

SPIRITUAL SCIENTIST

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A Lecture delivered in Music Hall, Boston, Dec. 29, 1872.
THE RELIABILITY OF MEDIUMS.

BY WILLIAM DENTON.

It would doubtless be very pleasant to a great many people, if we could obtain our religion as we do our flour; the wheat ground, bolted, thrashed, separated from all chaff and bran, and just suited to the delicate appetite of the eater; but we have as yet no process by which this can be accomplished. The grain of wheat in Judaism is so small that it is almost lost in the bushel of chaff in which it lies hid; the gold in Christianity is but a small percentage of the ore in which it may be seen as bright threads that sparkle in the earthy mass with which they are associated.

How is it with Spiritualism? Is that all refined gold? Is all the circulating medium among us the genuine coin of heaven, good at the Bank of Truth for its face? I should like to be able to say yes; but truth demands an emphatic *no*.

It is much better that we should criticise what is faulty among us, than that we should leave it for outsiders and strangers. If Christians had been willing to criticise what passed for Christianity, and anxious to discard whatever was false, whatever did not harmonize with the facts of Nature, then had Christianity been established firm as the pillars of Heaven; and if Spiritualism is to become the religion of humanity, it must be carefully separated from the mass of fable, that already clusters around it, and from many eyes hides entirely its heavenly glory.

When men wish to study Judaism, they turn to the Books of Moses and the acknowledged teachers of Judaism after his time; when they wish to investigate Christianity they turn to the books of the New Testament, which contain the views of its founders; what wonder, that when men wish to learn what Spiritualism is, they turn to the books and papers written by Spiritualists, and from their contents form their opinions with regard to it.

Some books have been written on this subject of which no intelligent Spiritualist need be ashamed; but a great many have been published, bought and read, and are still being read and praised, that are the veriest trash.

There is a book called "Marigolds by the Wayside; or, the

Prose and Poetry of Life," rendered by Theodore Parker through the trance condition of Sarah A. Ramsdell; a very fair title. How are we to know whether this was "rendered" by Theodore Parker or not? If the matter is worthy of Theodore Parker and written in his style, we may even then doubt whether it was inspired by him, for other persons could write matter worthy of him and imitate his style. But if we find the matter infinitely below and utterly unworthy of Theodore Parker, we may then be sure that the lady who wrote the book, however honest, was sadly mistaken. Here is a sentence on the 7th page:—

"Geologists of all ages have spread their nucleus of strength to battle with the primitive lessons that ancient historians plunged in mystery and doubt, and then left with the seal of sanctification, made fast by the teutonic assumption of authority that claimed to be the vicegerant of God to proclaim the world's formation and the world's salvation on the mere hypothesis of God's will."

Here we have geologists (geologists we know, but who are geologists?) spreading a nucleus to battle with lessons plunged in mystery; but what chance could the lessons have in the fight? They were not only plunged in mystery, but sealed with sanctification, made fast by Teutonic assumption. Poor lessons! Teutonic means relating to the ancient Germans; but it is evident that the person who uses the word in such a connection as that, has no conception of its meaning. A little farther on we read:—

"The rudimental strata is the underground car of propelling power that hangs a world on the orbit of time."

The "strata of earth" are layers of rock, and these layers, it appears, are an underground car; and this car hangs a world on the orbit of time. What has the world done that it should be hung?

How could an underground car hang a world? And above all how could it hang it on the orbit of time? One sentence more:—

"Is it because the spirit of the Old World has crept into the American nest of reputed freedom, and hatched an egg of discontent that is to destroy the basis of principle that underlies the system of honest toil which is assuming a non-committal appearance, that bespeaks little freedom in systematized effort to make the weak more strong, and build a fortification that shall ensure safety to all classes and grades of civilization that throng around the American footstool of labored enterprise, that, untrammelled by the false spirit of pride, would be the natural badge of honor to be worn by any country with success to its growth of honor and liberty of expression?"

Theodore Parker, hopelessly insane, could never have talked such nonsense as that. But, you may ask, who puts any confidence in such trash? Those persons in Boston who published the book we should suppose, Adams & Co., and those stores where it is sold as a part of our spiritual literature.

Not very long ago I received from the author, a work

entitled, "My Experience; or, The Footprints of a Presbyterian to Spiritualism," by Francis H. Smith, of Baltimore. I found on the fly-leaf strong endorsements of the work. One well-known Spiritualist of Albany writes:—

"It is the very stamp of truth; the seal of the angels; the footprints of a good man along the shores of the great here-after."

A lady well-known in the spiritual ranks, one of our best writers and speakers, says of it;—

"I have found amongst the immense pile of spiritual literature which your country has produced, no work of its unpretending size, that has wrought so profound an impression on the minds of my countrymen, we English, as your book."

In this book are communications professedly from Sir Humphrey Davy, Thomas Hood, David Hume, Edgar A. Poe, Henry Kirke White, and several others. Davy was a natural philosopher, a thoroughly practical man, constantly interrogating nature by experiment, and making new and valuable discoveries. In this work there are about forty pages from him, and through the whole nothing characteristic of Humphrey Davy. No experiments recorded, no new discoveries announced, no philosophic account of the spirit realm, but a dreary waste of platitudes such as might be written by a presbyterian who had advanced to Spiritualism as Mr. Smith had done. As an excuse for not making some philosophic revelations, we have the following:—

"Dear friends, man has searched out the various principles of his own globe; but there is much yet which has not been revealed."

We do not require the spirit of Sir Humphrey to tell us that much has not been revealed, "much that is hidden which shall be brought to light." Very true; and now Sir Humphrey Davy is just the man to bring some of it to light. Instead of that we read:—

"If spirits were permitted to tell all of God's mysteries, man would have nothing left to search for himself. There would then be no occasion for chemical analysis. The astronomer would no more construct telescopes to search the etherial skies. No more need ships be sent out to explore the vast expanse of the polar regions, of which so much has been written, so much speculation indulged, and wherein so many earth-lives have been lost. Can you not see that if all were revealed, man with his inert nature would not care to search for himself? If the discoveries yet to be made in chemistry were already laid down, what occasion would there be for constructing new and various vessels? Would the astronomer tax his brain to search the divine and get undiscovered regions above him? All would be plain.

Every man that has a truth might have the same excuse for keeping it locked in his bosom. "If I should tell you what I know, you would not care to search for yourselves." But who does not know that our desire for knowledge increases with our knowledge. The man who knows but little, knows not the desirableness of knowledge; while the man who knows much is he who is most desirous to add to his stock, for he knows the bliss that it brings.

In the volume are several poems by Thomas Hood, who never wrote a dull line; but the poems ascribed to him in this volume might have been written by a boy of twelve, and a dull boy at that.

Here is one:—

My friends, there is a rhymer here,
Though may be not a poet;
His name is one you need not fear,
He at the end will show it.
It is not Shakespeare, deep, and bold,
To him I can't aspire;
Nor do I, like Montgomery hold,
The sweet, pathetic lyre.
It is not Dante, I declare
I deal not in Infernals,
A serious face I never wear,
Though one of the Supernals.
Milton, sublime and blind, I'm not,
This I confess to thee,
To see has ever been my lot
Though not a seer I be.

Such dull, ungrammatical stuff reminds me of what I once saw on a Welsh tombstone,—

"Farewell, father, mother dear,
We are not dead but sleeping here;
Here we lie that you may see,
Prepare yourselves to follow we."

Compare this with a few lines of Hood's, on his son three years and a half old.

Thou happy, happy elf!
(But stop!—just let me kiss away that tear),
Thou tiny image of myself!
(My love, he's poking peas into his ear!)
Thou merry laughing sprite!
With spirits feather light,
Untouched by sorrow and unsoiled by sin,
(Good heavens! the child is swallowing a pin!)

Thou little tricksey Puck!
With antic toys so funnily bestuck,
Light as the singing bird that wings the air,
(The door! the door! he'll tumble down the stair.)
Thou darling of thy sire!
(Why Jane, he'll set his pinafore afire!)
Thou imp of mirth and joy!
In love's dear chain so strong and bright a link,
Thou idol of thy parents (Drat the boy, there goes
[my] ink.

Who would not rejoice to have a poem from such a writer as Hood to add to our literary store? but if those poems that Smith gives came from Hood, death must be a horrible thing; and if Hood should die again and again, and deteriorate as much, an idiot will be a philosopher compared with him.

In 1852, just twenty years ago, Isaac Post of Rochester, an excellent old gentleman, a member of the Society of Friends, well known as a man of honesty and true worth, sent out a work entitled, "Voices from the Spirit World." In it are communications professedly from Benjamin Franklin, George Washington, John C. Calhoun, William Penn, Voltaire and many others. Yet the whole is eminently Quakerish, all written in one general style, abounding with the same grammatical errors, and containing the same singular Quaker-like expressions.

It is quite common for Quakers to say, "I feel to do this, I feel to give that." The form of expression arises from the confidence that the original Quaker had in the light within. The first message is from Adin S. Corey, in which he says,— "I feel to give some of my experience." Corey was a Quaker, and we are not surprised to find him using the expression; but what are we to think when George Washington says,— "I feel to say a word about John Calhoun." Has George Washington turned Quaker since he went to the spirit-world? The poetess, L. E. L. says, "I felt to rejoice," and uses ungrammatical expressions, as,— "I would impress every medium to keep their minds." William Weeks, who was no Quaker, says,— "I feel to bless God." Henry Colden says,— "I feel to give a view of the clergy."

Thomas Jefferson writes like a third-rate Quaker preacher, and makes mistakes in grammar that a school-boy might be ashamed to make. The book is evidently the reflection of the good old Quaker's mind, and contains not the slightest evidence that it came from the illustrious individuals whose names are attached to it.

Here is a work with the very ambitious title of "The Philosophy of Creation," and by Thomas Paine. It is published by William White & Co., and has passed through four editions.

Thomas Paine never wrote on a subject that he did not understand; and every subject of which he treated was illuminated by his genius; his words are always well chosen, and express his ideas with the greatest clearness; but with regard to matters of which this book treats, its writer neither knew what he professed to teach, nor could he express even the ideas he had in clear and forcible language.

On the thirty-third page he tells us that water, in the earlier periods of the earth's existence, was in a more dense state.

"Being composed of less hydrogen and more nitrogen; as fluorine, which is the result of a union of hydrogen and nitrogen, and also carbon."

It would be difficult to crowd a greater number of mis-statements into a single sentence. It teaches that water was composed of different elements, and was more dense in the early periods of the earth's existence; but if it was composed of different elements it could not have been water at all, but some different substance. It teaches that water is composed of nitrogen, for it says that this primitive water was composed of more nitrogen, so that water to-day is composed of less. But water is composed of hydrogen and oxy-

gen, and is destitute of nitrogen. It also teaches that the water of that period was composed of fluorine. Fluorine might be contained in the water of that time, as salt and other substances are contained in water to-day; but if it was composed of fluorine it could not be water. More, and more remarkable still, it declares that fluorine is the result of a union of hydrogen and nitrogen; but fluorine is an element and not a compound. I may be told that Thomas Paine may have progressed in the spirit-world so as to see that to be true which appears to us to be false. Of course there is a possibility of that, but the next sentence reads:—

"This proposition can hardly be denied by men of science and research."

It is quite certain that no man of science and research would agree with such unscientific statements.

On the 43d page we are informed that during the carboniferous period the chain of mountains "called the Appennines in Spain were elevated;" but the Appennines are not in Spain; they are in Italy, and a man might as well talk about the Adirondack Mountains in Nova Scotia, as the Appennines of Spain.

We are also informed on the same page that all life became extinct in the carboniferous era. Every geologist knows the falsity of this statement.

On the 52d page we are informed that "the chalk became the seat of the orlilite formation, and that the orlilite became the seat of the lias."

But the orlilite is older than the chalk; how, then, could the chalk become the seat of the orlilite? and the lias is older than the orlilite, how, then, could the orlilite become the seat of the lias? It would be just about as sensible to say, "then the boy became the sire of his father and the father of his grandfather."

I do not deny that there are truthful statements in the book; but the great trouble with such books is that no man, unless he is posted, can tell what to rely upon; and if he is posted he does not wish to waste his time in reading such trash. Worse than that is the statement that the author of this is Thomas Paine. To attribute such science run-mad to Thomas Paine, is to calumniate one of the clearest thinkers and plainest writers, and to place a stumbling-block in the way of every intelligent investigator into the truth of Spiritualism.

The book is said to have been written at the rate of a printed page a minute, and I must say it reads like it. By placing certain sentences on slips of paper, books as good, or better, could be made by steam.

Mrs. Conant is considered the best medium for spiritual communications on this continent. I have no doubt whatever that she is a medium, and that spirits do communicate through her and frequently. Many communications that have been made through her have been verified, and many more would have been if the surviving relatives had not been afraid of identifying themselves with the despised Spiritualists. I have also confidence in the thorough integrity of Mrs. Conant; what I knew of her personally, and what I have heard from mutual friends, gives me the greatest confidence in her veracity. And yet I am satisfied that a large proportion of what is published in the Banner of Light, from week to week, from her as a medium, never came from the spirits whose names are attached; it is evident that the spirits professing to answer questions upon all subjects, are ignorant of many cases of even the merest elements of natural science.

[CONCLUDED NEXT WEEK.]

A REMARKABLE TEST.

To the Editor of the Spiritual Scientist:

DEAR SIR:—Appreciating most thoroughly the gallant fight you are making against the many frauds and follies perpetrated in the name of Spiritualism, I take the liberty of inclosing a slip, cut from the last number of the Banner of Light, purporting to be a communication from the spirit of my uncle, Charles Selden, to his old friend, Hon. A. G. W. Carter, of New York City.

In presenting this matter, I do not wish to be understood as animadverting in the least upon the character of the Judge. On the contrary I have a high regard for him, and do not believe that he would, under any circumstances, lend his name to that which he knew to be a fraud, but the "Communi-

cation" which he received, or thought he received, and which he considered so perfectly conclusive and satisfactory, is simply worse than worthless.

The portion of his letter bearing on the subject is as follows:

"The name 'Wheelock Sheldon' none of us recognized, and trying to recall such a name, I remarked I knew a gentleman by the name of 'Selden,' who was a long time a friend of mine, and departed this life some two years ago in Cincinnati. I recollected him well. At this, Mr. Mansfield took the paper and pencil from me and immediately wrote on it as follows: 'Yes, Judge. I recollect you well. Do you recollect my system of book-keeping, used by all the banks in Cincinnati? Drink killed me.' CHAS. A. SELDEN."

'What a test,' said I. 'Yes, Selden, I do well recollect you and your system of book-keeping, which was used in all the banks.'

Now for the facts.

First, Mr. Charles Selden died in Indianapolis, Indiana, and not in Cincinnati, O.

Second, He died July 30th (or 31st) 1871, instead of two years ago.

Third, He died of an old chronic disorder which had been troubling him more or less (to my knowledge) for fifteen years.

Fourth, His celebrated system of accounts, which have been in use for years in the Public Offices of Hamilton Co., were not, to his knowledge, used by a single bank in the City of Cincinnati, as he had given his entire attention, up to the time of his death, to introducing them in the various County offices, they being especially adapted to Governmental accounts; and if any of the banks are using the system now, they are doing so without authority.

Fifth, Chas. Selden while in the flesh, possessed no middle name.

It is this sort of thing repeated over, and over, and over again, that prevents many honest seekers after truth from investigating the phenomena of Spiritualism. It has come to such a pass that, with a great many, the name Spiritualist is synonymous with either fool or knave. I should not have taken the trouble to notice the matter, had it not been that both the Judge and my uncle were well-known citizens of Cincinnati, and the "wonderful test" (wonderful only in its entire lack of truth) might not be without its weight in the community.

As I stated in the early part of this communication, I do not think for a moment that Judge Carter is at all guilty of any intention to deceive. Either the medium clairvoyant read his (the Judge's) mind, and told him just what he remembered, or thought he remembered, or Mr. Mansfield himself was the victim of one of the myriads of lying, deceitful, "fantastic" spirits which seem to have taken possession of pretty nearly the entire mediumistic fraternity.

I sincerely hope you may succeed in accomplishing the revolution begun, and should like very much to assist you; but with the immense majority who will persist in being humbugged, I must confess the outlook does not seem brilliant.

Respectfully,

JOHN R. SELDEN.

CINCINNATI, O., Sept. 5th, 1875.

THE FUTURE OF SPIRITUALISM.

THE road to experiment is opened; the oft-derided "table-turning" will become the means of solving the deepest problems of man's nature, of uprooting all superstition, but of reinstating much that has been classed as superstition amongst the natural processes of a magic creative activity in the spirit of man. That ill-reputed "table-turning," a word that every man of culture now fears to utter in a believing sense, will one day aid both the philosopher and the psychologist in the explanation of their problems and the physicist will be compelled unwillingly to those experiments which to-day are revolting to his inner nature. The first step is as yet scarcely taken, for experiment is difficult, the conditions of success are unknown to us, and it is not easy to seize the exact points and moments at which it is most necessary to watch for and to arrest any possible hidden error and deception; and if even lifeless metal only gives up reluctantly to man the secret of its working, much more obstinately does the living organism keep a tight seal upon its mysteries.

"Mysteriously in garish day
Does nature hide herself, her beauty veiling;
And when she wills not secrets to betray,
Nor screws nor levers will be found availing."—FAUST.

—Schindler's "Magic Life of the Spirit," 1857.

THE BOOK OF SPIRITS.

BY ALLAN KARDEC.

TRANSLATED FROM THE FRENCH FOR SPIRITUAL SCIENTIST
BY MRS. EMMA A. WOOD, OF WASHINGTON.

VII.

FOR many persons, the opposition of the various scientific bodies is, if not a proof, at least a strong contrary presumption. We are not of those who raise a hue and cry against scientists; on the contrary, we hold them in high esteem, and would be glad to be counted among them; but their opinion cannot be, under all circumstances, an irrevocable judgment.

As soon as science emerges from the observation of material facts, as soon as the appreciation and explanation of these facts is in question, the field is open to conjectures; each one brings his own little system that he would have prevail and rabidly sustains it. Do we not constantly see the most divergent opinions by turns cried up and rejected, now repulsed as absurd errors, then proclaimed as incontestable truths? The facts, here is the true criterion of our judgment, the unanswerable argument; in the absence of facts, doubt is the opinion of the wise.

For well-known things the opinion of scientists is admitted as evidence, because they are more and better informed than ordinary persons, but as regards new principles, unknown things, their method of seeing is always but hypothetical, because they are no more than others exempt from prejudices; I will even say that the scientist has, perhaps, more prejudices than another, because a natural impulse makes him subordinate everything to the especial branch he has studied; the mathematician sees proof only in an algebraic demonstration, the chemist refers everything to the action of the elements etc. Every man who makes to himself a speciality cramps within it all his ideas; take him away from that often he talks nonsense, because he would subject everything to the same crucible; it is one consequence of human weakness. I will then, willingly, and in all confidence, consult a chemist on a question of analysis, a physicist on electric power, a mechanic on motive force; but they will permit me, and that too, without prejudice to the respect their special knowledge commands, not to have the same esteem for their negative opinion in the case of Spiritism, any more than the judgment of an architect on a question of music.

The common sciences rest on the properties of matter, which can be experimented and manipulated at will; spirit phenomena rest on the action of intelligences who have their own will, and who constantly prove to us that they are not subject to our caprice. Thus observations cannot be made in the same manner; they require special conditions and quite another starting point; to wish to subject them to the ordinary processes of investigation is to establish analogies that do not exist. Science proper, as science, is thus incompetent to pronounce on the subject of Spiritism; it has no call to engage in it, and its judgment, whatsoever it may be, favorable or not, should have no weight. Spiritism is the result of a personal conviction which scientists may have as individuals, aside from their quality of scientists; but to wish to defer the question to science,—as well desire to have the existence of the soul decided by an assembly of physicists or astronomers; indeed Spiritism rests wholly on the existence of the soul and its state after death; now, it is supremely illogical to suppose a man must be a great psychologist, because he is a great mathematician or a great anatomist. The anatomist in dissecting the human body, seeks for the soul and because he does not find it under the scalpel, as he finds a nerve, or because he does not see it fly off like a gas, concludes it has no existence, his stand-point is exclusively material; does it follow that he is right in opposition to the universal opinion? No. You see then that Spiritism has nothing to do with science. When its beliefs shall have become common accepted by the masses, and, if we may judge by the rapid strides it has already made, this time is not far distant, it will be with it as with all new ideas that have met with opposition, the scientists will yield to the evidence; they will come to it individually by the law of events; until then it is inconsiderate to turn them aside from their special work, and force them to give their attention to a thing

that neither belongs to their delegated powers nor is in their programme. In the meantime, those, who without a previous and thorough study of the subject, pronounce in the negative, and ridicule all who are not of their opinion, forget that it has been the same with nearly all great discoveries; they may see their names augment the list of illustrious proscribers of new ideas, by the side of those members of the learned assembly, who, in 1752, received with shouts of laughter the memorial of Franklin on lightning rods, considering it unworthy to be addressed to them; and that other assembly who lost to France the benefit of the initiation of the steamboat, by declaring Fulton's system an impracticable dream; and yet these were questions within their jurisdiction. If then, these assemblies, which reckoned among them the elite of the world's scholars, had only raillery and sarcasm for ideas they did not comprehend, ideas which, a few years later were to revolutionize science, manners and industry, how hope that a question foreign to their labors should obtain greater favor?

These errors of some, of regrettable memory, should not destroy the title they possess to our esteem in other respects, but does it need an official diploma to have good sense, and must we reckon all outside of the academies as fools and imbeciles? Let them cast their eyes on the believers of the Spirit doctrine and they will see if they find among them only ignorant persons, and if the great number of worthy men who have embraced it warrants them in consigning it to the rank of old wives' fables. Their character and knowledge are, at least worth the trouble of saying; "since such men affirm it there must be something in it."

We repeat, that if the facts that now engage our attention were endorsed in the mechanical movement of the body, the search for the physical cause of this phenomenon would enter the domain of science; but so soon as a manifestation, outside of the laws of humanity, is in question, it leaves the jurisdiction of material science, for it can be explained neither by figures nor by mechanical power. When a new fact arises which belongs to no known science, the savant, in order to study it, must set aside his science, and say that it is for him a new study which cannot be entered upon with his preconceived ideas.

The man who thinks his reason infallible is very near to error; even those who have the falsest ideas rely upon their reason, and by virtue of that, reject what to them seems impossible. Those who have already rejected the remarkable discoveries that do honor to humanity, all appealed to this judge to reject them; what they call reason is often only pride disguised, and he who considers himself infallible sets himself up as equal to God. We address ourselves then, to those who are wise enough to doubt what they have not seen, and who, judging the future by the past, do not believe that man has reached his apogee, nor that nature has turned for him the last page of her book.

VIII.

Let us add that the study of a doctrine, such as the spirit doctrine, which suddenly thrusts us into an order of things so new and grand, can be fruitfully made only by men serious, persevering, free from prejudice, and animated by a strong and sincere desire to arrive at a result. We cannot suppose this qualification in those who judge *a priori* lightly, and without having seen all; who bring to their studies, neither continuance nor regularity, nor the necessary concentration of thought; still less can we give it to those who, in order to sustain their reputation as men of wit, labor to find a burlesque side to all verities, or those things judged to be so by persons whose knowledge, character and convictions have a right to the respect of all well-bred persons. Let those who deem the facts unworthy of them and their attention abstain; no one would dream of forcing their belief, but let them respect that of others.

What characterizes a serious study is the assiduity brought to it. Should we be astonished not to receive replies to questions, grave in themselves, when they are propounded by chance and thrown in hastily among a multitude of incongruous interrogatories? Besides, a question is often complex, and to make it clear, requires preliminary or complementary questions. All who would acquire a science should make a methodical study of it; begin at the beginning and follow the order and development of the ideas. Will he who asks of a

savant a question, at random, on a science of which he knows not the first word be any the further advanced? Can the savant himself, with the best intention, give him a satisfactory answer? This isolated reply will be necessarily incomplete, and often even for that very cause unintelligible, or may appear absurd and contradictory. It is exactly the same with the relations we establish with spirits. If we wish to be instructed in their school, we must go through a course with them; but, as among us, we must choose its professors, and work with assiduity.

We have said that superior spirits enter only serious reunions and those particularly, where there is perfect communion of thought and sentiment for good. Frivolity and idle questions alienate them as among men, they alienate sensible people; the field then remains clear for the rabble of lying and frivolous spirits, always crowding where they find occasions to joke and amuse themselves at our expense. In such a reunion what becomes of a serious question? It will be answered, but by whom? It is as if in the midst of a festive company, you should suddenly ask the questions,—what is the soul?—what is death?—and others equally recreative. If you want serious answers, be yourselves anxious in the full acceptance of the word, and place yourselves in all the desired conditions; only then will you obtain great things; be more and more laborious and persevering in your studies, without that superior spirits leave you, just as a professor would do by his negligent scholars.

IX.

The movement of objects is an acknowledged fact; the question is to know if, in this movement there is or not an intelligent manifestation, and in the affirmative case, what is the source of this manifestation.

We do not speak of the intelligent movement of certain objects, nor of verbal communications, nor even of those written directly by the medium; this kind of manifestation, evident for those who have seen and studied the thing, is not at first sight, sufficiently independent of the will to bring conviction to a new observer. We will speak only of writing obtained by means of some object armed with a pencil, such as a basket, planchette, etc.; the manner in which the medium's fingers are placed on the objects defies, as we have said, the most consummate address to be able to participate in any way in the tracing of the characters. But still let us admit that, by a marvelous address, he can deceive the most scrutinizing eye, how explain the nature of the answers, when they are entirely beyond all the ideas and knowledge of the medium? Remark well that the question is not of monosyllabic replies, but often several pages written with the most astonishing rapidity, either spontaneously or on a given subject; under the hand of a medium, far from literary, sometimes of poetry of great sublimity and irreproachable purity, and which the best human facts would not disavow; what adds still more to the strangeness of these facts is that they are produced everywhere, and that mediums are multiplying to infinity. Are these facts real or not? To that we have but one answer; See and observe, occasions will not be wanting; but above all observe often, long and according to the proper conditions.

What do our antagonists reply to the evidence? You are, they say, dupes of charlatany, or the sport of illusions. We will say first that the word *charlatany* must be discarded where there are no profits; charlatans do not play their tricks gratis. Then it must be a mystification. But by what strange coincidence would these mystifiers be extended from one end of the world to the other to act in the same manner, produce the same effects, and give, on the same subjects and in various languages, identical answers, if not in the same words, yet in the same sense? How is it that grave, serious, honorable, educated persons lend themselves to similar manœuvres and from what motive? How find among children the necessary patience and skill? For if mediums are not passive instruments, skill and knowledge incompatible with a certain age and certain social positions should be theirs.

Then it is added, if there is not treachery, on both sides they may be the dupe of an illusion. In good logic, the quality of the witnesses must have a certain weight; now here we must ask if the spirit doctrine, which to-day numbers

its adherents by millions, is recruited only among the ignorant. The phenomena on which it rests are so extraordinary that we can readily understand doubt; but what cannot be so easily admitted is the pretension of certain skeptics to the monopoly of good sense, and who, without respect for propriety, or for the moral value of their adversaries unhesitatingly tax with folly all who are not of their opinion. In the eyes of every judicious person, the opinion of enlightened people, who have long witnessed, studied and pondered over a thing, will always be, if not a proof, at least a presumption in its favor, since it has had the power to attract the attention of serious men, who have no interest in propagating an error, nor time to waste in utilities.

THE GENESIS OF POSITIVISM.

BY CHARLES SOTHERAN, AUTHOR AND EDITOR, SOCIÉTATIS ROS. CRUCIS, ETC., ETC.

The most bitter enemies of Spiritualism are to be found in the ranks of Positivism. Whenever one comes across a disciple of Comte, virulent attacks against Occultists and Media are certain to be the order of the day.

Take the case of that noteworthy volume "The Unseen Universe," acknowledged by high standard literary critics to be *sans pareil*. That remarkable work was written by eminent English scientists who have therein dealt with the deepest metaphysical subjects, in a trenchant and attractive style, and who rest their hypothetical bases for Immortality and presumed miracles, on the law of Continuity in the Universe, *i. e.*, that the visible universe is but an infinitesimal portion of the invisible, into which it is to re-dissolve, and what have been hitherto termed Miracles are not breaks of continuity, but a conjunction of the unseen with the visible universe. An argument like this, one would imagine affords an opportunity for many special scientists and their admirers to get out of the Slough of Despond they are floundering in, and eat humble pie *a la* Tyndall, thus: "When we endeavor to pass from the phenomena of physics to those of thought, we meet a problem which transcends any conceivable expansion of the powers we now possess. We may think over the subject again and again—it eludes all intellectual presentation—we stand at length face to face with the incomprehensible."

But no, despite what I can call Tyndall's recantation and the force of irresistible argument, Positivists continue to throw themselves, "in the breach" and make raids where "angels fear to tread;" as, for instance, Professor Clifford who disports himself in a recent "Fortnightly Review."

The worthy Professor and his brother Positivists may be very estimable men, and no doubt anxious for the propagation of their favorite materialism, but would it not be better instead of making rabid hydrophobic snaps against Rosicrucians, Occultists, Spiritualists, etc., who at least believe in the Most High and a future state, which *they* do not, for them to wash up their own dirty linen, and endeavor to answer such paragraphs as the following, for instance, which I find in "The Independent?"

"Comte is the father of Positivism—for those who can understand his writing more or less. For those who cannot understand them (*en ego*) either more or less, he is the propounder of unintelligible religion. Without understanding him, it is easy to see and wonder at the inconsistencies of his dogmas and his life. He proclaims that marriage is a sacrament and indissoluble; yet he divorced himself from his own wife and assumed, without marriage, the wife of a living convict. One of his trilogical divisions of society is into Woman, Priest, and Man. His actual life, as we see, excluded the Priest from his own marriage. On the religious flag which he has provided for worshippers, is enrolled the formula: *Amour pour principe, l'ordre pour base, et le progrès pour but*. In his own realization he has conspicuously omitted the basis. Not content with appropriating the wife of a living convict, he raised her to a divinity, worshipped her memory, and required all his disciples to do the same. A late writer says of Comte: 'His intellect was eminently neat and tidy. He loved order above truth, and abhorred all complications.' Very different, then, was his intellect from his life. This latter was anything but neat and tidy, while it abounded in 'unwholesome complications.'"

Will Messrs Clifford, Congreve, Henry Evans, Morely and Co., please rise up and explain? If they cannot then, I do not ask them to "step down and out" but I recommend them to leave off barking at Spiritualism, learn the A. B. C. of "Integralised Universological Reconciliation," and to go on puerilely spelling God with a small "g" and humanity with the biggest "H" the type-founder can cast.

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SPIRITUAL SCIENCE.

We have now had nearly twenty-eight years of experimental fact-gathering in the phenomena of modern Spiritualism. But what know we of the laws governing the phenomena? The sum total of our information is indeed small. Not that we complain of the past; much has been done in spite of the opposition; but in the future our path should be onward. We must learn how many of the phenomena are in reality spiritual; we must know how many are related to the electric, magnetic and chemical laws of life, and what those relations are. We must discover the powers, possibilities, and capabilities of the spirit in the body, *our latent spiritual faculties*, and therein find much that will enlighten us on subjects which are now darkly mysterious. When phenomenal Spiritualism receives more careful attention, then the world commences to know more of the laws governing matter and force. Nature's mighty forces and wondrous powers, used by spirits in a darkened back parlor, and none to impart a knowledge of the laws governing the results: Oh! shades of Hermes, Paracelsus, and ye ancient mystery men, how can you endure it?

Physical science has achieved many mighty conquests. She has wrested deep secrets from out the bosom of mother Nature. From matter to molecules, thence to cells, and then to atoms, ultimately to force, she has gone onward, each time drawing nearer to the realm of the imponderable—the *Spiritual*: the Spirit-world takes up the tale where science lays it down. They carry it forward, and the results of their endeavors stand out in the marvelous and astounding phenomena of the last quarter of a century, in what will be one day the second—or SPIRITUAL DEGREE of natural science: when will that day dawn?

Spiritualists, in regard to the phenomenal question, have a great work to do and it should be done. It is to take up and complete the work of scientists. Form experimental clubs, experiment to discover, not to be amused at the results. We shall then secure the cooperation of all high-minded spirits, and obtain a vast amount of knowledge. This information will so enlarge and improve the present conception of the Universe, that the existence of a spirit-world will be as natural to our belief—to our lives,—as is the acceptance of the reality of the issuing of hydrogen flames from the surface of the sun.

Our facts will lead to their laws; in turn we shall arrive at the philosophy. Cease to be mere phenomenologists without an educational or beneficiary institution

of any kind, and place ourselves in the way of becoming SPIRITUALISTS, proffering a SPIRITUALISM that presents a phenomenal science that the world needs, and science halts for to-day.

PROGRESS.

For the first time in the history of American Spiritualism, the minds of thoughtful and educated men, are turning towards the ancient writers, in the hope of finding in their works an explanation of its familiar phenomena. Before long, we shall see reprints and translations of Paracelsus, Hermes, Philalethes, Fludd, Cornelius Agrippa, De Foe, Glanvil, Villars, the modern Eliphas Levi, and other writers upon true Magic crowding our present sloppy and sentimental literature out of the market. A recent letter of M. A. (Oxon), to a London paper, shows the drift of the current which issued from between the pages of "People from the Other World."

The fact is, we have gotten nothing worthy the name of Philosophy out of our quarter-century of phenomena, and our scores upon scores of windy books. It was not known until recently that the Occultist writers contained anything about spiritual phenomena like those familiar to us. The word "Magic" has, in a measure, been associated in our minds with gabby gentlemen in claw-hammer coats or cotton-velvet and spangles, drawing cabbages out of hats, turnips out of the mouth of clod-hoppers, and making trained mice to walk a stretched string and canary-birds emerge from pistol-barrels. The idea that this awful word possibly expressed the Science of sciences, and that its adepts had by patient study made themselves familiar with every psychical as well physical science, and alone had the key to the portals of the Other World, never crossed our minds.

And so we have gone blundering on, giving ourselves up to the dominion of "diakka," and, worse yet, of "elementary spirits," and making ourselves and our Cause ridiculous in the eyes of educated people by a mawkish literature, in which a few grains of seed-corn lay buried beneath mountains of verbiage. What enormous injury has been done to individuals in this course of "development" we can never know until our sight is opened by recourse to the ancient fountains of knowledge. We are now crossing the threshold of a new era, and the SCIENTIST, if it is not permitted to lead the way, shall, at least, not be found lagging behind the pioneers of Progress.

AN IMPORTANT QUESTION.

If anything dirtier or more contemptible has been printed during the present campaign in Maine than this paragraph from the Augusta Journal (Mr. Blaine's home organ) of yesterday, we don't know where to look for it:—

John Ryan, the Democratic nominee for senator, from Lincoln County, is a Roman Catholic. Will that fact help him among the intelligent voters of Lincoln County?

Why should it hurt him? We don't know of anything meaner and more despicable than this course, which is in keeping with the policy of the Republicans in other parts of the state. We don't suppose those who are guilty of this sort of thing will ever know enough to be ashamed of it; but we don't doubt they will live to be sorry for it.

We cut the above from the Boston Herald, and although it may be looked upon as a political question, it is nevertheless a religious one in which all Spiritualists and liberals should be interested; and those who agitate it should not be treated as mere alarmists, or denounced as "mean or despicable."

With the above election (now passed) we have nothing to do: but a principle is involved. The laws of the country prevent the nomination or election of an alien to office; but no person can be more thoroughly alien to our government and its free institutions than a Roman

Catholic. Popery is under the rule of Jesuitism; a serpent brood denounced by Mr. Gladstone "as the deadliest foes that mental or moral liberty have ever known." Every intelligent voter must know that Catholics MUST acknowledge the power of the church to overrule that of the state. Acting as a unit, the Catholic church awaits its time in all countries and all places to gain and hold power.

Does not the Herald know this to be the fact in the city of Boston even? Does it not know that the Catholic church through its priests has, and does influence elections openly? Why are Catholic Irishmen foremost in our city politics and in the Democratic party? Do they strive for fame, as prominent American citizens, or for those favors from the church which are always bestowed?

Granted they are in a minority in the whole country: but has not a minority, in times past, controlled the United States? And in this case we have a minority acting as a unit, acknowledging one head and his subordinates, who are secret in their deliberations, as superior to all state laws; a unit, with unlimited amounts of money, to be drawn from all parts of the world, in case of necessity;—Tell us if an intelligent American voter should hesitate how to cast a vote?

In these days there are men who are Democrats when the Democratic party are in power, and Republicans when the Republican party are in power, and would be Catholics if the Catholics were destined to control national affairs. They are anything for a dollar, and will help to destroy the nation, if they can have a division of the spoils.

The signs multiply to indicate that the Jesuits, those great masters of seduction and delusion, know exactly how to surround their victim by their demon forces. Their latest public actions, as shown in the Sicilian expose, the wholesale murder of shepherds and herdsmen on a mountain of disputed possession, in the province of Aquila, by the united emissaries of Prince Barberini, and Government troops, are but the outcome of the lesser troubles which we are already experiencing in this country.

These are facts which should occupy the attention of the independent press of the country. The late controversy in England, contained many useful lessons for American Patriots. Has any foreign power a "foothold in the United States" we would ask? Have we a Prince among us who reigns with more despotic authority than any officer under the United States Government can exercise? And wherever there exists a priest or confessor there operates the infamous Bull of Compounding, issued by the present Pope in 1866; by this diabolical compact all thieves, murderers or other criminals can receive full absolution—full and absolute purification of their characters and consciences, by the payment of 30 per cent of their vilely gotten gains!

Tell us will any intelligent voter be he Democrat or Republican, vote for a Roman Catholic, be he Democrat or Republican, with these facts staring him in the face?

By the London Spiritualist we learn that Buguet has filled up the cup of his treachery by absconding from Paris, forfeiting his bail, and leaving Leymarie and Firman to pay the full costs of the trial. He is at present in Brussels, a place he could not have reached without the connivance of the police.

Geo. Sexton, LL. D., of London, will soon visit this country, and in a few months Prof. Wm. Denton will cross to England. This is what might be called an exchange of heavy weights in Spiritualism. A. Denton for a Sexton.

MIND READING.

MUSCLE-READING *vs.* Mind-reading, is the title of an article by Geo. M. Beard, M. D., printed in the "Review of Medicine and Pharmacy," September 1875. He differs with Francis Gerry Fairfield, about the "epilepsy" solution, saying,—

"It is entirely possible, nay, even probable, that the power of appreciating very slight muscular tension and relaxation, such as is necessary for 'mind-readers,' and the power of entering into trance—spontaneous, self-induced, emotional or intellectual—may be correlated to a nervous susceptibility that invites epilepsy, but there is as yet little or no satisfactory evidence of any such correlation.

"The evidence of Mr. Fairfield on this subject is worth very little; every page of his book shows him to be an honest *non-expert* of the worst kind."

But how little Beard knows about the subject, other than its relation to epilepsy, may best be seen by another quotation; he says,—

"'Second sight' is utterly a delusion. No member of the human race, in trance or out of trance, in health or disease, has ever exhibited any such power, even in the most trifling degree."

It is individuals like these who call themselves 'Scientists,' and believe they are able to deal with such intricate questions as are flimsily passed over in Muscle-Reading *vs.* Mind-Reading.

TURNING TO THE EAST.

ON the subject of Ritualistic practice of "facing eastwards," a writer in the Pall Mall Gazette says:—

"No one who has attentively observed the progress of this 'facing' in divine worship among ourselves can doubt for a moment what underlies the novelty,—namely, a superstitious reverence for the 'altar,' I say 'altar' advisedly, for whereas an intelligent Romanist will not genuflect in that direction unless the pyx is there, their shallow copyists turn and bow thitherward on many occasions when the table is bare—except, it may be, of candles, or flowers, or the unconsecrated elements—not because it is eastward, and because they believe such a 'facing' to be symbolic of 'watching,' for they praise and pray at other times looking at all the other points of the compass, but because it is the locality of the 'altar.' Talk of Comism and other forms of skepticism inculcated by a growing and influential band of free-thinkers, the clergy of the Church of England who practice and teach such pernicious usages as these, do more to materialize the minds of their congregations, to degrade the Almighty into fetishism, than all the infidels and free-thinkers put together. The emasculation of the men and the enfeeblement of the women which this system has produced in other countries—whenever it has not let both into infidelity—ought to be a special warning to Englishmen to eschew materialism under the garb of religion."

FOREIGN NEWS.

MR. NICEFORO FILAMETE, editor of the Italian journal *Annali dello Spiritismo*, at Turin, is engaged on an Italian translation of the works of Allen Kardec. The principal Kardechian books have just been published at Rio Janeiro in the Portuguese language.

A PORTRAIT of D. D. Home, by H. W. Pickersgill, R. A., was lately presented to the British National Association of Spiritualists; it was painted about twelve years ago; it also has one of Robert Owen painted about forty years ago.

IN THE London Christian Spiritualist for Sept. 1st, the editor announces the discontinuance of that journal on account of the scanty support afforded it by those whose principles it was intended specially to set forth, and to which it has been conscientiously devoted.

THE REVUE SPIRITE for this month opens with an address to its readers, signed by A. Bourgeo, captain of cavalry. The writer states that he has been requested by M. Leymarie, on account of the adverse judgment of the Court of Appeal, to co-operate with him in the administration of the Societe and the Revue, which he has much pleasure in accepting, holding M. Leymarie, in common with all who know him, in the highest esteem. On account of the press of work at the office of the Revue, it is requested that all friends will pay their visits on Wednesdays and Fridays only, between the hours of one and five in the afternoon, and that all letters should be addressed to the *Societe pour la continuation des œuvres spirites d'Allen Kardec*, 7, Rue de Lille.

Written for the Scientist.

CUI BONO?

BY DOCTOR OTIS.

IN discussing Spiritualism it is often asked by those who are predetermined that it is not, and must not be founded in fact, of what use is it if it is true? Was anybody ever benefitted by it, or by believing in it? As though it was not worth while to admit to ourselves our belief in it when convinced, unless we could see in it some practical business profit, that we were to be made richer, or had, thereby, some advantage.

Is it of any use for us to believe that which is true on any subject? Is it of any use for us to believe that the earth revolves on its axis, and around the sun, or that it is spherical in its form, or that the blood circulates in our veins? All these we know to be truths; but a few hundred years ago, one who advocated the truth of either of these facts, not only was considered a lunatic, but was liable to be punished as a criminal. The learned and godly men of those days *knew*, as they claimed, the matters mentioned were not true—but *still they were*. Was the knowledge of, and belief in those truths of any use to those who had such knowledge and belief?

The question is just as pertinent to-day as three hundred years ago—is it of any use or advantage to mankind to learn new truths in Philosophy, whatever they are? Facts are facts, and will exist, and remain, and obtrude themselves before us, no matter how *much*, or how long, and how persistently we shut our eyes and turn our backs, and say we do not see, and do not believe.

The question, of what use is it, if true, ought to suggest its own answer; and that it does not, is because the inquirer does not know what Spiritualism is. A spirit is defined by Webster to be—"immaterial substance—an intelligent being or substance, imperceptible by our present senses;—soul;—That which is (sometimes) apparent to sight, but usually not otherwise perceptible; an apparition; a ghost; a spectre." This definition indicates the general belief of mankind. Webster further says, a human soul when it has left the body is a disembodied spirit.

To the few who affect to believe we have no soul or spiritual body, I have nothing to say; but to all who believe or admit that man has a soul or spiritual body, I shall assume that the definition given by Webster is a satisfactory one to them: also that the definition of Spiritualism as given by Webster; viz., the doctrine that departed spirits hold communion with man is an acceptable one—both to Spiritualists and those who oppose it. But Spiritualists would enlarge the definition, and say that departed spirits not only hold communion with men, but that our spirit friends have a regard for us, feel and manifest interest in us, love us and watch over us, endeavoring to lead us from evil, and direct us to that which is good—that they are the angels or messengers from the great spirit—God, to us. Now if this *is* true, and all Spiritualists believe it to be, of what use is it, or of what benefit to mankind? If it is true that spirits hold communion with men, what do they communicate? Evil spirits *may* incite men to do evil deeds, but so far as I have knowledge, all communications from spirits, authenticated as such, teach us to believe in God—the great spirit soul of the universe, infinite in all qualities and attributes of power, intelligence and goodness; in, and by whom, all things exist, and whose laws all must obey, or suffer the penalties which he has affixed to their infraction, and in his angels and messengers; Spirits who may or may not have been embodied as men upon the earth—to do unto others as we would that they should do unto us (which includes the whole moral law as taught by Jesus, and all other great moral teachers of whom we have knowledge), and that our spirit friends are always near us and observe our acts, whether they are in accordance with our knowledge of right and wrong, whether we are doing as we would be done by; and endeavoring to bring us up to that standard, and that our condition of happiness, or the absence of it in the spirit world is largely, if not wholly dependent upon our course of conduct in this life.

Does the objector inquire, what is the good of such teaching as this? Does he allege that many who call themselves Spiritualists do not believe in this, or do not teach or practise the principles here inculcated (which may be and frequently

is true)? Such do not change the truth, or represent Spiritualism or Spiritualists truly, and are not entitled to be classed as such. But to answer the question, of what use is Spiritualism if true—what good does it do to mankind, all good Spiritualists claim, and it must be true to some extent, (in fact, individual observations will demonstrate that it is so) that the teaching of, and belief in the doctrines here stated, does make men better; it has a tendency to, and does in some degree keep them from evil; but it does not make them perfect. It is not necessary to imagine whether any other system of moral or religious teaching does or not. I do not wish to compare Spiritualism or its teachings with any other system. Right is right whoever may lead it, and is from and of God; and wrong cannot be made right whoever may uphold or defend it, and what is true, and of and from God, will stand eternal as such, whether taught or denounced by Christian, Jew, Mussulman, or Buddhist. True Spiritualists seek the truth—to know and believe it—to preach it and practise its teachings, subject of course to human infirmities and weakness, and differs from those who accept the moral philosophy, and have not seen the irresistible proofs of spirit communion with men, only in this that they have seen, and believe, *and know* that there is a spiritual body that lives after the death of the material body; that it can at times, and under certain conditions, not well understood at present, does communicate with us here, any individual of fair intelligence may see and know this if he will fairly investigate. "Ask, and ye shall receive: Knock, and it shall be opened unto you."

From the London Spiritualist.

MANIFESTATIONS WITH THE FAKIRS IN INDIA

BY DR. MAXIMILIAN PERTY,

PROFESSOR OF PHYSICAL SCIENCE, BERNE. TRANSLATED FROM THE "PSYCHIC STUDIES."

THE early history of those ancient people who exercised the greatest influence on classical and on modern culture, was not much inquired into until the present century. It is more particularly the Hindoos and the still more ancient Egyptians, nations with an essentially hierarchical government, a powerful priesthood, highly-developed mysteries, and minutely-prescribed rites and ceremonies, whose arts, customs, opinions and philosophies had such a powerful influence on the Persians, the Arabs and the Greeks, and whose religious ideas have interpenetrated so deeply other religions, the Christian religion not excepted. The Aryans, in their primitive abodes, appear to have believed in the spirits of their ancestors, and amongst the Hindoos this belief was developed into a complete system in the "Book of the Pitris." These and other Indian subjects have been again investigated within the last few years, by a Frenchman named Louis Jacoliot, who resided in Pondicherry, and from that point travelled throughout India, and instituted researches into its history, its antiquities, and its religion. One portion of these, most likely to interest the readers of this journal, bears the title, *Le Spiritisme dans le monde. L'initiation et les sciences occultes dans l'Inde*, Paris, 1875. It contains, in addition to much matter drawn from the "Book of the Pitris" (spirits), also some original observations on the performances of the Fakirs, which bear a great similarity to Western spirit-manifestations.

Communion with spirits can only be obtained by the initiated, from the fakirs upward. Only by severe, long-continued penances can the higher stages be reached; the highest of all, the Jogy, stands immeasurably above ordinary men. The Jogys constitute the Council of Elders, abstain from sexual intercourse, and so elevated is their condition and so great their merit, that ordinary persons could not attain to it in thousands of generations and incarnations. The seven-knotted bamboo stick, which even the fakirs always use, is also found in the higher stages, and is solemnly delivered to them by the high-priest; the seven knots represent the seven degrees of invocation and of outward manifestation. The highest priest is called by the name Brahmatma. When the Guru, or high-priest, begins teaching his students, who sit in faith and reverence at his feet, he says to them: "Listen! while the wretched Sudra (lowest class) throws himself like a dog upon his couch, the Vaysia heaps up the riches of this

world, the Tschatrya (prince, warrior) sleeps in his mistress's chamber, wearied but never satisfied with pleasure; then is it time for the righteous, who will not allow themselves to be enslaved by the impure bodily envelope, to devote themselves to the purest of knowledge."

The initiated attain to the power ascribed to them through a long life of severest asceticism. There are different degrees of this power. To the first class belong the Grihastas, who do not forsake their families, and are a sort of intermediary between the priesthood and the people; they cannot produce any magic phenomena, but can only invoke the spirits of their own family ancestors, in order to receive injunctions from them as to the earth-life. Then come the Purohitas, who are attached to the temples, and perform the ordinary priestly functions at seasons of birth, marriage, burial, invocations of family ghosts, casting of horoscopes, and the expulsion of demons. Lastly, the Fakirs, who are the almoners of the temples, as well as magicians, and have power at will to produce the most striking effects, seemingly at variance with our so-called natural laws; and this occurs, according to the assertion of the Brahmins, with the help of the Pitris, or ancestral spirits. In the second and third classes, the Sanyassis, the Nirvanys and Jogys, the power is the same in kind, but different in degree. They perform their manifestations only in the inner part of the temple, or, quite rarely, before very distinguished persons, and occasionally at public festivals; they believe that the visible and the invisible world are alike subject to their will, that they can command the elements, leave their bodies and return to them; their oriental fancy knows no bounds and no hindrance, and they are looked upon in India in the light of gods. The working of a priestly organization can be seen throughout, and it is asserted that in the crypts of the pagodas these adepts are subjected during many years to a severe discipline, which works a physiological change in their organism, and increases the amount of pure fluid, which is called Agasa, and is the vehicle of all magic influence. M. Jacolliot did not succeed in gaining any knowledge of these processes, and can only give us information concerning the Fakirs themselves. Even the prayers and evocations of the first degree were never written down, only given *viva voce*, and the "Book of Pitris" (Spirits) is silent on this point.

According to Brahminical teaching, the agasa, the pure life-fluid (perhaps our ether) pervades all nature, and is the connecting agent between all animate and inanimate, all visible and invisible beings; electricity, heat, all natural forces, act only by means of agasa. Whoever possesses it in large measure gains power over those who have less, and over inanimate objects. The spirits themselves, who place their power at the service of those mortals able to invoke them, feel the universal binding force of agasa acting on all earthly things. Certain Brahmins believe that agasa is the active principle or soul, in nature, as well as the ruler of all human souls, and that these would be much more intimately united but for the continual obstruction of sensuous matter; the more a soul liberates itself by a contemplative life, the more open it becomes to receive the universal stream which is ever flowing throughout the visible and invisible world.

The extraordinary skillfulness of the Indian fakirs is well known; they are generally designated as magicians or jugglers, and all Asiatic people ascribe to them a supernatural power. Many believe that our cleverest conjurers can produce the same effects, but there exist between the two some essential differences; the fakir, for instance, never performs before large assemblies, but only in private residences; he has no assistant, is always quite devoid of clothing, with the exception of a small lappet depending from the waist; is innocent of all apparatus or preparation, of the cups, false-bottomed boxes, magic pockets, or prepared tables peculiar to the prearranged performances of our conjurers. The fakir has nothing at all but a small bamboo stick, of the thickness of a penholder, and with seven joints, in his right hand; and a pipe about three inches long fastened to a plait in his hair, because, being unclothed, he has no pocket in which to keep it. He operates, according to wish, either sitting or upright, on the matting of the saloon, on the marble, granite, or mortar floor of the verandah, or on the bare earth of the garden. Should he require any person on whom to operate for mag-

netic or somnambulant effects, he takes the first domestic indicated, be he Indian or European. Should he require a musical instrument, a tube, paper, or pencil, he simply asks for it. At the same time he will repeat his performance as it is required—he never demands payment, but accepts an alms for his temple. The fakirs in all the various Indian provinces observe these regulations. "Can any one believe," asks Jacolliot, "that our conjurers would be capable of performing under these conditions?"

The above writer, who had been many years in India, knew nothing of the phenomena of American and European Spiritualism, and had never seen a table moved. "The immoderate belief in the invisible" reminded him so much of the ecstasies and mysteries of Catholicism, that he, a live Rationalist, as he still asserts himself to be, could not bring himself to be present at a modern spirit-circle. Having always considered the Indian fakirs as conjurers only, he had refused to see them likewise, but continued to hear of their wonderful feats of skill. One day at noon, while in Pondicherry, his dobaschy, or man-servant, again announced a fakir. He resolved to receive him, and repaired to one of the inner verandahs of his house, where the fakir awaited him, cowering on the marble floor. Jacolliot was struck with his leanness, his emaciated features, and his half-sunken eyes, which reminded him of the motionless gray-blue eyes of the great sea-shark. The fakir raised himself slowly, bowed with his hands placed on his forehead, and murmured, "Salaam, Sahib! I am Salvanidin-Odear, son of Canagareyen-Odear. The immortal Vishnu protect your days!" "Welcome, Salvanidin-Odear, son of Canagareyen-Odear, may you die on the sacred banks of the Tucangy, and may this transformation be your last," replied Jacolliot. "The Guru (high priest) of the pagoda told me this morning, 'Go and glean at hazard along the rice fields,' and Gonesa, the protecting deity of the wanderer, has guided me to you." "You are welcome!" "What do you want with me?" "It is said you can move inanimate bodies without touching them; I should like to see you perform that miracle." "Salvanidin-Odear has not that power, but he invokes the spirits, and they give him their assistance." "Very well, Salvanidin-Odear, call the spirits, and show me their power." At the words the fakir crouched again on the floor, placed his seven-jointed staff between his crossed legs, and asked me to allow him to have seven little earthen pots of mould, seven thin bars of wood, each of two yards in length, and seven leaves of any sort. When the desired objects were brought, he requested the dobaschy to place them in a line about two feet beyond his extended arms, to stick one wooden bar in each pot, and to transfix each leaf by a wooden bar, so that it should hang down over the pot as a sort of covering. This done, the fakir raised his folded hands above his head and pronounced in the Tamulic language the following invocation: "May all the powers that watch over the spiritual principle of life and over the principle of matter, protect me from the anger of evil spirits, and may the immortal spirit Mahatratridandi, who has three forms, deliver me from the revenge of Yama." Then he stretched out his hands towards the pots, and remained in a motionless trance, moving his lips only from time to time, as if speaking inwardly.

A THEOSOPHICAL SOCIETY.

ONE movement of great importance has just been inaugurated in New York, under the lead of Col. Henry S. Olcott, in the organization of a society to be known as "The Theosophical Society." The suggestion was entirely unpremeditated, and was made on the evening of the 7th inst., in the parlors of Madame Blavatsky, where a company of seventeen ladies and gentlemen had assembled to meet Mr. George Henry Felt, whose discovery of the geometrical figures of the Egyptian Cabbala may be regarded as among the most surprising feats of the human intellect. The company included several persons of great learning and some of wide personal influence. The managing editor of two religious papers; the co-editors of two literary magazines; an Oxford LL D.; a venerable Jewish scholar and traveler of repute; an editorial writer of one of the New York morning dailies; the President of the New York Society of Spiritualists; Mr. C. C. Massey, an English visitor; Mrs. Emma Hardinge Britten and Dr. Britten; two New York lawyers,

besides Col. Olcott; a partner in a Philadelphia publishing-house; a well-known physician: and, most notable of all, Madame Blavatsky herself, comprised Mr. Felt's audience.

After his extempore discourse, an animated discussion ensued. After a convenient pause in the conversation Col. Olcott rose, and after briefly sketching the present condition of the Spiritualistic movement, the attitude of its antagonists, the materialists; the irrepressible conflict between Science and the religious sectaries; the philosophical character of the ancient theosophies, and their sufficiency to reconcile all existing antagonisms, and the apparently sublime achievement of Mr. Felt in extracting the key to the architecture of Nature from the scanty fragments of ancient lore left us by the devastating hands of the Moslem and Christian fanatics of the early centuries, he proposed to form a nucleus around which might gather all the enlightened and brave souls who were willing to work together for the collection and diffusion of knowledge. His plan was to organize a society of occultists and begin at once to collect a library, and diffuse information concerning those secret laws of Nature which were so familiar to the Chaldeans and Egyptians, but are totally unknown by our modern World of Science.

Mr. Felt said, in reply to questions, that communion of mortals with the dead, and the reciprocal intervention of each in the affairs of the other, was not a mere conjecture among the ancient Egyptians, but reduced to a positive science, and he, himself, had been able to cause the materialization of human forms in full daylight, by magical appliance.

It was unanimously voted to organize the proposed society forthwith; Col. Olcott was elected temporary president, and a committee was appointed to draft a Constitution and By-laws.

We hail the movement with great satisfaction, as likely to aid in bringing order out of our present chaos, furnish us a true Philosophy of spirit-intercourse, and afford a neutral ground upon which the tired wrestlers of the Church and College may rest from their cruel and illogical strife.

For the Spiritual Scientist.

WISDOM OF THE WESTMINSTER REVIEW.

BY PROF. J. R. BUCHANAN.

IN the Westminster Review for July 1875, we have a happy illustration of the wilful blindness of materialistic scientists, who are bold and honest in the recognition of facts adverse to the Christian Theology, but have no courage or candor in recognizing any facts adverse to their own *Dynamic Theology*. We may properly say *Dynamic Theology*, for although force is their only God, an able Christian Theologian writing in MacMillon's Magazine, claims that even the doctrine of evolution by force alone is a Theology, although its God is destitute of intelligence.

The Theology of the Westminster Review, carefully excludes intelligence from its conception of the government and evolution of the Universe. Of course it cannot recognize a spirit-world, or any of the spiritual facts in human history which demonstrate its existence.

In the reviewer's zeal to demonstrate the non-existence of intelligence or design in the great first cause, he argues that all the common reasons for recognizing a design in creation are quite fallacious. His own reasoning, however, is much more incomplete and unsatisfactory than Paley's, and one of his far-fetched *quasi*-reasons is, that "if positive evidence of design be afforded by the presence of a faculty, *negative* evidence of design ought to be afforded by the absence of a faculty"—in other words, that whenever an animal is lacking in a faculty which he might very well have had, it is a good evidence that he had not an intelligent creator! This over ingenious thinker might have said with equal propriety, that the solar system affords no evidence of its divine author, because it might have had several more planets outside of those which have been seen, and if they are lacking, their absence destroys all evidence from those which exist!!

The writer proceeds to state that the male Bombyx, a species of butterfly, will discover a female of its own species at any distance, and go to it, guided by some faculty which he considers entirely different from smell, and calls a "sixth sense." Very well, he admits the sixth sense upon a very small amount of evidence, when a butterfly is concerned, but he utterly ignores the existence of a sixth sense in man, of which we have a million times the evidence that we have

in the case of the butterfly, and proceeds thus "Do we consider the deficiency of this sixth sense in man, as the slightest evidence against design?"

The manifestations of the sixth sense in man, in the way of clairvoyance, are far beyond anything in insects or birds. It has its sphere in philosophy, as well as in physical clairvoyance, and guides us in the form of *intuition* to the quick recognition of truth, before it has been logically reached.

It is not an evidence against creative wisdom, that writers, as learned as those of the Westminster, neither possess much of this faculty, nor are willing to admit its existence. The inertia and solidity of the mineral kingdom, are the basis from which all life and beauty are developed; in like manner, the inertia and *stolidity* of the governing classes in politics and literature, form a basis for intellectual progress and reform—a conservative stability which, although it often appears as *learned stupidity*, is a very necessary part of the social structure, holding mankind to that slow rate of progress, or evolution which Divine wisdom deems best.

Credulity is sometimes the amiable weakness of the friends of progress, but *stupidity*, dense and utterly impenetrable to reason, is the universally present and controlling element of what is politely called conservatism, and is as often associated with literary attainments now, as it was in the days of Galileo.

LAKE PLEASANT.

A CORRESPONDENT of the Hartford Times in writing an article on Lake Pleasant says:—

It was my pleasure to hear lectures by Mrs. Bland; Professor Eccles and Denton; and on Saturday afternoon one by J. Frank Baxter, of Plymouth, who gave singular spirit-tests during his lecture. I should think there were from fifteen to twenty of them. He gave the age, time of death, occupation, and frequently the personal peculiarities of persons who had died, and who were recognized by individuals present. In some cases, persons present, skeptics, doubted the truth of the statements; but on telegraphing to parties acquainted with the particulars, they acknowledged the medium's statements to be correct. It was a remarkable exhibition.

One thing about as wonderful as any other in regard to the meeting, is the quiet that prevails in the great crowd. I saw no rowdyism. The people in the tents left their property in the open tents, some of it quite valuable, and considered it safe.

SPIRITUALISM IN BRUSSELS.

LA PRESSE BELGE gives a lengthy and fair account of a physical seance at Brussels, with a medium of twelve years of age. The phenomena appear to have been similar to those occurring through Mrs. Fay's mediumship. The writer concludes with the following remarks: "Cheating was out of the question, for we were in the presence of honorable and enlightened persons, acting in good faith. How was it done then? We do not know, and we shall take care how we attempt to explain phenomena of which we do not hold the key. Reason may reject the idea of the intervention of spirits of the dead in our earthly affairs, and yet we can find no explanation of the facts we have witnessed." When the press begins to own it does not know, and hesitates to explain, it has already taken the first step towards knowledge.

MISS FAY'S SEANCE.

On Friday evening last, we attended a seance at Miss Fay's residence, 26 Hanson Street. Miss Fay was not in her usual health, indeed, she was so far indisposed that it must have been with great mental exertion that she remained in the room. The usual manifestations took place, in both light and dark circles. We applied no test, but the conditions appeared very satisfactory, considering the endorsement that Miss Fay has received from Mr. Crookes.

The Boston Herald, in giving an account of the seance, says:—

"Taken altogether, the affair was a success, viewed from any standpoint. The investigators acknowledged that, while they had seen and felt similar things performed before, they had never known them to be done with quite such celerity and apparent ease on the part of the medium. The writer is convinced they were not caused by Miss Fay or her agent, in their proper persons. He is equally satisfied they were not produced by machinery or confederates. As at present viewed, the whole matter assumes the form of a conundrum, and he gives it up."

How To Form A Spirit Circle.

It is calculated that one person in every seven might become a medium by observing the proper conditions. The thousands of Spiritualists have, in most cases, arrived at their conclusions by agencies established by themselves and independently of each other and of the services of professional mediums. Every spiritualist is indeed an "investigator,"—it may be at an advanced stage; and that all may become so, the following conditions are presented as those under which the phenomena may at all times be evolved.

Inquirers into Spiritualism should begin by forming spirit circles in their own homes, with no Spiritualist or professional medium present. Should no results be obtained on the first occasion, try again with other sitters. One or more persons possessing medial powers without knowing it are to be found in nearly every household.

1. Let the room be of a comfortable temperature, but cooler rather than warm—let arrangements be made that nobody shall enter it, and that there shall be no interruption for one hour during the sitting of the circle.

2. Let the circle consist of from three or five to ten individuals, about the same number of each sex. Sit round an uncovered wooden table, with all the palms of the hands on its top surface. Whether the hands touch each other or not is usually of no importance. Any table will do, just large enough to conveniently accommodate the sitters. The removal of a hand from the table for a few seconds does no harm; but when one of the sitters breaks the circle by leaving the table it sometimes, but not always, very considerably delays the manifestations.

3. Before the sitting begins, place some pointed lead pencils and some sheets of clean writing paper on the table, to write down any communication that may be obtained.

4. People who do not like each other should not sit in the same circle, for such a want of harmony tends to prevent manifestations, except with well-developed physical mediums: it is not yet known why. Belief or unbelief has no influence on the manifestations, but an acrid feeling against them is a weakening influence.

5. Before the manifestations begin, it is well to engage in general conversation or in singing, and it is best that neither should be of a frivolous nature. A prayerful, earnest feeling among the members of the circle gives the higher spirits more power to come to the circle, and makes it more difficult for the lower spirits to get near.

6. The first symptom of the invisible power at work is often a feeling like a cool wind sweeping over the hands. The first manifestations will probably be table tiltings or raps.

7. When motions of the table or sounds are produced freely, to avoid confusion, let one person only speak, and talk to the table as to an intelligent being. Let him tell the table that three tilts or raps mean "Yes," one means "No," and two mean "Doubtful," and ask whether the arrangement is understood. If three signals be given in answer, then say, "If I speak the letters of the alphabet slowly, will you signal every time I come to the letter you want, and spell us out a message?" Should three signals be given, set to work on the plan proposed, and from this time an intelligent system of communication is established.

8. Afterwards the question should be put, "Are we sitting in the right order to get the best manifestations?" Probably some members of the circle will then be told to change seats with each other, and the signals will be afterwards strengthened. Next ask, "Who is the medium?" When spirits come asserting themselves to be related or known to anybody present, well-chosen questions should be put to test the accuracy of the of the statements, as spirits out of the body have all the virtues and all the failings of spirits in the body.

9. A powerful physical medium is usually a person of an impulsive, affectionate, and genial nature, and very sensitive to mesmeric influences. The majority of media are ladies.

The best manifestations are obtained when the medium and all the members of the circle are strongly bound together by the affections, and are thoroughly comfortable and happy; the manifestations are born of the spirit, and shrink somewhat from the lower mental influences of earth. Family circles, with no strangers present, are usually the best.

If the circle is composed of persons with suitable temperaments, manifestations will take place readily if the contrary be the case, much perseverance will be necessary.

Possibly at the first sitting of a circle symptoms of other forms of mediumship than tilts or raps may make their appearance.

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