spoke of. ‘Because, miss,’ she returned, ‘I see him—with beautiful, fine white hair.’ Now the peculiarity of this gentleman is his exquisite white hair—too white for his age. Still to Johanna the fact of his white hair could not prove that he was my friend, as she had never seen him, nor heard him described; although to me the hair was a sign by which to recognise him.

“We were told spiritually last Sunday (March 11th), that as no human being united as yet the various spiritual powers of our Lord Jesus Christ, nor possessed any one of them in the full degree of perfection which He did, so no one could heal Johanna instantaneously. The evil spirit, we were assured, could, however, in process of time be cast out; but it would be needful for Johanna to go through a course of purification similar to, and as strict as a Mosaic rite; that as the spiritual influence had entered into *matter*, the remedy must be *material* as well as spiritual; that, if the prescribed course of healing could be strictly pursued, three weeks would suffice for the cure. But the details given regarding air, diet, clothing, prayers, &c., were, alas! quite impossible to carry out, owing to want of material means.”

Fumigations, ablutions, and most delicate nicety of cleanliness in the surroundings of Johanna had been enjoined by the spiritual-writing given through Mrs. B. as necessary adjuncts to the spiritual cleansing produced by prayer.

“We were also told that our prayers for Johanna did good,

not so much through 'clamouring down' heaven upon us, as that prayers were spiritual breezes which would reach the miasma of evil spirit stagnating around the poor undeveloped spirits, and would as inevitably affect their surroundings as a breeze of the external world would remove a stagnant stench. C. (a friend of the A.'s) was last Sunday with the L.'s, and the spirits from Johanna came and rapped a regular chorus upon C.'s chair. Mrs. L. again saw the long black arm of a spirit. It was, she said, scarcely human in form; bestial in appearance; which corresponds with the animal noises uttered by it. Last Sunday it occurred to me, probably why the evil spirits cast out by our Saviour did not wish to go into water (a means of purification for them), they perceived our Lord's intention to send them thither before He spoke. Our Lord, therefore, granted them to enter at first into the swine (into bestial, unclean natures, correspondental to their own natures); but instantly they, by this entrance into the swine, drove themselves into the very element of purification which they desired to escape. Thus they themselves compelled their own obedience to the Master's will, whilst seeking their own wills! Doubtless an ever-operative law of God's government!"

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In 1874 Johanna still lives, and much in the same condition as when eight years ago this earnest band of spiritual friends did their small best to raise her into higher conditions. Their endeavours, however, procured, if no higher or more lasting good to the sufferer herself, at least to themselves a glimmer of light, whereby to study more hopefully and more carefully the mystery of Demoniac Possession. A still stronger faith too has been aroused within them all, that, by the *cultivation* of a higher nature in themselves, by living in an ever-nearer communion with Christ, and by efforts of combined material and spiritual aid, man may hope even in the nineteenth century to cast out demons from his fellow-man in obedience to the injunctions of his Divine Master, the Lord Christ.

A. M. H. W.

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## AN EXTRAORDINARY CASE OF SPIRITUAL DISTURBANCES.

BY BENJAMIN COLEMAN.

IN a former number of your journal Mr. Wm. Howitt has given an account of extraordinary manifestations occurring at the house of M. Joller, situate at the village of Stans, on the Lake of Lucerne, and strange as those occurrences appear to have been, your readers will probably be interested to know that a very similar and thoroughly well authenticated case of spiritual disturbances of a still more remarkable character is recorded as happening at the residence of the Rev. Eliakim Phelps, D.D., of Stratford, Connecticut, which continued from the 10th day of March, 1850, until the 15th of December, 1851.

Dr. Phelps, like M. Joller, was at first a great sceptic and wholly indisposed to attribute these violent and apparently malicious manifestations to their true cause. He resided in a large mansion situated in the country, with his wife and five children, the eldest a daughter aged 16. On the 10th of March, being Sabbath day, all including the servants went to church; locking the front door from the inside, leaving the key in the lock and passing out at the back door, Dr. Phelps locked that and put the key in his pocket.

On returning from church he was surprised to find the front door open, as also the bed room doors which had been left shut; and in the nursery all the furniture was in disorder; chairs were lying on the bed; shovel, tongs and poker were in unusual places and fantastic positions; everything showing the presence of some disturbers who must have entered the house during the temporary absence of the family; but upon discovering that none of the valuables had been carried away, Dr. Phelps was puzzled to account for this singular state of things. He, however, determined to remain at home alone whilst his family went to afternoon service; on their return, about three o'clock, he informed them that nothing had disturbed his quiet, no sound of anything unusual had occurred; but, nevertheless, they found upon examination every article in the kitchen, including a kettle which had been used at dinner time, either hidden in obscure places or put where they did not belong. The bread, sugar bowl, eggs, and numerous other things had been removed; upon entering one of the sleeping rooms a sheet was found spread over the bed outside of the counterpane, beneath which was a night dress laid out with the arms folded

across the breast, with stockings placed in a position to represent as it appeared a corpse, and large hieroglyphics written on the walls which none of the family could decipher. Still Dr. Phelps could only attribute these things to the act of some roguish boys who had, as he imagined, in some unaccountable way, effected an entrance for mischief rather than for robbery.

On the following morning when the family entered the same room after breakfast, they found it in a similar state of disorder as on the previous evening. Here, a sheet was spread out upon the floor, the washstand laid upon its back on the sheet, the wash bowl placed on one side, the pitcher on the other, a nightgown and chemise were found, one in the bowl the other in the pitcher; these things were not in use, and had been placed in a trunk which stood in a closet in the adjoining room. Dr. Phelps folded them up, replaced them in the box, locked the closet and following his children out of the room, locked the room door and put the key in his pocket; having occasion to go up stairs about fifteen minutes after, he was astounded to find the identical articles lying at the head of the stairs out in the passage. He speedily unlocked the door, opened the box, and found the articles missing from the box where he had so recently placed them.

Here was a mystery for which he could in no way reasonably account. He was an utter unbeliever in the appearance of ghosts or departed spirits, and at the age of threescore he had never seen anything connected with that class of spiritual phenomena; he believed the statements on such subjects to be gross superstitions, and that the spiritual manifestations so-called, might by strict scrutiny be accounted for on natural known principles which would destroy their mysterious character altogether. Dr. Phelps, however, was at length about to have a new light opened to him; his increased knowledge was on the eve of placing him, as it has done so many others, at the mercy of the *savans* of Harvard University of America, and of the Tyndalls, Huxleys and Carpenters of this country.

On the same day (the 11th of March), Dr. Phelps asserts that he saw an umbrella placed in a stand at the end of the hall leap as it were, without any visible agency, a distance of 25 feet; a bucket standing at the head of the stairs was thrown into the area below; smaller articles, such as nails, forks, knives, spoons, keys, &c., were thrown about from various places in the house. He says they came at times from such directions as entirely to preclude the possibility of any deception being practised by any one about him.

He and Mrs. Phelps had occasion to visit Bridgport, a town three miles distance from their residence. During their absence

similar occurrences took place, and in addition the house was dressed by the invisibles for mourning, a custom observed in some country places in America. The knocker of the door was tied with crape, the mirrors were covered with sheets and table cloths, which Dr. Phelps himself removed; and he said the position of the mirrors in one room was such that the coverings could not have been placed there without great difficulty by any one about the house. On the following day the same kind of phenomena were witnessed by the whole family and by a neighbour who had been called in by Dr. Phelps. Books were seen to leap off the library shelves, Bibles were opened at selected passages, and the places marked by either putting pieces of paper on them or turning down the leaves; two solar lamps were removed from their places to the floor, a man's hat was placed on one and a cap on the other; and in one afternoon not less than 46 articles had been brought from various parts of the house, and were thrown into the room where the family were seated.

It was not until the fifth day that Dr. Phelps and his neighbours (several of whom had now been brought in to consult on these strange proceedings) heard the rappings and poundings, as if some person was striking the floor with a heavy substance, and chopping with an axe, and several times these noises were terminated by a loud scream like the cry of a cat or the bleating of a lamb, but louder than either; and now for the first time these manifestations were supposed to be connected with the presence of one of the inmates, a lad named Henry, 11 years of age, a son of Mrs. Phelps, by her first husband—Dr. Phelps never before having thought that particular persons were “mediums.” On this day, however, some very remarkable occurrences took place with this boy. His cap was torn off his head and entirely destroyed. On another cap characters were written apparently with chalk. A sentence was written on his red pocket handkerchief, others on his trowsers and the inside of his coat. These were copied and carefully preserved for some time, when they were mysteriously destroyed, and from this time it became evident that some, at least, of the phenomena were produced by the presence and influence of this boy Harry. An umbrella, which he was carrying, was torn in several places; his trowsers were torn from the foot upwards as high as his knee, and at length were literally torn to ribbons an inch or more wide. His clothing was several times, during a period of some weeks, destroyed, whilst he was in the presence of others, by some unseen agency. On the sixth day several figures, to imitate human beings, were formed of different articles of clothing found about the house, and shoes and bonnets aptly placed, on figures

representing females in the attitude of devotion, with prayer books and Bibles before them. These things were witnessed by strangers, to whom they appeared very wonderful and very amusing; but to the family they had become very serious and trying, particularly as every member was subjected to the most rigid scrutiny, on the supposition that there was still some fraud to be detected by which the occurrences would be accounted for.

From this time, and for many days after, with scarcely a day's omission, the disturbances in Dr. Phelps' household continued and increased in their intensity and annoyance to every member of the family. No personal injury however was sustained, but the destruction of glass and crockery-ware was frequent.

Not less than 71 panes of glass were broken by articles such as a poker, brush, shoe, candlestick, &c., being hurled at the windows. Dr. Phelps saw a brush, which had been lying on a shelf some distance from anyone present, fly at the window and break out a pane; then a tumbler rose from its place, and dashed out the only whole pane of glass remaining in the window. Pitchers of water were emptied into the beds, and the pitchers were thrown on the floor and broken; and in fact these hostilities, after ceasing for a day or two, were continued with increased violence. The Doctor resisted the advice of his friends to hold communications with these intelligences in the usual way; but at length the spirits forced him to hear them, they wrote notes in pencil which were generally of a puerile, and sometimes of an offensive character; these were dropped about the rooms in which the family were seated. Sometimes letters addressed to Dr. Phelps would drop, purporting to be from clergymen residing at Philadelphia, giving accounts of conversions in their congregations, and indicating an astonishing knowledge of real events passing in that city! Some were signed by spirits of departed persons who had lived in Philadelphia, and who were known to Mrs. Phelps. There were in all not less than 100 letters purporting to come from different persons or spirits, but all were in the same handwriting. Writing would appear on the walls, and on one occasion, whilst Dr. Phelps was alone at his desk, with his back turned for a few moments without quitting his chair, turning again to his paper, he found written in large characters with ink, and still wet, "Very nice paper and very nice ink."

Early in May, Dr. Phelps, of Boston, a brother of the Rev. Doctor, and Professor Phelps, of Andover, a son, went together to Stratford to expose the delusion, fully believing that they would be able to prove that the whole was the work of some

evil-minded persons. But like many others, who assume to have more sagacity than their neighbours, they were disappointed! The rappings and poundings continued with even more violence, the visitors hurried about from one spot to another in a vain endeavour to detect the cause, and both were at length satisfied that the disturbances proceeded from supernatural invisible agencies. The family and their visitors also became satisfied that the agents of these sounds were intelligent and able to appreciate acts of kindness or discourtesy. One morning, during the breakfast hour, the table was pushed about, raised up suddenly, shaken from side to side, spilling the coffee and putting the party to serious inconvenience; one commanded them to be quiet, another insisted they should leave, but the invisibles still continued to annoy them. At length one of the ladies said, "I request you kindly to cease, and allow us to take our breakfasts quietly." This gentle appeal had the same effect as it would have had in most cases, were it addressed to a human being—the disturbances ceased at once.

A lady who spent a few weeks with the family during the summer, received many communications from the spirits, and when her scissors or thimble could not be found, she would say, "I will thank the spirits to return my thimble," and immediately the article would be dropped in her lap.\*

The doctor having occasion to visit Huntingdon (a distance of 7 miles), took Harry with him in his carriage. When they had proceeded about a mile, a stone, about the size of a hen's egg, was thrown into the carriage (which was a covered one), then another and another followed, and on their return they found 16 stones had been thrown into the carriage, without hurting either of them, and from no visible source.

As it was certain that many, if not all of these manifestations were connected with Harry the medium, it was thought best to separate him from the family; and accordingly he was placed under the care of a family residing about two miles distant from Dr. Phelps. One day when Harry came home, he told his mother that he had been awakened the night previously and much frightened by a figure dressed in white which he saw standing by his bedside. The spectre spoke, and said, "Be not afraid, my son; I am your father. Wear this for my sake;" and a silver watch was put into his hand, which, however, he could not retain. It seems that a silver watch had been left to the boy by his late father, and this watch was locked up in a dressing-table drawer

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\* The late Mrs. Magendie—sister of Lady Franklin—told me that the spirits teased her very much, in this way, by taking her thimble, her scissors, and various articles from her work-basket, but when she kindly asked them to restore them, they invariably did so.

to which Harry had no access. A member of the family went to the drawer and found the watch safe. She locked the drawer and returned the key to Mrs. Phelps. A few minutes after Harry came running in to his mother from the garden with the watch in his hand, and told her that his father had just appeared to him again and repeated, "Wear this for my sake. Tell your mother to look at the second hand;" which was off, and lying on the face under the glass. The watch was taken to Dr. Phelps, who tried to replace the hand, but could not. He told Harry to take it to the watchmaker, but at that moment the hand was seen to be in its place, and the watch going. In an instant after the second hand was displaced and seen to be lying on the face, and again for the second time it was replaced, all within a minute or two. The Doctor affirmed that the watch was not out of his sight, that it was not opened and that he was certain no ordinary power was employed in the transaction.

About this time the pianoforte was played upon by the invisibles and turned completely round, with its face to the wall, leaving room for a person to sit on the music stool on that side, which had also been moved round and appropriately placed.

On several occasions some members of the family said they saw spectral appearances; Dr. Phelps did not see them, and was inclined to think his children were mistaken, attributing it to their excited imaginations. Towards the latter end of May, however, it was signified that one of the spirits who had previously communicated would appear, first to the eldest daughter, Anna, then to Mrs. Phelps, and then to the Doctor himself. On the same night Anna, who occupied the room adjoining the one where the Doctor and his wife slept—the door being open and a lamp placed so as to light both rooms—called out, "There it is, in a sheet." The Doctor asked where. Anna indicated the spot between the two rooms, and that the figure was moving slowly towards her. In about two minutes Mrs. Phelps exclaimed excitedly "I see it!" and drew the bed clothes over her head. Both the mother and daughter saw it at this moment, but the Doctor did not see it for two or three minutes after, when, feeling no alarm, he watched its movements and saw it move slowly from the inner chamber and turn back again. It had the appearance of a tall person with a sheet thrown around it. In about a minute something was laid upon the bed, which proved to be a sheet that had been taken from a wardrobe standing in the hall.

Some three weeks subsequent to this a similar appearance was witnessed by the Doctor and Anna; the Doctor tried to seize hold of it, but it disappeared when he was about two feet from it, and the sheet was dropped into the chair. These are the only instances in which the Doctor saw anything himself,

but others of the family saw spectral figures several times, and Anna, who must have been a medium of not less power than Harry, stated that one day on entering the front parlour she saw three gentlemen all with their hats on, seated there, two on the sofa and one reading the paper on a chair with his feet resting on the table; she was surprised that none of them rose up or noticed her, but as she came near the one who was reading he leaned over and fell, chair and all, and the whole instantly disappeared. She was frightened and ran to her cousin, who was at the street door. They returned to the room, but nothing was to be seen, except the prostrate chair, and no one near who could have thrown it down.

Dr. Phelps, about this time, paid a visit to the Fox family, at New York. Most readers know that the three daughters of this family were the first mediums known in America.

Dr. Phelps soon decided that the manifestations which he witnessed in their presence were essentially the same as those at his own house, with this difference—the Fox family were not painfully annoyed; no destruction of property ever occurred with them; the communications were invariably of an orderly and intelligent character, purporting to come from the spirits of departed friends. Indeed it may be affirmed that the violent nature of the manifestations witnessed by M. Joller and Dr. Phelps are quite exceptional, and by no means usual, and to be attributed probably to their determined antagonism. In all the varied forms of Mr. Home's extraordinary mediumship I never heard that either he, or any of those forming his numberless *séances*, ever suffered annoyance of any kind from the presence of disorderly spirits. During the months of June and July the disturbances continued, and although Dr. Phelps and his family were of blameless character, and ever ready to afford all comers every opportunity of investigating and witnessing the character of these strange phenomena, they were made to suffer little less than martyrdom for their honest candour in speaking the truth. See how history repeats itself in this case. Newspaper discussions were carried on in the usual way. Editors and correspondents wrote the most flippant and shallow articles; the family were abused as idiots or impostors, and all who sympathized with them as either dupes or confederates: thus incontestably proving that the masses, in all times and in all climes, hold tenaciously to their foolish prejudices, ignore facts patent to their senses, and remain to the last, as Faraday once said of Spiritualists, "ignorant of their own ignorance." The remainder of Dr. Phelps' strange history, in connection with these distressing visitations, may be briefly told. Finding that he was not relieved from these dis-

turbing visitants, he determined to close his house at Stratford, and remove his family to Philadelphia during the fall and winter months. Before doing so, a message was given through the alphabet—"Rook (the name of a person who had been at the house to witness the manifestations) has destroyed the Doctor's book." What book? "The big book in the secretary: look and see."

Dr. Phelps had two large books in the secretary with blank leaves for journalising. In the larger one he had written a full account of the mysterious occurrences in the form of a diary, and having noted them as they occurred from day to day, they were recorded with more minuteness than could afterwards be done. Upon looking, it was discovered that every page he had written had been torn from the book and was gone! After long search the fragments of the leaves were found in the vault. Copies of the characters which the Doctor had carefully taken, and which he was anxious to preserve, were every scrap gone. There were in a dressing-table drawer a great number of the notes which the spirits had from time to time dropped about the house. These were set on fire by a match, and so charred before it was discovered, as to injure them beyond preservation. It does not appear whether all this mischief was done by the visitor, Mr. Rook, as stated by the message, or by the spirits themselves. Let us hope it was the work of these tormentors.

The last act at this period was apparently a very malicious one. The daughter Anna was dressed ready to start from home to make a trip of pleasure, and whilst standing on the balcony a bottle of ink was thrown at her, which went over her dress, so as entirely to destroy its usefulness.

The family having been removed from the house (no one remaining but Dr. Phelps and the cook), the demonstrations ceased, with but one exception. Dr. Phelps having written a letter to his wife, the letter, when received by her, contained a message written by the spirits, in pencil—"Your husband is sick, and wishes you to return if you expect to see him alive." He was then quite well; but the next week he was ill and confined to his bed for several days.

The family returned home in March. Soon after, rappings were heard and trifling messages given; and subsequently several acts of mischief and annoyance were again committed, and they determined to send Harry to school at New Lebanon. Whilst there, his clothes were torn, his books destroyed, and so much disturbance made that his master would not keep him at the school, and he was sent home. Strange to say, from the time of his return the manifestations began gradually to subside, and by the 15th of December, 1851, they had ceased altogether.

Finally, Dr. Phelps left Stratford with his family, in the spring of 1852, to reside permanently at Philadelphia. The house at Stratford was immediately after occupied by another family, who never had any disturbance; nor up to the time of this history being published in 1855 had anything more occurred to disturb the peace of Dr. Phelps and his family. No satisfactory explanation has ever been given to the public of the cause of these remarkable visitations. But difficult of belief as these facts were at that time, we now know that similar instances have since been repeatedly witnessed in isolated instances by many persons, and to many of these I can add my own testimony. No murder nor crime of any kind is attached to the history of the family or the house. It would appear that it was simply a case of two or more of the family being strong mediums, and from their entire unacquaintance with the mode of holding intercourse with spirits in the first instance, and of Dr. Phelps' religious scruples to do so for a long time afterwards, is to be attributed the series of distressing trials to which this worthy family were subjected.

This history of marvellous spiritual manifestations, though perhaps the most remarkable upon record, does not, as I have said, stand alone, for there are several well attested cases to be found in the pages of this journal, and one is tempted to ask what does it all mean? It would be the height of folly to attempt to ignore them on the ground that they are not to be believed as real occurrences, and that Dr. Phelps and all his family, together with his friends and neighbours, and those who came from a distance to view the disturbances, were all demented: That, as Dr. Carpenter would explain, they were all of diseased minds, deluded by distempered imaginations—very worthy people no doubt, but thoroughly unreliable witnesses—to be pitied, but not to be believed. And will the readers of this plain unvarnished history, so thoroughly well attested in every particular, be satisfied with such a puerile attempt to solve such facts as Dr. Phelps has placed upon record? I answer, No; and none but a Fellow of the Royal Society, who presumes upon his elevated position and his well-earned fame in his own department of science, would venture to insult the common sense of his humblest auditor by offering such an explanation of Dr. Phelps' experiences.

If Dr. Carpenter had to write the life of such a man, and found such facts recorded in Dr. Phelps' private diary, he would as a matter of course pass them over as subjective and unworthy of credence. But Dr. Carpenter is not a biographer, he is only a popular lecturer, who finds his largest audiences when he attempts to explain "popular delusions," and when left alone on the platform without contradiction makes a great impression

upon the minds of most of his listeners, and especially on those who have themselves had unaccountable personal experiences which they have not ventured to tell, even to their most intimate friends, lest they should be laughed to scorn; and they go away no doubt greatly relieved of a difficulty which had disturbed their peace, by finding that this highly-educated and learned gentleman had proved, by many accredited instances of similar phenomena, that they had only encountered a very well understood case of delusion of the senses.

Dr. Carpenter, however, is not a writer of history, but there is a very able biographer, Mr. John Forster, who I have reason to believe agrees with most, if not all, of Dr. Carpenter's theories, and who is now writing the life of one of the most popular essayists of this century—Charles Dickens. He, too, during a great portion of his life laughed at Spiritualism, and though he found ghost stories the most attractive to the multitude of his readers, he thought it prudent to destroy the mystery of these stories by some easy explanation of how the marvellous occurrences took place. But Charles Dickens lived long enough to discover his error in acting thus and opposing Spiritualism, by receiving a very significant test, which seemed to have proved that he was himself a medium, as I have no doubt from his distinguished genius he really was; and probably had had many proofs known to his biographer and others about him, but he doubtless found it more easy to sail with the stream of popular prejudices, than to grapple with strange incidents of which neither he nor his companions could give a reasonable explanation short of the spiritual theory. The special instance I have alluded to occurred to Mr. Dickens in connexion with his publication of Mr. H's narrative in *All the Year Round*, October 5, 1861; and as I know, from having seen the correspondence which took place at that time between the writer of the narrative, the late Mr. Thomas Heaphy, and Mr. Charles Dickens, and that the incident made a profound impression upon the mind of the latter, I infer he must not only have named it to his friend Forster, but he must have made a distinct note of the "astonishing" fact in his diary; and what I am aiming to arrive at by this perhaps too tedious preface, is to discover whether Mr. Forster knows of the incident I allude to, and whether he intends to introduce it with other matters of a similar character attached to the latter years of Dickens's life in the biography he is writing? I ask the question, because I have only read the first volume, but I should no doubt have heard of it if he has; and if Mr. Forster has not thought it worth while to introduce this, and the many conversations Dickens had with the late Sir Bulwer Lytton, upon peculiar

psychological facts known to Lord Lytton, the world will know with what a bias history is written, and the readers of this Magazine may well feel surprised at the astonishing progress Spiritualism has made in this country, despite the perverse and disingenuous conduct of a large proportion of the best recognized literary and scientific men of this day.

I repeat the question, what do these undignified, rude, and violent manifestations really mean? Be assured they have a meaning little dreamt of by the learned members of the Royal Society, and not to be extinguished by those pride-of-intellect young gentlemen who write mis-leading articles for the public press. I believe that they are the spirits of departed persons of rough uncultured habits whilst in life, and best suited to carry out the Almighty's work on earth by giving some startling proofs of spirit-power to awaken the clergy to the plain teachings of His Bible, and to draw back the veil which darkens the materialistic mind.

I do not believe in Satan or his emissaries; but I do believe most fervently in a Living God of infinite wisdom, who permits these abnormal and extraordinary interferences to come among us when other means have failed; to enlighten, regenerate, and to establish His Almighty power in the face of His world and the comprehension of all His creatures.

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## "GOD IS LOVE!"

*A Lyric for Sacred Music.*

EARTH, with all its trees and flowers,  
Air, with all its mists and showers,  
Ocean's infinite expanse,  
Heaven's resplendent countenance,  
All around, and all above,  
Sweetly whisper—"God is love!"

Sounds among the vales and hills,  
By the brooks and by the rills—  
Of the breeze, and of the bird,  
By the gentle summer stirred—  
These are voices from above,  
Softly echoing—"God is love!"

All the hopes and fears that start,  
From the promptings of the heart—  
All the quiet bliss that lies  
In our human sympathies—  
All around, and all above,  
Bear the record—"God is love!"

J. R.

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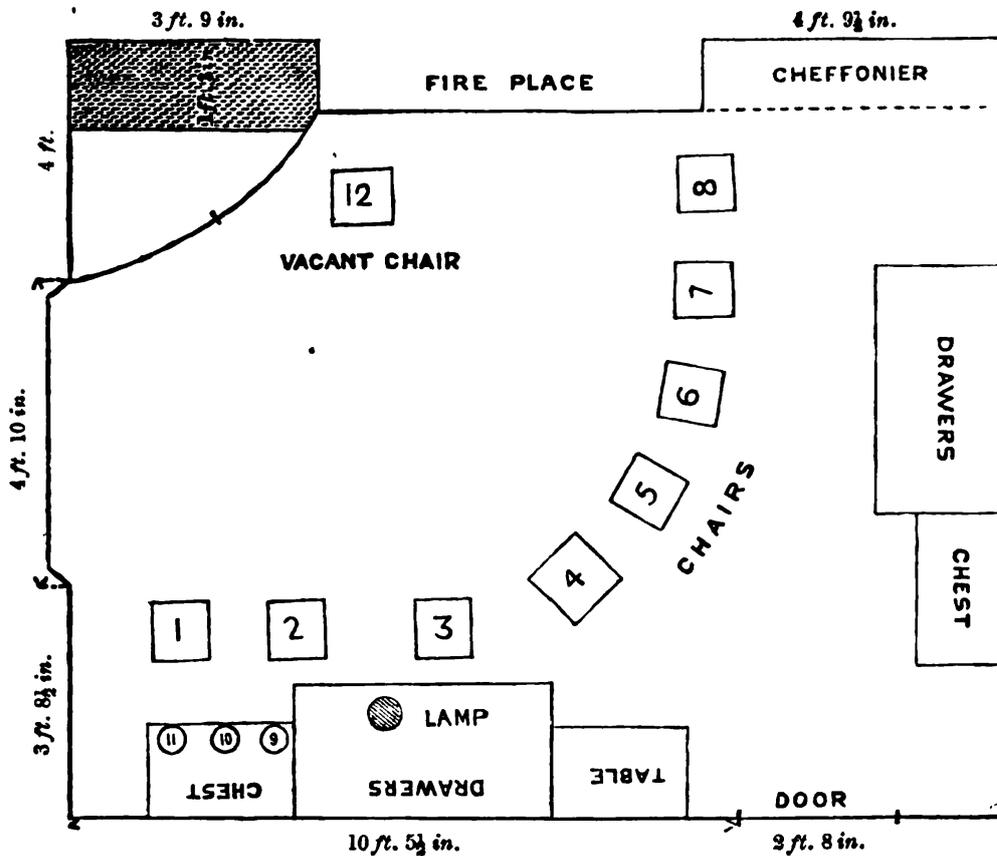
\* In the foregoing narrative I have epitomised the principal facts from a work published in Boston, U.S., in 1855—*Modern Spiritualism, its Facts and Fanaticisms*, by E. W. CAPRON—corroborated by personal enquiries when I visited Boston in 1861.—B. C.

MATERIALIZATION OF SPIRIT-FORMS.

BY T. P. BARKAS, F.G.S.

ON Friday evening, December 11th, 1874, I attended by invitation a *séance*, at the house of Mr. Petty, Newcastle-on-Tyne. There were present, including the medium, Mrs. Petty, four ladies and five gentlemen, and two daughters and one son, children of Mr. and Mrs. Petty, all young.

The room in which we sat is of the following size and form, on a scale of one quarter of an inch to the foot:—



The screened recess is formed by an iron rod extending from the architrave of the window to the corner of the fireplace, at a distance of 5 1/2 feet from the floor; on the rod two dark curtains, reaching to the floor, were suspended on brass rings, and the curtains when drawn enclose the recess, which is only 3 feet 9 inches long, 4 feet deep at its broadest part, and 1 foot 3 inches deep at its narrowest part. The walls of the recess and the whole room are papered, the floor is partly covered with oilcloth, and on the floor indicated by the dotted space a rug was laid for

the medium to recline upon, two pillows being placed next the fireplace, on which her head was laid. The curtains moved freely, and were free at the sides and centre. Prior to Mrs. P. entering the recess it was well examined, and nothing in the least suspicious was discovered; indeed, the space is so small that there is no room for concealment, and besides, immediately after the *séance* the whole fittings were taken down and removed. The medium entered the recess and lay on the rug on the floor, her head reclining on the pillows. When she laid down a lady visitor covered her with a dark shawl, and a top-coat belonging to a gentleman present, and when so covered the curtains were closed. The company sat in the following order: Mr. F. S. H., seat number 1; Mr. Barkas, 2; Mr. P., 3; Mrs. H., 4; Mrs. J. H., 5; Mrs. T., 6; Mrs. T. H., 7; Mr. H., 8; Master P., 9; Miss P., 10; Miss F. P., 11; vacant chair, 12, on which were placed a few marked sheets of paper and a lead pencil. The lamp, on the drawers immediately behind me, was turned down, but during the whole evening there was sufficient light to enable me to distinguish with ease the features of all the sitters.

After we had sat for about ten minutes a tall, white, unveiled female figure appeared at the central opening, and after many presentations and withdrawals, as if afraid to advance, she finally left the recess and walked across the floor to Mr. H., on chair No. 8, with whom she shook hands.

This figure was tall and graceful, and much slighter than the medium who is somewhat stout and matronly like. After an interval of about four minutes another female figure emerged from the recess, moved freely about the room and sat on chair No. 12; she was stouter and shorter than the previous figure and spoke feebly when out of the recess. While this figure was sitting on the chair I was about to observe to my friend on my right, that "it would be very desirable to see the medium and spirit-form at the same time." I had said "it would be very desirable," when the figure rose from her seat and I did not finish the sentence. She went directly to the curtains, drew them widely apart in the centre, apparently for the purpose of showing us the medium. I thanked her for her efforts, said she had anticipated my request and asked her to remove the left hand curtain which screened the medium's head and face, she immediately drew away the curtain and I and those who were present distinctly saw the medium reclining on the pillows. The light was good and I saw the medium and spirit-form quite distinctly. This I considered at the time, and do now, a conclusive proof of the double personality of the figure and medium. The form again left the recess, and kneeling beside chair No. 12, wrote with a pencil, on a piece of paper, which I had previously

initialled, the following sentence: "I shall give you a piece of my garment the next (here the writing became illegible).—Emma." She then moved gracefully about the room, her raiment was very white, her face was veiled, and finally she retired within the recess.

In about five minutes another female figure appeared. She was slighter than the previous one and taller. Her face was quite uncovered. She came from the curtains with considerable freeness, and walked or rather glided towards Mrs. T. (No. 6.) Her form did not at all resemble that of the medium; and she intimated to Mrs. T. by bowing that she, Mrs. T., was her daughter, and she patted her face and stroked her forehead. She then walked across the floor and stood close before me, she patted my head and face with both her hands, and gazed steadily into my face at a distance of not more than 14 inches. As the lamplight was behind me and shone directly upon her, I saw her face and features distinctly, and could recognize them again with ease. Had I been an artist, the face is so vividly impressed upon my mind, I could have sketched it. I noted distinctly that the face was a broad oval, the features somewhat flat, and the nose specially small, the eyes were large and dark, the eyebrows dark and well defined, the skin a somewhat deep brown approaching a light mulatto, and the expression fixed and steady; I did not observe any play of features, and the face did not in the least resemble that of the medium; the hands with which she stroked my head and face were warm and pleasant.

This figure retired by the window edge of the curtains, and in retiring took from her person a piece of white raiment like a very large cambric handkerchief, which she shook out and held by one corner at a distance from her person; this white substance gradually approached her skirts and had the appearance of sinking into them. She was succeeded by a small psychic form, 3 feet 9 inches high, known as Sarah. Sarah showed herself frequently at the centre and side of the curtains, but did not emerge entirely from them. She conversed with us in an audible, child-like manner and voice. Her voice has increased in power since I first heard it. She shook hands with Mrs. J. H. and Mrs. T., but declined to shake hands with any others. She asked for Mr. M., and said she had brought a lock of hair for him. Mr. M. was not present, and she declined to give it to anyone but himself. Having played, like a child, at bo-peep with us through the openings between the curtains, and conversed with us for about twelve minutes, she said that Jack was coming, and would try to show himself, while she looked on. She continued to talk, and Jack, or someone within the recess, played a whistle very vigorously, but did not appear.

In about three minutes the curtains were thrown back and the medium was found lying in a trance exactly as we had left her one and a half hour before. Seeing the person of the medium and the spirit-form at the same time, and seeing a human face, very different from that of the medium, were to me conclusive proofs of the objective reality of the phenomena, and that they were no mere personations on the part of the medium.\*

At the conclusion of the *séance* I entered into conversation with Mrs. T. whom I had met that evening for the first time, and the alleged spirit-form of whose mother I had distinctly seen and felt. Without saying what my impressions of the appearance of her alleged mother were, I said, "Was the form which professed to be that of your mother at all like her?" She replied, "It was." "Had your mother prominent or flat features?" "Flat and small." "Had your mother a pale or dark complexion?" "Very dark; my father used to say she had a skin like tobacco leaf." "Were your mother's eyes dark or light?" "Very dark and bright; my father said when he married her he had at least got two diamonds." These replies are in exact accordance with the impressions I received from a close inspection of the face.

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## ORGANIC ELECTRICITY.

BY WILLIAM HITCHMAN, LL.D.

### II.

It is universally acknowledged at the present time, not only that atmospheric pressure exercises a stupendous effect on health of body and soul, but that the quantity of OZONE bears an important scientific relation to the prevalence of certain peculiar diseases in 1875. And are not such conclusions alike rational, philosophical, and logical, as well as in conformity to the facts and phenomena of physiological observation and medical experience? During recent attacks of cholera, for example, the air has been

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\* I have sat with this medium on several occasions, have tested her mediumship in the most rigid manner, by taking out her ear-ring, fastening a thread through the hole in her ear, and holding the other end of the thread in my hands during the entire *séance*; by fixing on the backs and palms of her hands by means of gum, slender rings and hollow squares of dark tissue paper, so that they could not be got off and on again without being torn; and I have on three occasions seen the medium and the materialized spirit-form at the same instant. Under the tests named I have seen, spoken to and touched at least nine different forms, men, women, and children, black and white; and it will be seen from the size and arrangement of the room that to smuggle these forms in was simply impossible without our seeing the mode in which it was done.—T. P. B.

almost free from ozone, which is itself a *modification* of oxygen, caused by frequent electrical discharges, and characterised by a singular odour and increased power of oxidation, or the combining of a given quantity with other substances. Moreover, it cannot be questioned by non-Spiritualists, that organic temperature is largely influenced by nervous agency, and that no two parts of the human body are in the *same* electric condition—individually. Human electricity, in short, circulates in closed currents from the central parts of nerve fibres which are in a *negative* condition, to the surface or periphery, which is in a *positive* state, with entire independence also of all mechanical and chemical actions, either internal or external, as regards *bodily* organisation. Electricity in man is certainly not dependent upon nervous influence entirely, since under the form of the voltaic current, physiological action may be excited in muscular fibre, even though the nervous structure be divided, injured, or wholly arrested in its function and course of distribution.

Many analogous facts point to the conclusion that organic electricity is sometimes different in form and kind, when acting or generated in the constitution of man. At all events, there are various modifications of electric and magnetic force, not unfamiliar to the scientists of this our day, as electric machines, voltaic batteries, powerful magnets, thermo-electric combinations likewise, and electrical *fishes*, with a peculiar apparatus of special cell-formation, providing physiologically for an electric function, distinct from any attribute of nervous tissue in man, and exactly resembling the wonderful effects of accumulation, tension, and discharge, which philosophers obtain by artificial means—with a view to excite electrical currents, and certain polarities in the matter of spirit, mind or soul, by *simple contact*, without the intervention of any—the slightest chemical action in form of energy.

Again, during a late epidemic of catarrhal fever, or “influenza,” in Liverpool, ozone was notably in *excess*. Fluctuations of mortality spring from the same conditions everywhere—epidemic diseases, of whatever name, *supplant* each other in all localities and generations. Some impurities act directly on the great nervous centres of organic electricity, whilst other poisons influence *special ganglia* of the human structure—namely, those which minister to the particular functions of soul and body—elements of force only in the world of Physics. Obviously, nervous and electric currents are not always identical. Electricity is a powerful spirit-like agency so universally diffused, and so instantly operated upon by every change of atom, germ, molecule, or material particle, that I cannot but regard its wonderful phenomena as of surpassing interest to

readers of the *Spiritual Magazine*. Even a trivial alteration of temperature, for example, produces an important current of real thermo-electricity; nay, more, it is now demonstrable, scientifically, that movements of whatever kind, spiritual or physical, among the component particles of each organ or tissue, evolve a certain amount of magnetism in an *active* state—especially when—like those highly favoured instinctive electricians—rich nervous ganglia act directly in the production of sparkling attractive light!

In 1839, Professor Faraday experimented upon the *Gymnotus electricus* then exhibited in the Adelaide Gallery of Practical Science, and the results he enumerated I well remember to have been *corroborative* of the splendid dissections and experiments of Walsh, Hunter, Cavendish, Priestley, Davy, Matteucci, Linari, Abernethy and Wilson Philip, and which ran thus from the great man's lips—"THESE PHENOMENA HAVE FINALLY ESTABLISHED THE IDENTITY OF ANIMAL AND GENERAL ELECTRICITY THROUGHOUT THE UNIVERSE." Surely Dr. Faraday was once on the high road to Spiritualism, when from these significant facts he drew the not illogical inference, that organic electricity *is* generated by nervous influence,—heat of blood *is* an electric consequence, and as heat reproduces electricity—why may not electricity reproduce the nervous force in animal life? Nay more, his favorite hypothesis in the Royal Institution was indisputably to the effect, that electricity is the *sole* medium through which the occult principle of VITALITY carries on the essential processes exhibited in organised beings, from the lowest to the highest, adding substantially that heat, light, magnetism and electricity, are everywhere analogous in their properties, and that the "*vital effects*" of thermal electricity were capable of perfect demonstration.

OH, WHEN TRUTH CALLS,  
THEN THE VOICE WE MUST OBEY.

Facts are not wanting to show that the matter of *fire*, for example, resident in combustible bodies throughout the material universe, may be absorbed into the human organism, and again eliminated beyond question in the form of electricity, which in men and animals is not only expended in vital processes, but is transmitted occasionally from one individual to another, of the *genus* HOMO, after the manner of the repeated shocks and glowing heat of Torpedo, Silurus, Gymnotus, &c., with a visible exaltation of temperature, it may be, in the intervening platinum wire of bigoted sceptics. I have known sensitive, magnetically endowed persons, to be alike *suddenly and unconsciously charged with electricity*; in such examples of the feminine gender especially, vivid electrical sparks pass to the face of an

objector from the end of each finger of the electric positive individual. The most prominent circumstances which add to the force or faculty of this exalted organic electricity are an atmosphere of 80° Fah., moderate exercise, tranquillity of mind, and the cheerful presence of genial society—mentally, morally, and materially. And why? Because, in my judgment, intense love maintains an indissoluble connection between those under the blessed influence of *sympathy of soul*, no matter how widely their bodies are sundered over the habitable globe.

Human beings it appears to me, from wide observation of facts, really send off those *magnetic* particles of organic electricity,\* which carry with them the spiritual impressions or precise characteristics of those sensitive hearts and brains from whence they strongly emanate, from soul to soul *responsive*. The very thoughts, feelings, hopes, fears, joys, sorrows, and deepest aspirations of spirituality of sentiment in each innermost life and being, *give*, according to vast experience—and scientifically this is true in the case of fragrant flowers, &c.—a fixed determination to such magnetic emanations, and thus maintain through all the changeful scenes of earth those delicate, exquisite, golden chains of affectionate inter-communication between loving and deathless friends, which bless their existence with brightest dreams and most beautiful premonitions, until they reach the gates of Heaven. Spiritualism is the last and best Goddess of Reason. *Lampada tradam.*

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## HYMNS FOR THE SPIRITUAL CHURCH.

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### OUR NATIVE LAND.

Now for our Native Land we pray,  
And ask Thy blessing, Lord, to-day  
On all its people; may we be  
A nation truly serving Thee!

May pure Religion's sacred flame  
Glow in each heart, and may Thy  
name  
In every home be hallowèd,  
In thought and word, in soul and  
deed!

May ancient feuds, false shame, and  
pride,  
No longer class from class divide;  
But may we all united feel  
Our duties to the commonweal!

May we with all men live in peace!  
May knowledge evermore increase!  
And Justice, Order, Freedom, stand  
The pillars of our Native Land!

T. S.

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\* Very distinct effects are produced in a galvanometer of adequate delicacy by the *voluntary* contraction of the muscles of the fore-arm; a finger on either side being immersed in a vessel of salt water, with which the wires of the instrument communicate. Under such arrangement, the deflection of the needle amounts to 50 or 60 degrees occasionally, and is *uniform in magnetic direction*. May not the result of the human will be equally distinct with the electric currents of heart and brain?—W. H.

## NOTES AND GLEANINGS.

DR. WILLIAM HITCHMAN has recently been lecturing, not only at the rooms of the Liverpool Psychological Society—from Sunday to Sunday—frequently, but at the Mechanics' Institution, Woolton. On January 12th he addressed a large audience, *by request*, on the chosen subject, "EXISTENCE, WHAT IS IT?" Mr. Brown, a local magnate, of Allerton, and well-known merchant-prince, took the chair, and amidst loud applause, eventually characterised "*such* Spiritualism as that enunciated by the learned Doctor, to be of the utmost benefit to mankind, for *his* discourse proved the truth of spirit-communion in all ages, as historic facts and, if practised as preached, a blessing to all."

## THANKSGIVING DAY IN AMERICA.

We learn from the American papers that Thanksgiving Day in that country was observed with unusual fervour by the Spiritualists, who looked upon the past year as one exceedingly rich in results in connection with the glorious truth of spirit-communion. Sittings in abundance were held during the day and in the evening, by those persons who were desirous of realizing the sweet intercourse with the loved ones who had passed away. A large number of meetings were held, and at one of these Dr. Henry T. Child delivered an able discourse on the subject, "What good has Spiritualism done?" from which we extract the following:—

If there be any of God's children who have a right to rejoice and give thanks it is the Spiritualists. Looking over the progress of modern Spiritualism during the last quarter of a century we see that it has come to humanity in waves, not bearing destruction, but healing in their course. First we had the raps, accompanied as they were by an intelligence which startled the thinking minds who were willing to investigate the phenomena, which were simple and insignificant, and without this intelligence would have been, what many supposed them to be, but a mere bubble on the ocean of time that must soon burst and be lost for ever. Next came the movement of tables and other physical bodies. These were more general, and were considered by thousands as an interesting amusement. But behind these, and resulting from them, was a similar intelligence, which, while it interested a large number of persons, awakened in the minds of others a fear that "it was an evil thing," because it came in conflict with certain religious dogmas which they had accepted. This wave, like the former, rolled over the world, and greatly increased the number of believers in the intelligence conveyed by the phenomena. Then for a time there was a repose, followed by other waves which need not be enumerated here. To-day we are in the midst of the most surging and powerful of all the waves of Spiritualism, one that has swept over the world with greater power and awakened a greater interest than ever before. The phenomena of materialization, which had been predicted for a considerable time, has become so general as to attract almost universal attention. And as thousands of spirits have been recognized, the question "What good Spiritualism has done?" is in part answered, while still greater interest prevails to see and know more. When we thus recognize the

forms and familiar voices of loved friends who have passed over the river called Death, the question of continued existence is almost settled, especially where these can give positive evidence of their identity. The question, "What good has Spiritualism done?" is an old and a proper one, and we are glad to answer it. The first intelligence which came through the raps on the memorable 31st of March, 1848, was a reply to two mothers who asked the number of their children, and were surprised to find that the response told not only the number still living, but referred to some whose forms had been laid away in the grave, and who had almost been forgotten, as their children still; and so, ever since; all the forms of intelligence that have been received have had this one great object to prove that all our loved ones hold the same relation to us in the life beyond that they held here.

How often when the minister has stood beside the open coffin has he hesitated, and said we might hope that the departed had found mercy and was safe in the arms of Jesus. Spiritualism is not based on hope, it brings positive and unmistakable evidence of a future existence. Does anyone question what good there is in this? Millions of earth's children are living better lives because they know that their loved ones are not lost but gone before. The owl may ask what good does the daylight do? And may answer the question by saying none, because it only blinds his vision. Let us hope that this is not the case with any persons who ask this question. We have often compared Spiritualism to the light and heat of the sun; we know that in the outward these may cause the decomposition of many things; but who ever thought of calling in question the grand and beautiful life-giving powers of the sun on this account?

Spiritualism has brought life and immortality to light to millions of earth's children, by giving them the consolation that their loved ones are safe; has removed the dreadful pall that had made life one continuous gloom, and given peace and joy in the knowledge that God is good; that He is the loving Father of all His children; and as it thus comes to comfort the mourner, it opens the pathway of the future, and by its light sheds a halo around this life which may not be proclaimed in the public ear, but is treasured in the soul as its choicest blessing. All truth comes from God our Father, and as His ministering angels bring this to us we are blest.

We have seen the strong man, exulting in his power and ready to defy everything around him bowed down under grief when his child whom he had looked upon as the staff of his declining years, has been snatched away by the rude hand of death and when the evidence came to him from the other shore, proving not only that there is a life beyond, which he had never realized, but that his child, the light of his life, had come from that home to speak to him of its realities. As the tears ran down his manly cheeks, and his spirit went forth in joy to receive the blessing of his own darling, there was no question, either with him or us, as to what good Spiritualism has done. We have seen a mother, under the weight of a deep affliction because of the uncertainty she felt in regard to her child that had gone before her, when the evidence came that fully satisfied her that all was well with him, her soul was made to rejoice, and especially when she learned that his happiness could be promoted by her cheerful resignation and a willingness to hold sweet communion with him. Who will say that there is no good in these things, which are the legitimate results of Spiritualism?

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#### CONFESSIONS OF AN OPIUM EATER.

I now pass to what is the main subject of these latter confessions, to the history and journal of what took place in my dreams; for these were the immediate and proximate cause of my acutest suffering.

The first notice I had of any important change going on in this part of my physical economy was from the re-awakening of

a state of eye generally incident to childhood, or exalted states of irritability. I know not whether my reader is aware that many children, perhaps most, have a power of painting as it were, upon the dark, all sorts of phantoms; in some, that power is simply a mechanic affection in the eye; others have a voluntary or semi-voluntary power to dismiss or summon them; or, as a child once said to me when I questioned him on this matter, "I can tell them to go and they go; but sometimes they come when I don't tell them to come." Whereupon I told him that he had almost as unlimited a command over apparitions as a Roman centurion over his soldiers. In the middle of 1817, I think it was, that this faculty became positively distressing to me; at night, when I lay awake in my bed, vast processions passed along in mournful pomp; friezes of never-ending stories that to my feelings were as sad and solemn as if they were stories drawn from times before Œdipus or Priam—before Tyre—before Memphis. And at the same time, a corresponding change took place in my dreams; a theatre seemed suddenly opened and lighted up within my brain, which presented mighty spectacles of more than earthly splendour. And the four following facts may be mentioned, as noticeable at this time:—

1. That as the creative state of the eye increased, a sympathy seemed to arise between the waking and the dreaming states of the brain in one point—that whatsoever I happened to call up and to trace by a voluntary act upon the darkness, was very apt to transfer itself to my dreams; so that I feared to exercise this faculty; for as Midas turned all things to gold, that yet baffled his hopes and defrauded his human desires, so whatsoever things capable of being visually represented I did but think of in the darkness, immediately shaped themselves into phantoms of the eye; and by a process apparently no less inevitable, when thus once traced in visionary colours, like writings in sympathetic ink, they were drawn out by the fierce chemistry of my dreams into insufferable splendour, that fretted my heart.

2. For this, and all other changes in my dreams, were accompanied by deep-seated anxiety and gloomy melancholy, such as are wholly incommunicable by words. I seemed every night to descend, not metaphorically, but literally to descend, into chasms and sunless abysses, depths below depths, from which it seemed hopeless that I could ever re-ascend. Nor did I, by waking, feel that I *had* re-ascended. This I do not dwell upon, because the state of gloom which attended these gorgeous spectacles, amounting at least to utter darkness, as of some suicidal despondency, cannot be approached by words.

3. The sense of space, and in the end the sense of time, were both powerfully affected. Buildings, landscapes, &c., were exhibited in proportions so vast as the bodily eye is not fitted to receive. Space swelled, and was amplified to an extent of unutterable infinity. This, however, did not disturb me so much as the vast expansion of time; I sometimes seemed to have lived for seventy or a hundred years in one night; nay, sometimes had feelings of a millennium passed in that time, or however, of a duration far beyond the limits of any human experience.

4. The minutest incidents of childhood, or forgotten scenes of later years, were often revived; I could not be said to recollect them; for, if I had been told of them when waking; I should not have been able to acknowledge them as parts of my past experience. But placed as they were before me, in dreams like intuitions, and clothed in all their evanescent circumstances and accompanying feeling, I *recognised* them instantaneously. I was once told by a near relative of mine, that having in her childhood fallen into a river, and being on the very verge of death but for the critical assistance which reached her, she saw in a moment her whole life in its minutest incidents, arrayed before her simultaneously as in a mirror, and she had a faculty developed as suddenly for comprehending the whole and every part. This, from some opium experiences of mine, I cannot disbelieve. I have, indeed, seen the same thing asserted twice in modern books, and accompanied by a remark which I am convinced is true, *viz.*—that the dread book of account which the Scriptures speak of, is in fact, the mind of each individual. Of this, at least, I feel assured, that there is no such thing as forgetting possible to the mind. A thousand accidents may and will interpose a veil between our present consciousness and the secret inscriptions on the mind; accidents of the same sort will also rend away this veil; but alike, whether veiled or unveiled, the inscription remains forever, just as the stars seem to withdraw before the common light of day; whereas, in fact, we all know that it is the light which is drawn over them as a veil, and that they are waiting to be revealed, when the obscuring daylight shall have been withdrawn.—*De Quincey.*

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## Correspondence.

### IS SPIRITUALISM A RELIGION?

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

SIR,—In reply to Mr. Brevior, will you allow me to say that a religion is a faith, and which has been defined as the evidence of things unseen; hence the demonstrated facts of Spiritualism concerning the prolongation of life under altered conditions does not constitute a religion. Again, religion has reference to a Supreme Being, to which Mr. Brevior makes no reference. The facts of Spiritualism bear reference to science rather than to religion. Then, again, the spirits need not necessarily be religious, for they get no nearer to a knowledge of God. A man may be very religious without the belief in another life; or believe and not be religious, or even believe in a God. No doubt every science has its own method and class of facts to deal with, and the facts of Spiritualism are all-important to a science of man; but in a manner have been very disappointing, both to men of science and to the religious world—to men of science, who prided themselves that they had at last got quit of the superstition, as they believed it, concerning the agency of spirits and of possession; and no one can be more aware of this than Dr. Sexton, and should have great forbearance with the doubts of scientific men. Then, the religious man is disappointed to find his future to be so different from what he has supposed and been taught to believe: that is, in an emancipation to a life of such glory and splendour, and to such joys as have never entered into the heart to conceive—a difference somewhat similar to that of the beautiful butterfly as compared to its existence in the grub state. And the double sense of the term "spiritual" must not be confounded: to have life prolonged as a spirit is one thing; but to be really and truly spiritual, as a devout, elevated, and superior being, and at once in an intellectual, moral, religious, and poetic sense, is quite another matter to that, as thus expressed by *Hamlet*:—

"What a piece of work is man! How noble in reason! How infinite in faculty! In form and moving, how express and admirable!—in action how like an angel!—in apprehension how like a god! The beauty of the world! The paragon of animals!"

And if a man be all this, what signifies it whether you term the substance of it spirit or matter? No; Spiritualism is not a religion: nor is the so-termed Christian religious, when disputing about cloths and candles. But if Spiritualism be not a faith, it is a tremendous fact, the ultimate effect of which no man can foresee, and in respect to which perhaps as yet we are not even wise enough to guess wisely.

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*P.S.*—Since writing the above, I see Mr. Newton Crosland's article on "*Supernatural Religion Considered*," in which he says, "The phenomena of Spiritualism has demonstrated the verity of miracles beyond the possibility of cavil." But such is not the opinion of the naturalist, Mr. Wallace, nor of any Spiritualist that I am acquainted with—taking miracle to mean contrary to the laws of nature; and it is only human arrogance to suppose we can discern the limits of the powers of nature—for conceivability is not a certain criterion of truth, as Mr. Mill so well demonstrated in opposition to Mr. Herbert Spencer. There are thousands of facts in nature utterly incomprehensible, such as the motion in a medium called light passing through that seemingly solid substance called glass. In fact, fundamentally considered, all nature is profoundly mystical and incomprehensible, and, to the human understanding, as it were miraculous. But Mr. Crosland does not seem able to master that universal verity, in regard to which all we know or can know is—that we know nothing! The right meaning of the term "miracle" was discussed in the *Spiritual Magazine* some time back, and in which, I think, Mr. Crosland took a part.